

LAKKI MARWAT: Terrorists have blown up main transmission gas pipeline in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district, which was supplying gas to Punjab, local police said on Wednesday. Lakki Marwat police said that the terrorists again detonated explosives to blow up the gas pipeline near Wandah Ameer in Torwah area of Saddar police jurisdiction.

MUZAFFARABAD: The police in Haveli, Kahuta (Azad Jammu and Kashmir) on Wednesday arrested Sessions Judge Raja Imtiaz Ahmad for unlawfully ordering the release of a narcotics dealer, in defiance of a Supreme Court directive. The Supreme Court of AJK, led by Chief Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan, sentenced Judge Imtiaz to three days in jail for contempt of court.



ISLAMABAD: President of Awami National Party, Aimal Wali Khan called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

AC among 5 killed in Bajaur blast

F.P. Report

KHAR: As many as five killed in a bomb blast including Assistant Commissioner Faisal Ismail and Tehsildar Nawagai Abdul Wakeel at Sadiqabad Patak area of Khar district Bajaur, while 17 others were injured. Four of the injured were shifted to Peshawar in critical condition, on Wednesday.

The blast targeted the vehicle of Assistant Commissioner Nawagai Faisal Ismail as he was traveling from Nawagai to Khar. The explosion killed five people, including the Assistant Commissioner, Tehsildar Abdul Wakil, a police officer, and a passerby.

Almost 17 individuals were injured, with four of them in critical condition and shifted to Peshawar for further treatment. Local people and rescue teams quickly responded to the incident, providing aid and shifting the injured and deceased to the nearest hospital. The funeral prayers for the martyrs were held in Khar, attended by a large number of people, including government officials and locals.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday strongly condemned a bomb blast in District Bajaur and expressed his grief over the death of an assistant commissioner Nawagai, tehsildar and other personnel. The president expressed his condolences and sympathies with the bereaved families of Shuhada, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president also prayed for the high ranks of the Shuhada and for their families to bear the losses with equanimity. He said that terrorists were the enemies of humanity who targeted people and reiterated the resolve of taking all possible measures to complete eradication of the scourge of terrorism.

ECP restores reserved Assembly seats

— gives PTI's 76 reserved seats to other parties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has officially reinstated 76 suspended reserved seats across the National and three Provincial Assemblies, following the Supreme Court's recent ruling. A fresh notification has been issued to restore the memberships of women and minority lawmakers who had previously been de-notified.

In accordance with the June 27, 2025 verdict of the Supreme Court, the ECP has reversed its earlier notifications issued on July 24 and 29, 2024, and has also withdrawn its prior decision that recognised certain independent candidates as PTI-affiliated members. Among the reinstated seats, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has secured the most significant share with 44 seats across the National Assembly and provincial legislatures.

In total, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) received 13 seats, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) got 14, and MQM regained one seat. Additionally, the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), PML-Q, Awami National Party (ANP), and PTI-Parliamentarians each received one seat.

In Punjab, a detailed

notification restored 24 reserved seats for women and 3 for minorities. Of the women's seats, 21 were given to PML-N, while PPP-Parliamentarians, IPP, and PML received one seat each. Among the three minority seats, two were awarded to PML-N, and one went to PPP-Parliamentarians. Notable women lawmakers reinstated as Punjab Assembly members included Maqsood Bibi, Rubina Nazir, Salma Zahid, Kanwal Nauman, Zeba Ghafor, Saeeda Samreen Taj, Sheher Bano, Aamna Parveen, Syeda Sameera Ahmed, Uzma Butt, Afshan Hussain, Shagufta Faisal, Nasreen Riaz, Sajida Naveed, Farzana Abbas, Maria Talal, Tashin Fawad, Abida Basheer, Sadia Muzaffar, Faiza Momina, Amira Khan, Samia Atta, Rahat Afza, and Ruksana Shafiq.

Reinstated minority members include Tariq Masih Gul, Waseem Anjum, and Basro Ji, who have resumed their roles as members of the Punjab Assembly. It is worth mentioning that yesterday, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) had issued a restraining order against the swearing-in of newly selected members on reserved seats in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies.

The order came during a hearing on a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P), where serious objections were raised regarding the allocation of reserved seats by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

As per the SC decision, 21 reserved seats in the National Assembly, including 3 minority seats, will be restored. From Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 8 women's seats in the National Assembly will be reinstated, while Punjab will see the return of 10 women's reserved seats.

In the Punjab Assembly, 24 women and 3 minority seats will be restored, while the Sindh Assembly will reinstate 2 women and 1 minority member. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will see the restoration of 21 women and 4 minority seats. Party-wise, the National Assembly will reinstate 14 seats for PML-N, 4 for PPP, and 3 for JUI-F. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will see the reinstatement of 10 seats for JUI-F, 7 for PML-N, 6 for PPP, and one each for ANP and PTI-P. From Sindh, MQM will regain one seat and PPP two. Nationwide, JUI-F will reclaim 13 seats, PPP 14, MQM 1, and one seat each will go to IPP, PML-Q, ANP, and PTI-P.

Saif visits bereaved family of Swat tragedy victims

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, visited the grieving family in Mardan's Nawar Kali Rustam, who lost three members in the recent tragic flood incident in Swat. He was accompanied by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Technical Education, Mr. Tufail Anjum, and Director General Information, Mr. Ansarullah Khilji.

During the visit, the government delegation expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and conveyed a special message of sympathy from Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Dr. Saif assured the family that the Chief Minister and the entire provincial government share in their grief. He said that the entire nation mourns the Swat tragedy, and financial compensation announced by the government will be provided to the affected family without delay.

He further stated that action was already being taken against those found negligent in their duties. While natural disasters are beyond human control, the government is taking strict disciplinary action against any official negligence. As an initial step, the Deputy Commissioner of Swat, two Assistant Commissioners, and the Rescue 1122 Swat In-Charge have been removed from their positions.

Barrister Dr. Saif also announced that the Chief Minister has constituted a high-level inquiry committee to thoroughly investigate the incident. The committee has begun its work and will soon present its findings to the Chief Minister. Once the report is received, all individuals found guilty of negligence will be held accountable. He also shared that following the incident, an indiscriminate operation has been launched against encroachments along the Swat River. Structures violating the River Act are being demolished. Additionally, the government is working to strengthen the rescue services by equipping them with modern tools and technology to minimize damage in any future emergencies.

NEPRA okays cut in power tariff

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Wednesday approved Rs1.15/unit cut in the basic electricity tariff in Pakistan. As per details, the NEPRA approved the federal government's request to reduce the base tariff.

In its official decision issued from Islamabad, NEPRA confirmed the decrease in the basic electricity rate and has forwarded the decision to the federal government for notification. The revised tariff will come into effect once it is formally notified by the government.

Justice Mansoor raises 'questions'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Senior judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has raised 'questions' on the seniority of judges in the recent appointment, media reported, citing sources.

According to details, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has sent another letter to the Secretary of the Judicial Commission, raising serious concerns over the determination of judges' seniority without prior consultation. According to the sources, the letter was penned by Justice Shah ahead of a recent meeting of the Judicial Commission.

PTI warns against attempt to topple KP govt

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur dared the Centre to topple his government if they have the required numbers.

Addressing a press conference at KP House in the federal capital, Gandapur said that the struggle of PTI will remain continue till the real independence. Flanked by other PTI leaders, he said that today's parliamentary party meeting is a message of our unity. "The constitution was violated, and our mandate was stolen. The May 9 was a conspiracy against the PTI founder," said the chief minister.

Ali Amin Gandapur revealed that he was pressurised several times to give statements against the party founder. He added that May 9 was just a pretext; the actual target was the PTI founder. "You cannot topple our government through constitutional means. If you want to impose Governor's Rule—go ahead and try," CM Gandapur said.

Speaking on the occasion, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar said that the party holds no personal enmity against anyone. He added that the PTI founder always talked about dialogue in the politics to end the stalemate.

He also challenged the opposition,

saying, "If anyone is eager to bring a no-confidence motion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, they're welcome to try. Those plotting such moves don't have the required numbers." PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said that February 8 was a historic day when the people stood against the oppression. "We're told to move on and forget it," he added. He emphasised that PTI will continue its political struggle and won't back down. "It is a fight for human rights. Taking away our mandate won't end the resistance," he added.

PTI Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram has demanded an investigation into the deaths of the party's jailed workers, urging the chief justice to form a judicial commission to probe the matter. He said the PTI leadership passed a unanimous resolution against the Constitutional Bench's verdict on reserved seats and stated that the party would work to ensure the release of Imran and other jailed PTI leaders.

Meanwhile, PTI pledged to pursue all legal avenues to secure the release of its chairman, Imran Khan, and other party members currently detained. In a statement disseminated on X (formerly Twitter), the party also announced its dissatisfaction over the Supreme Court's decision regard-

ing reserved seats, vowing to utilize constitutional and democratic processes to protect its rights.

The PTI denounced the solitary confinement of Khan and the restrictions placed on his access to legal counsel and political allies. The party also voiced apprehensions about fatalities reported following the discharge of other detainees. The PTI reiterated its call for Khan's release and the liberation of its incarcerated members.

The party confirmed its commitment to pursuing various forms of constitutional, political, and legal action under Khan's leadership to uphold the rule of law and constitutional principles in Pakistan. These actions encompass public demonstrations, peaceful protests, and negotiations. The PTI affirmed its unity and resolve under Khan's guidance and expressed awareness of alleged conspiracies by its political adversaries.

The party's parliamentary gathering also raised concerns about purported government pressure on the judiciary. The PTI urged the judicial system to maintain its independence, uphold merit, and ensure justice. Finally, the meeting recognized the sacrifices made by party members, leaders, and parliamentarians in their legal and constitutional struggle.

PM applauds record 42% tax revenue surge

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday applauded the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for achieving a historic 42% increase in federal tax revenues during the fiscal year 2024-25 — the highest surge in the past decade.

The prime minister chaired a high-level weekly review meeting on the digitization and reform agenda of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), whereas during the briefing, it was revealed that reforms and enforcement of new tax laws enabled the government to collect an additional Rs 865 billion in revenues compared to the previous year, an eightfold increase. The federal revenue-to-GDP ratio also improved significantly, reaching 11.3 per cent, a 1.5 per cent rise over last year.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that no institutional complacency will be tolerated in achieving revenue targets and other economic goals for the new fiscal year. "All departments must work with complete dedication," he said, reaffirming his personal oversight of all stages of revenue collection and economic target implementation.

He instructed FBR to treat taxpayers with dignity and respect and called upon all public sector institutions to extend full cooperation with the revenue authority. The prime minister also stressed the need to broaden the tax net through digitalization and enforcement.

PM Sharif also issued key directives including expansion of the Track and Trace Digital Production System to cover all stages of production and distribution in order to bring untaxed production into the tax net, mandatory digitization of production processes for tax non-compliant businesses and industries,

widening the Point of Sale (POS) system in the retail sector to strengthen documentation and transparency and ensuring business facilitation by keeping FBR accessible to the business community and taxpayers.

The Prime Minister congratulated the meeting participants on the successful passage of the upcoming fiscal year's budget and reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to ensuring Pakistan's bright economic future.

It was informed during the briefing that the Track and Trace system has already been fully implemented in sugar, tobacco, and fertilizer sectors, and will soon be expanded to cement and other industries. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar, FBR Chairman, and other senior government officials.

Kundi briefs Shehbaz over Swat tragic incident

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Khan Kundi Wednesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and briefed him on the tragic incident of River Swat in which a number of tourists lost their lives.

The prime minister expressed his grief over the loss of lives and directed the relevant authorities to enhance their capacity building to forestall such occurrences, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan, State and Frontier Regions Engineer Amir Muqam, Minister for Public Affairs Unit Rana Mobashar Iqbal, PM's Advisor on Political Affairs Rana Saunallah, Minister of State for Power Abdul Rehman Kanju and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Talha Burki. During the meeting, the overall situation in the country was also discussed.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the efforts by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for peace in the Middle East as well as its significant role in the ceasefire understanding between Pakistan and India.

The prime minister said this in a meeting with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Islamabad Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malkiy, while fondly recalling his warm and cordial telephone conversation with the Saudi Crown Prince on June 24 to discuss the regional situation.

He conveyed his respectful regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohamed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur addressing a press conference along with party leaders.

Aurangzeb advocates country-led, results-based development Spain conference

SEVILLA (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, has called for a renewed global commitment to revitalising international development cooperation to meet the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Speaking at a multi-stakeholder round table during the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) in Sevilla, Spain, the minister emphasised that such revitalisation is not merely desirable but essential at this pivotal juncture for global development.

The minister laid out a comprehensive

three-pronged strategy to effectively implement the Sevilla Outcome and foster meaningful progress. As a first step, he stressed the need for urgent execution of priority actions to transition from pledges to tangible delivery. This, he noted, must involve greater country ownership of development agendas, with national strategies taking precedence over donor-driven models. Aligning frameworks with domestic priorities is key to ensuring sustainability and relevance on the ground.

The Minister further underscored the importance of expanding access to concessional and blended financing—particularly for climate initiatives

and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-related investments in order to catalyse private capital in fiscally constrained developing countries.

He called for a thorough reform of the global financial architecture, urging multilateral development banks, international financial institutions, and credit rating agencies to better reflect countries' reform efforts, climate vulnerabilities, and developmental ambitions in their lending terms and assessments. Senator Aurangzeb also highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in how development cooperation is approached within developing countries themselves.



Muqam urges PTI to adopt responsible attitude for 'Dialogue'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Engineer Amir Muqam, Wednesday said the government remains open to dialogue in the greater interest of the country and within the bounds of democratic norms, noting that responsible political conduct is essential in the current climate.

In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, Muqam said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) must demonstrate political maturity and adopt a more constructive approach if it genuinely seeks meaningful talks, adding that the government has always supported

dialogue but will not compromise on democratic principles.

He mentioned that the government had been willing to engage in dialogue even back in 2018, during its time in opposition, demonstrating a consistent commitment to political engagement and national stability regardless of its position in parliament. He said that despite these repeated efforts, PTI's unwilling attitude and ongoing internal divisions have obstructed any real progress toward meaningful dialogue.

Responding to a query, Muqam criticized that Imran Khan's sister and other party members have been issuing conflicting statements, highlighting the

deep divisions and factionalism within PTI.

He pointed out that such internal discord not only weakens the party's position but also undermines the possibility of a cohesive and constructive political dialogue. Responding to a query about any potential change in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), he said that anything can happen at any time, indicating a sense of unpredictability in the political landscape.

In response to another question, he welcomed the improved tone of the budget proceedings and said that things could improve further if all sides demonstrated political maturity and came together in dialogue, stressing that it remains the sole way forward.

Over 50,000 cops deployed for Muharram security

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Police deployed over 50,000 officers and personnel across the province to ensure foolproof security for mourning processions and majalis held on the 6th of Muharram.

According to a police spokesperson, in Lahore alone, over 3,500 police personnel were on duty. A total of 930 mourning processions and 3,835 majalis were held province-wide, including 56 processions and 416 majalis in the provincial capital. Over 22,000 community volunteers also assisted in maintaining order during the religious gatherings.

Inspector General of Police, Punjab Dr Usman Anwar said that a high-alert security posture will be maintained throughout Ashra Muharram. Section 144 is being strictly enforced, with bans on aerial firing, display of weapons, hate speech, and incitement to violence. Dr Usman also directed full enforcement of the Loudspeaker Act and strict action against those promoting hate material, including on social media platforms.

SBP's foreign exchange reserves rise to \$14.51 billion

F.P. Report

KARACHI: As per provisional data, SBP's foreign exchange reserves closed at US\$ 14.51 billion as on 30 June 2025.

During FY25, SBP's Fx reserves has recorded an increase of US\$ 5.12 billion to reach US\$ 14.51 billion as on 30 June 2025 compared to US\$ 9.39 billion as on 30 June 2024.

This reflects a noticeable improvement in the country's current account balance and realization of planned inflows during the year.

FIA Lahore arrests human trafficker

LAHORE (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Lahore Zone has arrested a suspect involved in human trafficking and visa fraud during an ongoing crackdown against criminal elements exploiting citizens under the guise of overseas employment.

According to an FIA spokesperson, the accused, identified as Asim Tahir, was apprehended during a raid conducted in Lahore. The suspect was allegedly involved in collecting a total of Rs. 1.665 million from multiple individuals by falsely promising them employment opportunities in Saudi Arabia through fake work visas. However, he failed to send the victims abroad and later went into hiding.

Following his arrest, a formal investigation has been launched to probe the extent of the fraud and identify any possible accomplices.

9,485 air-conditioners given to hospitals

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has announced that a total of 9,485 air-conditioners have been distributed to tertiary care hospitals across the province by the Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Department.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the minister said the initiative aims to provide greater comfort to patients and enhance the overall working environment in government hospitals. He noted that the previous government had neglected the need for modern cooling systems in public healthcare facilities, leaving patients to suffer during extreme weather conditions. Khawaja Salman Rafique said that the distribution of air conditioners is a part of the Punjab Government's broader strategy to uplift public healthcare services under the leadership and vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

CM, Ethiopian Envoy discuss bilateral relations, trade cooperation



KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah met with Ethiopian Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula at the CM House and discussed the strengthening of bilateral relations and enhancing trade cooperation between Sindh, Pakistan, and Ethiopia.

Secretary to CM Zaman Narejo and Ethiopia's Honorary Consul General Ibrahim Khalid Tawab also participated in the meeting.

The Ethiopian ambassador praised the Sindh government's post-flood rehabilitation efforts, highlighting the swift and effective measures taken under the leadership of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto.

Dr Jamal also expressed appreciation for the development of Shahrah-e-

Bhutto in Karachi, recognizing its importance as a major artery that will play a key role in facilitating port traffic. Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah thanked friendly countries and donor agencies for their support in the flood relief and rehabilitation process. Both sides agreed to collaborate on cotton hybrid seed development, signaling a step forward in agricultural cooperation.

The meeting also acknowledged Chairman Bilawal Bhutto's diplomatic visits, with the Ethiopian ambassador extending an invitation to the Sindh CM to visit Ethiopia. The chief minister welcomed the invitation, noting that Ethiopia was just a four-hour flight from Karachi and expressing his intention

to visit soon.

Ethiopian envoy, Sindh Governor discussed expansion of bilateral ties and joint green initiative: Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula met with Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Wednesday to discuss expanding cooperation between Ethiopia and Pakistan in a range of key sectors including trade, investment, energy, aviation, and climate change.

During the meeting, both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral and multilateral engagement.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker shared details of Ethiopia's "Green Legacy

Initiative," launched this year by Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed under the theme "Renewal through Planting." He said that since 2019, Ethiopia has planted over 40 billion seedlings and aims to plant another 7.5 billion this year as part of efforts to improve food security, create jobs, and combat climate change.

To mark growing ties between the two nations, the Ethiopian Ambassador proposed a collaborative plantation and awareness campaign in Sindh titled "Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity under the Green Legacy Initiative." He expressed hope that this effort would serve as a symbol of environmental cooperation and shared commitment to sustainable development.

Governor Tessori welcomed the proposal and assured full support from the Governor House Sindh for launching the joint campaign in partnership with the Ethiopian Embassy. He stressed the need for greater public engagement in environmental initiatives and underscored the importance of people-to-people connections in building enduring international relations. He also acknowledged the steady progress in Ethiopia-Pakistan relations and called for enhanced collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

50,000 new houses completed under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's flagship housing initiative 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' is in full swing, marking a historic milestone in Punjab's development journey.

Under her leadership, a record-breaking target of more than 50,000 houses has been achieved by June 2025, setting a new national benchmark for low-cost housing construction in just a few months.

According to official figures, 51,911 home construction loans have been issued so far, amounting to Rs. 57.9 billion disbursed under the project. The initiative has already led to the completion of 5,293 houses, now occupied by families, while 41,324 more homes are currently under

construction at a rapid pace across the province.

The beneficiaries have widely hailed the project as a blessing for low- and middle-income families, praising its transparency, accessibility, and efficiency. For the first time in Punjab's history, citizens have been able to apply for home loans online, without needing to physically visit government offices or seek political recommendations.

CM Maryam Nawaz said, "Issuing home loans without any political influence or recommendation is an unprecedented step in Punjab's governance. The 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project is designed to create genuine ease and empowerment for the people." She added that every eligible applicant, regardless of

political affiliation, is receiving support under the program. "We have not only made history, we intend to break our own records," she added.

The CM credited the success of the initiative to the vision of PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, whose commitment to public service inspired this people-centric housing model. "While others made hollow slogans, we delivered homes for the people of Punjab," she remarked.

The 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' initiative is being recognized as a transformative step toward inclusive development, significantly contributing to housing accessibility, economic empowerment, and urban uplift in Punjab.

Minister honors sports journalists on World Sports Journalists day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of World Sports Journalists Day, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jihan, in his message on July 2, stated that this day holds immense significance for the promotion of sports, as it marks the founding of the International Sports Journalists Association.

He said that the day is celebrated with great enthusiasm around the world, including in Pakistan, with the aim of recognizing the professional contributions of sports journalists and highlighting their role in keeping the public informed about sporting events.

The Minister emphasized that sports are a symbol of a healthy society and by reporting on sports activities, journalists not only inspire youth towards constructive pursuits but also serve as a source of encouragement for national athletes.

He added that sports journalists are our eyes and voice on the field, who responsibly report every development taking place in the world of sports.

Syed Fakhar Jihan affirmed that the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa deeply values the services of the sports



media alongside its efforts to promote sports across the province.

He extended his heartfelt congratulations to all sports journalists on this occasion and expressed hope that through mutual cooperation, the government will successfully expand sporting activities to every corner of the province.

PREM Union praises Railways minister over 100-day performance

LAHORE (APP): President of the Pakistan Railway Employees (PREM) Union Sheikh Muhammad Anwar has praised Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi over his impressive performance during the first 100 days in office and the positive reforms introduced across Pakistan Railways.

In a meeting held on Wednesday at Railways Headquarters, a delegation from PREM Union, led by Sheikh Anwar, met the Railway Minister to discuss employee issues and departmental development. Pakistan Railways CEO and Senior General Manager Aamir Ali Baloch was also present.

During the session, Sheikh Anwar commended the minister's initiatives to restore the institution's dignity and rebuild trust among employees. He raised critical concerns including salary delays, stoppage of travel allowances (TA) since 2019, and the pending dues

of retired workers, urging immediate resolution.

The minister assured full support, stating, "I am fully aware of the problems faced by the employees," and pledged that salaries and pensions will be paid on time.

The PREM Union also demanded the restoration of key train services in Balochistan, especially the Akbar Bugti Express, to alleviate the sense of deprivation in the region and enhance travel facilities. In response, the Minister noted that several union demands, including the restoration of Khushhal Khan Khattak (ML-2), Lahore-Wazirabad via Narawal-Sialkot train, and the extension of the Musa Pak service to Dera Ghazi Khan, have already been addressed. He promised to work toward reviving the Akbar Bugti Express soon.

Sheikh Anwar hailed, for the first time in Pakistan's history, the close coordination between federal and provincial governments on

railway development projects, calling it a vital step toward modernizing the sector and improving public travel services.

Reaffirming his support for continued dialogue, the Federal Minister assured the union of his commitment to resolving institutional and employee-related issues. In return, Sheikh Anwar expressed PREM Union's full cooperation with the government for the betterment of Pakistan Railways.

PREM Union Chairman Ziauddin Ansari, Advocate Supreme Court, also welcomed the Minister's positive stance, emphasizing that all railway workers and officers remain committed—above regional or political divides—to improving and maintaining train operations across the country.

The delegation included Senior Vice President Abdul Qayyum Awan, Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry, and Deputy Secretary General Adnan Shakoor.

Peshawar administration launches operation against encroachments

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the instructions of Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Shahab Ali Shah, the Peshawar District Administration has launched a large-scale operation across the city to eliminate illegal encroachments, remove obstructions from water courses, improve sanitation, drainage, and traffic flow, and reclaim state-owned land from unlawful occupants.

As part of the operation, multiple anti-encroachment drives were conducted in different parts of the provincial capital, resulting in the recovery of government land worth millions of rupees.

Deputy Commissioner Peshawar,

Sarmed Salim Akram, informed the media on Wednesday that under the ongoing campaign to eradicate illegal constructions, restore water passages, and reclaim encroached public land, illegal structures built over drains in Kabootar Chowk were demolished using heavy machinery. This was done to improve drainage and protect citizens from potential issues during the monsoon season.

He further stated that in a several-hour-long operation near Namak Mandi Chowk, all permanent encroachments along the Hazarkhwani Canal were removed, and valuable government land worth millions of rupees was successfully reclaimed from illegal occupiers.

Similarly, an illegal parking

stand located to Naseerullah Babar Hospital on Kohat Road was also dismantled. Two individuals were arrested from the site, as the encroachment was hindering the movement of patients and ambulances.

The Deputy Commissioner appealed to the public to avoid encroaching upon drains, canals, state pathways, and government land. He urged citizens to comply with construction and civic regulations and cooperate with the administration in maintaining a clean, safe, and orderly environment.

He reiterated that the district administration will continue unbiased and immediate legal action against encroachments under its zero-tolerance policy.

U-23 squash champion Noor Zaman meets Sports Minister

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: World Under-23 Squash Champion Noor Zaman met with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jihan here at his office in Peshawar.

Noor Zaman, recently secured the U-23 World Championship title, a major achievement for Pakistan after several years.

During the meeting, Minister Syed Fakhar Jihan congratulated Noor Zaman on his remarkable success and presented him with a cash prize of Rs. 500,000 as a token of appreciation for bringing honor to the country and the province.

The minister lauded Noor Zaman's dedication and outstanding performance, assuring him of continued support.

"Insha'Allah, we will continue to support you in the



future as well," he stated.

Minister Fakhar Jihan encouraged all athletes to work hard and perform with excellence in sports events, emphasizing that the provincial government would continue to provide full support to talented players.

He further stated that under the vision of PTI

founder Chairman Imran Khan and Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, the KP government is committed to promoting sports and athletes.

"We are taking every possible step to uplift the sports sector and ensure our province excels at the national and international level," he added.

IHC suspends CDA fine on 'rehriiban'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday suspended the order of CDA for imposing Rs30,000 fine on a 'rehriiban' and directed petitioner's lawyer to prepare licenses draft and submit to CDA for approval.

Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard the case related to the renewal of licenses of licensed 'rehriibaans'.

During the hearing, lawyers Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chatha appeared on behalf of the petitioners, while the Special Magistrate and lawyers from the CDA were also in attendance.

Advocate Imaan Mazari said that a warning had to be given for the first violation but a fine of Rs 30,000 was imposed, on which Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan said that the petitioner can file an appeal against the fine order at the relevant forum.

PDMA Punjab issues alert on rising river water levels

LAHORE (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab has issued an alert regarding a potential rise in water levels in all major rivers across the province, coinciding with the start of a strong monsoon spell expected from July 6.

According to the statement released on Wednesday, the water levels in major rivers and their adjoining streams may begin to increase from July 7.

There is a significant risk of flash flooding in riverbeds, particularly in Dera Ghazi Khan division, due to heavy rainfall. The alert also highlights the danger of urban flooding

in major cities and the possibility of landslides in vulnerable areas of Murree and Galiyat.

Director General PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia has urged farmers to take necessary precautions in light of the forecast and follow all official instructions. He has instructed Deputy Commissioners across Punjab to remain vigilant and ensure that all relevant departments are prepared to respond to any emergencies that may arise.

The PDMA has activated its provincial control room along with district emergency operation centers, which are now on high alert. DG Irfan Ali Kathia emphasized

that rescue agencies, including Rescue 1122, must keep their equipment and staff ready for action, as the situation is being monitored round the clock.

Citizens have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel during bad weather and not to reside in dilapidated buildings, which have led to an increase in accidents and roof collapse incidents. Special care should be taken to keep children away from stagnant water in low-lying areas, and people are warned to avoid open spaces during lightning and thunder. For assistance during emergencies, citizens can contact the PDMA helpline at 1129.



Federation excludes 2 projects of KP from energy plan:

KP govt expresses concern, exclusion from IGCEP plan injustice

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has expressed concern over the federal government's lack of cooperation in energy projects and the exclusion of two important ongoing hydropower projects from the IGCEP Plan 2025-35, calling it a retaliatory action against the province. The provincial government has announced a strong protest at the highest forum against the said move.

In this regard, in a letter

addressed to Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Owais Ahmed Leghari, Special Assistant to CM, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Energy Engr. Tariq Sadozai has written that two hydropower projects in Swat district, Gabral Kalam Power Project, 88 MW and Maden Power Project, 157 MW, are being implemented with the financial support of World Bank in province, launched under KHRE program, which is scheduled to be completed in 2027.

Moreover, the said projects to generate cheap electricity with a total capacity of 245 MW, which was previously included in IGCEP Plan 2021-30 and 2022-31 through a Committed resolution, was included in plan with the consent of ECNEC, CCI, and NEPRA. However, its exclusion from the IGCEP 2025-35 in review plan has been declared a complete injustice of federation.

Sadozai also mentioned in letter that the exclusion of said projects through

system operator is constitutionally illegal, the federal government has been asked to review the decision. The provincial government has declared that Mohmand Dam, Dasu, Tarbela Extension 5 under the supervision of the federal government have also been declared committed in IGCEP, therefore, 2 important projects of the province should also be included in the program and allowed to be completed successfully, he concluded.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Pir Musavir Khan speaking with delegations from Chitral and other districts at his office.

Fuel costs soar despite global drop, says Sabir Hussain Awan



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sabir Hussain Awan, former MNA and General Secretary Jamaat-e-Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Central, strongly criticized the government's recent increase in petrol

and diesel prices, calling it an "unjust burden on struggling citizens."

Speaking at a meeting of party officials in Peshawar, Awan said the price hike is unjustifiable, especially as global oil prices have declined.

He accused the government of shifting the cost of foreign loans obtained on "harsh conditions" from the IMF, World Bank, and other lenders onto the public through repeated increases in fuel, electricity, and gas rates.

Awan warned that the rise in fuel prices will lead to higher transport and food costs, fueling a new wave of inflation.

"People are already grappling with record inflation, and this decision will make daily life even harder," he said.

Highlighting what he called a double standard, Awan pointed out that the current prime minister had once called for a significant reduction in fuel prices when in opposition. He urged the government to revise fuel prices in line with international markets and provide immediate relief to the public.

KP signs MoU with China's DBN Group

F.P. report

PESHAWAR: In a significant step toward transforming Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into a hub of scientific and agricultural advancement, Dr. Shafiq Ayaz, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Science and Information Technology, visited China at the invitation of the Chinese government.

During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and China's DBN Group to establish a cutting-edge Agricultural Technology Demonstration Base in the province.

Special Assistant to chief Minister Dr Shafiq Ayaz held a high-level meeting in Beijing with representatives from DBN Group and the Zhongguncun Talent Association. Discussions centered on collaboration in modern agricultural models, Biological Artificial Intelligence, and Smart Agriculture, aiming to boost agricultural productivity and innovation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This historic agreement aligns with the vision of Chairman Imran Khan and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to drive scientific progress, achieve agricultural self-sufficiency, and promote digital innovation in the province.

The initiative is expected to position Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a leader in sustainable agriculture and technological advancement in the region.

KP police ensuring foolproof security for Muharram: IG

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulfiqar Hameed, has stated that foolproof security arrangements have been finalized for Muharram. Speaking to The Frontier Post correspondent, he confirmed that over 50,000 personnel have been deployed across the province, with operations being monitored from the central command in Peshawar.

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

Speaking on the security situation in the southern region, he acknowledged

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

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

Radio broadcasts suspended for 15 days

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Radio Pakistan Peshawar's high-power transmitter in Chugalpura has been without electricity for the past 15 days. The alleged reason is a delay in the payment of the electricity bill. As a result of this serious situation, Radio Pakistan's broadcasts have been completely suspended—a deeply alarming development that goes against national interests.

At a time when Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is facing a new wave of terrorism, the suspension of broadcasts from a national institution like Radio Pakistan not only harms public awareness but also severely affects the dissemination of

the state narrative, the National Action Plan, and crucial security-related information.

Radio Pakistan, particularly for remote and sensitive regions, is the only reliable source of information that keeps the public informed about the national stance, official instructions, and verified news.

Its silence is creating a vacuum that can be filled by rumors, misleading propaganda, and unverified sources.

It is evident that this issue is not merely a financial dispute—it is directly linked to national security, the public's right to information, and state sovereignty.

The Government of Pakistan, especially the

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, must take immediate notice of this situation. Electricity supply to Radio Pakistan Peshawar should be restored immediately to resume continuous broadcasting.

Disciplinary action should be taken against PESCO officials who acted without considering national security requirements. An emergency coordination and protection system must be established for all such national institutions to prevent such negligence in the future.

Radio Pakistan is not only "The Voice of Pakistan" but also the fourth pillar of the state. Its silence is, in fact, a sign of collective institutional failure.

'Timber auction to be held soon in Chakdara Timber Market'

F.P. Report

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

He expressed these

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

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

While speaking with the delegation from Chitral, Pir Musavir Khan stated that instructions have been issued to the relevant authorities for the early auction of timber in the Chakdara Timber Market.

He said that the auction will benefit not only the government but also individuals associated with the timber business and local residents. He also assured the delegation of a swift resolution of other issues.

Later, while speaking to other delegations, Pir Musavir Khan said that the provincial government believes in practical measures. He highlighted that a "Green Budget" has been presented for the fiscal year 2025-26 in line with the vision of founding chairman Imran Khan. Billions of rupees have been allocated

in the budget to make the province greener and to tackle the impacts of climate change.

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

He stated that tree planting is a guarantee of a healthy environment for future generations.

Indus Highway condition: High Court taken notice

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court has taken notice of the deplorable condition of the Indus Highway and has summoned officials from the National Highway Authority and other relevant departments to appear before the court, on Wednesday.

A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Syed Muhammad Atique Shah and Justice Faheem Wali heard the case.

The Chief Justice expressed concern over the loss of precious lives on the highway due to the negligence of authorities. He

remarked that the highway resembles a jungle, with no regard for citizen safety.

The court summoned NHA officials, including the representative of the authority, to appear before the court today.

The court directed the NHA and other authorities to submit a detailed report on the current state of the highway and the measures being taken to improve it.

PHC directed the authorities to provide a comprehensive plan to address the issues on the Indus Highway and ensure the safety of citizens.

The court adjourned the hearing until today.

ANP challenges reserved seats allocation at PHC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Awami National Party (ANP) has filed a petition in the Peshawar High Court challenging the allocation of reserved seats by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The petition names the ECP and the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly as respondents.

The ANP claims that the party is entitled to two reserved seats based on its performance in the general elections and a by-election in Bajaur. However, the ECP has only allocated one seat to the party.

The ANP objects to the ECP's methodology for allocating reserved seats, arguing that it is not in accordance with the law.

The ANP had previously approached the ECP with its grievances but was not heard, the petition stated.

Amjad Ali visit Work One project

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Housing Dr. Amjad Ali visited the multi-storey residential and commercial project, Work One, in Peshawar, managed by the Provincial Housing Authority.

The Director General PHA and officers concerned were also present. The Special Assistant on Housing was informed in the briefing that the project is being constructed at a cost of Rs 2 billion, which consists of a total of 13 floors, out of which 10 floors will be used for residential purposes while 3 floors will be used for commercial activities.

The residential floors consist of a total of 160 flats of different sizes.

The briefing further informed that out of the total flats of the Warsak One project, 49 percent are reserved for government employees while 51 percent are reserved for common citizens.

He said that the Housing Department is taking steps to eliminate the residential issues. He said that public takes interest in land sharing which is very transparent and easier.

Dr. Amjad Ali said that 45 percent of the work on the well equipped with all modern facilities housing scheme has been completed, while this will be completed by October 2026.

KP reports 5 suicide attacks

PESHAWAR (APP): KP has witnessed 5 suicide bombings and 756 terrorism-related cases in the first six months of 2025, according to a semi-annual report released by CPO on Wednesday.

The report said a troubling security situation across the province, with a rise in militant activities including kidnappings, extortion, and bombings.

The figures highlight that 5 suicide attacks have been reported so far this year, while 756 terrorism cases registered in various police stations.

Law Minister condemns Bajaur blast

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Law Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Aftab Alam Advocate, has condemned the recent bomb blast in Bajaur as a tragic and inhumane act, expressing deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives.

He extended his condolences to the families of the victims and prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the attack.

In an official statement, the minister said that terrorists were enemies of

humanity who deliberately targeted unarmed civilians.

He described such acts as a cancer for the nation and stated that the country remained united in its resolve to confront and eliminate terrorism.

The attack, according to the minister, was part of a broader agenda aimed at destabilizing Pakistan. However, he stressed that these cowardly acts would not weaken the morale of the Pakistani people.

He further noted that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had made

extraordinary sacrifices in the ongoing struggle against terrorism, adding that these sacrifices would not be in vain.

The minister reaffirmed that the provincial government, in close coordination with the country's security forces, was fully committed to eradicating the menace of terrorism.

The Law Minister expressed hope that peace would soon be restored across the province and reiterated the government's determination to eliminate terrorism from the region

entirely.

Meanwhile, the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Forests, Environment, Wildlife, and Climate Change, Pir Musavir Khan, strongly condemned the bomb blast in Nawagai, Bajaur, targeting the Assistant Commissioner's vehicle.

He expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of the Assistant Commissioner, Tehsilard, and other personnel in the blast.

In a statement issued from here, Pir Musavir

Khan said that the sacrifices made by the martyrs, including the officers and police personnel, would not go in vain.

He emphasized that no religion, including Islam, permits such acts of violence.

The Special Assistant prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and for the swift recovery of the injured.

He further stated that the provincial government stands in solidarity with the grieving families during this time of sorrow.

World Sports Journalists Day marked by KP Sports Writers Association:

Role of Sports Journalists vital in promoting games, says Qamar Zaman

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former World Squash Champion and legend Qamar Zaman has said that celebrating World Sports Journalists Day through the joint efforts of the Pakistan Sports Writers Federation and Sports Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a commendable initiative.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held in Peshawar to mark the occasion.

Like other parts of the country and the world, World Sports Journalists Day was celebrated in Peshawar with the collaboration of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports Writers Association and Pakistan Sports Writers Federation.

Acting President of the Sports Writers Association Imran Yousafzai, Secretary General Shahid Afridi, Shakeel-ur-Rehman, Arshad

Dar, Qadir Khan, Hashim Khan, Ijaz Butt, Kaleem Qureshi, Azmatullah, Farhan Khalil along with KP Police Cricket Team Coach Muhammad Tanveer and many association members were present at the event.

Qamar Zaman congratulated all participants and highlighted the significant role of the media in sports promotion. Back in the 1970s, we were advised to bring media and sponsors together to support sports. I was also part of the foundation of the KP Sports Writers Association and today as sports move into the digital era the role of sports writers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in bringing athletes to the forefront is truly admirable, he added.

Earlier Acting President Imran Yousafzai and Secretary General Shahid Afridi said that World Sports Journalists Day has been observed globally



since 1994. The purpose of this day is to acknowledge the efforts of sports journalists, appreciate their services and inspire the younger generation to pursue careers in sports journalism, they said. They

emphasized that in today's digital age it is essential for sports journalists to adapt to modern tools and trends. Alongside the government's support media coverage has played a vital role in reviving and developing

sports grounds across the country, they added.

It is worth mentioning that World Sports Journalists Day are being held regularly in Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, and Karachi.



In brief

Reforms at Tank DHQ Hospital
F.P. Report

TANK: Medical Superintendent Dr. Israr-ul-Haq on Wednesday announced a decisive end to the long-standing proxy culture at DHQ Hospital Tank, declaring that the era of drawing government salaries without attending duty is over. Addressing a meeting of medical officers, he made it clear that employees unwilling to perform their responsibilities should seek transfers elsewhere. Dr. Israr stressed that ensuring the presence of hospital staff will no longer operate under outdated and ineffective practices. He pledged to restore the true functional identity of the hospital. He revealed that significant improvements have already been initiated, including the installation of clean and cool drinking water facilities, an upgraded sanitation system, and the transparent procurement of medicines through open bidding for the first time in the hospital's history. A digital patient record system has also been introduced to ensure accountability and enhance service delivery. Emergency patients, he added, will now be treated within the hospital premises with all necessary facilities available, reducing the need for referrals to other cities. Dr. Israr reaffirmed his commitment to delivering on the responsibilities assigned by the government, aiming to make DHQ Hospital Tank a model of efficient and patient-focused healthcare.

Sahiwal Medical College meeting
F.P. Report

SAHIWAL: The first meeting of the Board of Management of Sahiwal Medical College Sahiwal was held in the main conference room of the college, in which Principal Sahiwal Medical College Professor Dr. Muhammad Akhtar, Board Members Sheikh Basharat Nadeem, Lt. Col. (ret'd) Dr. Fawzia Mazhar and Naseem Sadiq attended. MS Sahiwal Teaching Hospital Dr. Yadhullah was also present in the meeting. The meeting discussed in detail various issues related to improving health facilities in Sahiwal, management of the hospital and making the educational and administrative performance of the college more effective. The participants expressed their determination that all available resources will be utilized to provide quality medical facilities to the people of Sahiwal and every possible step will be taken to make the institution exemplary. Meanwhile, Commissioner Sahiwal Division Dr. Asif Tufail has issued instructions to prepare a comprehensive plan under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Sahiwal to further improve the provision of urban facilities and to solve the sewage problems for a long-term solution in view of the monsoon season. He was presiding over a meeting held in his office to review the performance of the PSAP program and the Municipal Corporation. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Shahid Mahmood, Additional Commissioner Coordination Dr. Saifullah Bhatti, Director Development and Finance Shafiq Ahmed Dogar, Chief Officer Corporation Sheikh Ashfaq Ahmed and other relevant officers. Dr. Asif Tufail said that during the monsoon rains, machinery and staff should be kept on high alert to prevent urban flooding and immediate drainage should be ensured in low-lying areas.

Saif: Legal practice & journalism noble services for society



Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Advisor to Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, has said that the legal profession is not merely a career but a noble public service and an effective tool for ensuring justice and upholding the rule of law in society. He said that young lawyers, if they adopt service, integrity, and professional ethics as their guiding principles, will achieve great success and earn the respect of society.

He was addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of the District Bar Association Mardan as the chief guest. The event was attended by a large number of lawyers, representatives from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council, civil society members, and other dignitaries. On this occasion, Barrister Dr. Saif stated that the demand of Rs 10 Million as grant for the District Bar will soon be taken up with the Chief Minister for approval. Barrister Dr. Saif congratulated the newly elected cabinet and reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to resolving the long-standing issues faced by lawyers across the province.

He said that progress on key demands such as the construction of the Mardan Judicial Complex, provision of sheds for junior lawyers, solarization of Bar Rooms, and financial grants will be made soon. Barrister Dr. Saif emphasized that creating a conducive and enabling environment for the legal community remains a top priority of the provincial government. Responding to the demands presented in the vote of thanks, he urged the Bar Councils to develop comprehensive skill development programs for young lawyers to help mitigate their financial challenges and enable them to fulfill their professional responsibilities effectively. The Advisor praised the District Bar

Association Mardan for its continuous struggle for the supremacy of the Constitution, strengthening of democracy, and ensuring timely and affordable justice for the citizens. Meanwhile, Barrister Dr. Saif also visited TeElected tam, where he administered the oath to the newly elected cabinet of the Rustam Press Club.

Addressing local journalists, Barrister Dr. Saif said that free, responsible, and professional journalism is the cornerstone of any democratic society. He highlighted that the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is fully committed to strengthening this foundation and is taking all necessary steps in this regard. He lauded the role of local journalists in highlighting community issues, raising the voice of the people at government forums, and contributing to the achievement of developmental goals.

Appreciating the dedication and professionalism of Rustam Press Club journalists, he said their hard work is commendable. Barrister Saif reiterated that media freedom and editorial independence are essential for democratic stability, and the government remains fully committed to safeguarding these principles. He urged local journalists to continue their role in promoting good governance and social reforms through positive criticism and constructive reporting. At the conclusion of the event, President Rustam Press Club, Atiq-ur-Rehman, thanked Barrister Saif for his official visit and acknowledged the provincial government's ongoing efforts for journalists' welfare and resolution of their issues. He expressed hope that the government would continue its practical steps for the betterment of the journalistic community in the future. Atiq-ur-Rehman further assured that Rustam Press Club would persist in its mission of responsible journalism, highlighting public issues and contributing positively towards the area's development.

Relief in power cut announced for Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: A high-level meeting held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner to resolve electricity issues brought good news for the public regarding a reduction in load shedding by two hours.

During the meeting, the load of the grade station was increased to 230 amperes after the Executive Engineer contacted the SE who approved the relief package. This step will help reduce the load shedding period by two hours, XEN announced. The meeting was also attended by ADC Relief Syed Akram Shah, ADC General Waaseem Akhtar, AC Gadzi Nasir Ali Khan, AAC Dagar Naveed

Khan, Xen PESCO Ikram Khan, SDO Sub-Division One and SDO Sub-Division Two and Grade Station In-charge. The meeting was attended by Nazim Gadzi Salarzi Sher Alam Khan, Nazim Dagar Haji Rozi Khan, Nazim Chagharzi Haji Sharif Khan, Syed Muammar Bacha from Mandnar and MNA Barrister Gohar Khan's focal person Dayal Mulk and Afsar Khan of Sultanwas from Gadezai, Wali Rehman Qaribur Rahman Saeedur Rehman Ali Rehman from Salarzai, Musa Jan from Ashezai and Khurshed Khan from Marble Association. They mentioned the problems faced by the people due to electricity load shedding,

low voltage over billing. XEN and SDOs, including the Grade Station In-charge, assured them of providing all possible cooperation and providing relief to the people in this heat and assured them of taking steps to resolve many other problems.

Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayum while concluding appealed elected members and the Jirga elders and local elders to provide moral support and full support in the immediate removing of trees under the main line, prevention of electricity theft, recovery of arrears, installation of large electricity posts and other reforms, to which the local elders participating in the meeting responded positively.

Rescue 1122, Khyber issues monthly performance report

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: District Emergency Officer (DEO), Eng Sharaq Riaz Khattak on Tuesday issued a monthly performance report for the month of June, 2025 and said that the Rescue 1122 Khyber provided services during 319 general and 124 referral emergencies and saved precious human life and their properties.

According to the performance report the Rescue 1122 Khyber received 12973 calls among which

12654 were informative and drop calls. The DEO said that the Rescue 1122 Khyber timely responded to the emergencies.

During the last month rescue services were provided in 36 road accidents, 224 medical emergencies, 16 fire incidents, 17 firing/quarrels happens, 02 drowned and 24 other recovery cases, he added. As per the direction of the health experts 124 patients were shifted (inside and outside of the district) to health centers under the

supervision of trained crew members for necessary medical treatment, the report stated.

Awareness and training sessions were organized in schools, masonries colleges, government departments and other community centers to sensitize the participants of life saving techniques. Keeping in view the severe hot wave to be graped the area and flood season, Rescue 1122, Khyber conducted drills to exhibit their abilities during natural disasters.

Naib Tehsildar arrested

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: An investigation was underway in the Anti-Corruption Establishment Toba Tek Singh against Naib Tehsildar Ameer Ali Khan posted in Pir Mahal for preparing fake documents of 39 kanals of land and there was also a case number 439/22 against Naib Tehsildar Ameer Ali Khan in the Anti-Corruption Establishment Toba Tek Singh.

Further investigation was against underway. After the investigation proved the crime, the Anti-Corruption

Toba Tek Singh arrested Naib Tehsildar Ameer Ali Khan.

Security plan finalized for Muharram: Foolproof security arrangements have been finalized across Toba Tek Singh for the 7th of Muharram, following the directives of District Police Officer (DPO). A total of 46 processions and 53 Majalis will be held throughout the district. Of these, 4 processions have been classified as Category A, 12 as Category B, and the remaining as Category C. Among the Majalis, 3 are Category A while 50 fall under Category C. According to official details, 5 processions and 12 Majalis will take place in the Toba circle. These include 2 processions and 4 Majalis in the jurisdiction of City Police Station, 3 processions and 3 Majalis in Saddar Toba, and 3 in Chutiana. In Kamalia circle, 28 processions and 13 Majalis are scheduled, including 17 processions and 7 Majalis in City Kamalia, 5 processions and 2 Majalis in Saddar Kamalia, and 6 processions and 4 Majalis in Bhussi.

Minor drowns to death in flash flood
Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: A 12-year-old boy tragically drowned in a flash flood while crossing a nullah (stream) in Nowshera's Pir Piai area during heavy rainfall. The boy, son of Yasin, slipped and fell into the swollen nullah, and despite rescue efforts, he was pronounced dead.

The Rescue 1122 team, including divers, quickly responded to the incident and arrived at the scene. The diver team recovered the boy's body from the nullah 10 minutes after arriving. The body was taken to a nearby hospital for an autopsy.

Meanwhile, a rickshaw driver was allegedly lured, intoxicated, and robbed of his vehicle, cash, and mobile phone in the premises of Nizampur area of Nowshera district. The victim named Asad Khan, received a call asking him to transport goods. When he arrived at the specified location, he was given an intoxicating substance, rendering him unconscious. The perpetrators stole his loader rickshaw, Rs. 10,000 in cash, and a valuable mobile phone. Police has registered a case and initiated an investigation into the incident.

Wife killed, husband injured
F.P. Report

MARDAN: Old enmity claimed life of a married woman and serious injuries to her husband when their alleged rivals opened firing over them near Akbar Darul-Uloom in the limits of Sheikh Maltoon Town police Station.

The officials of the relevant Police Station said that their preliminary investigations revealed that the couple was on their way home when the two alleged killers riding on a motorcycle opened fire on them, causing instant death to the woman while her husband sustained critical wounds on his head. The accused had fled the scene soon after committing the murder crime.

The police said that the slain woman was identified as Mst Nabeeya, 40, and the injured person as Naem, 19. The rescue-1122 officials had taken both the dead body of the woman and her injured husband to Mardan Medical Complex Hospital for relevant medico-legal procedure.

The police had lodged an FIR on the complaint of Syed Wali, father of the injured person, who nominated two brothers in the murdered case as accused identified as Ziyad and Ashraf. Both the victims and accused were hailing from Rustam Tehsil.

The complainant cited old enmity as reason behind the said incident between both the rivals groups. After registration of FIR, the officials of Sheikh Maltoon Town police station said that they began further investigations into the case as well as accelerated their efforts to arrest the alleged killers promptly.

Officers suspended
F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has suspended eight district health officers (DHOs) for alleged substandard performance and negligence, disrupting healthcare services across multiple districts.

A notification issued by the provincial Health Department cited poor/unsatisfactory performance and negligence in discharge of official duties resulting in disruption of healthcare services as reasons for the suspensions. The action was taken under Section 6 of the Balochistan Employees' Efficiency and Disciplinary Act (BEEDA) 2011.

The suspended DHOs represent districts across Balochistan, including Chaghi, Kachhi, Jhal Magsi, Killa Saifullah, Loralai, Sibi, Dera Bugti, and Killa Abdullah. The notification lists the names and designations of each suspended officer. The affected DHOs have been instructed to report to the Health Department.

JI protests against fuel price hike, power outages

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) held protesting demonstrations across all nine districts of Malakand Division against the recent surge in petrol and diesel prices, prolonged load shedding, and excessive penalties imposed on the business community.

The protests were held on the call of Inayatullah Khan, JI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North Ameer. A large number of people from different walks of life participated in the rallies and strongly criticized the government's "anti-people" policies.

Inayatullah Khan led a protest rally in Upper Dir and, while addressing the gathering, said that the continuous increase in fuel and electricity prices has become intolerable for the common man. "Every day a new petrol bomb is dropped on the public. Inflation has crushed ordinary citizens, and the ruling elite is busy issuing meaningless statements from their palaces,"

he said. Referring to the Swat tragedy and widespread load shedding, he said both incidents are proof of the government's inefficiency and failure. He called Jamaat-e-Islami the true voice of Malakand's people, vowing to continue raising public issues on every platform.

Other JI district and local leaders also addressed the protesters and condemned what they called the government's unjust economic decisions. They said the unannounced and prolonged load shedding has crippled businesses and made life unbearable for the public. They also criticized the heavy fines and raids imposed on traders, terming them a deliberate attempt to suppress the business community.

The JI leadership demanded immediate cuts in fuel prices, an end to load shedding, and the withdrawal of unfair penalties on shopkeepers. They warned that failure to act would result in expanding

the protest movement across the province and the country.

In Lower Dir, Jamaat-e-Islami held a major protest rally in Timergara against prolonged power outages and rising electricity tariffs. Protesters marched on foot from Balambat to Gorgori Chowk, chanting slogans against WAPDA and the federal government.

Speaking at the rally, JI Lower Dir Ameer and former MNA Maulana Asadullah Khan, General Secretary Shoab Ahmad, Information Secretary Malik Sher Bahadar Khan, and Engineer Yaqoobur Rahman said the unannounced load shedding has pushed people into mental and physical distress, disrupted daily life, and paralyzed businesses.

They demanded the early completion of the Koto Hydropower Project and called on the government to provide electricity from the project to Lower Dir and other Malakand districts on a priority basis.

Court convicts murderer for 25 years imprisonment

F.P. Report

KARAK: Additional Sessions Judge Takht Nusrati Muhammad Fayyaz sentenced the murderer to 25 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs 3 lakh. Renowned lawyer Fazal Hayat Advocate followed the case on behalf of the deceased.

According to the details, on July 3, 2018 at 8:30 am, the accused Jahangir son of Gul Bat Khan, who killed the serving Assistant Warrant Officer Asl Mir son of Daulat Mir, resident of Chokara, in broad daylight, was sentenced to 25 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 3 lakh.

Pre-monsoon preparation meeting held: An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Karak Shakeel Ahmed Jan regarding advance preparations for monsoon rains. In which Additional Deputy Commissioners (General) and Relief, Assistant Commissioners, Rescue 1122, Health, Education, Irrigation, Local Government and other concerned officers participated.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief gave a detailed briefing to the meeting on the advance contingency plan to deal with possible emergencies. Deputy Commissioner Karak directed that identification of low-lying areas, improvement of drainage

and monitoring of storm drains be given top priority. He further directed that an advance contingency plan should be prepared in consultation with the concerned departments to effectively deal with any emergency situation arising from possible rains and all available resources should be utilized to save the citizens from difficulties.

Residents held protest in favor of their demands: A protest demonstration by the elders of Takht Nusrati Tehsil at Hamidan Chowk, the protest was called off after successful negotiations with DC Karak.

According to the details, the residents of Takht Nusrati Tehsil staged a protest demonstration at Hamidan Chowk and completely blocked the Indus Highway. The demonstration was held in opposition to the shifting of the local tehsil courts to the under-construction Karak Joint Judicial Complex.

The protesters expressed serious concerns that the shifting of the courts would cause severe hardship to the people of the area, including increased travel time and legal expenses. As soon as the incident was reported, Deputy Commissioner Karak Shakeel Ahmed Jan, along with Sub-Divisional Police Officer Takht Nusrati, reached the spot on his own and held successful negotiations with the protesters.

Commissioner inspects

Two traffic personnel shot killed in Lakki

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Two traffic police constables were martyred when armed men opened fire on them near Gulbaz dehqan area here on Tuesday.

A police official identified the deceased cops as Sanauallah and Israel and said that they were going to Tajazai Chowk on a motorcycle to perform duty there. "The armed terrorists fled the place on a motorcycle", he maintained. He said that the bodies were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital at Tajazai to conduct a post mortem examination.

"The deceased were buried with full official honour at a graveyard in Tor Lawangkhel area", he added. Soon after the attack, the police reached the area and launched a search for the attackers.

Meanwhile, elders of Koh-i-Maidan have said that they are ready to extend full support to the police and other law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order and purge the remote areas of Karak district from miscreants and anti-peace elements.

The assurance to his effect was given at a meeting held at the dis-

trict police offices in Karak on Tuesday with Regional Police Officer Kohat Abbas Majeed Marwat in the chair. DPO Shahbaz Elahi, SP Investigation Muhammad Ashfaq Khan and Sub Divisional Police Officers were also present.

The elders told the officials that they wanted peace on their soil and would not allow miscreants to use their land for carrying out subversive acts. "Though maintenance of peace is the prime duty of police, the elders and local residents will also fulfill their responsibility in this regard", they affirmed.

Brother shot kills sister

F.P. Report

LARKANA: In village Madd Bahu near Taluka Bakrani of Larkana district, elder brother Nadeem Heshbani shot his young sister, 18-year-old, on the spot on suspicion of misconduct.

On receiving such information, the police of Bakrani reached the police station and inquired about the details, took the body and handed it over to the heirs after conducting a post-mortem from Dokri Hospital. When the body of the deceased woman reached her home, an atmosphere of mourning was created. Meanwhile, the heirs

have registered a murder case against the accused Nadeem Heshbani at Bakrani police station under case number 51/2025. On the other hand, DIG Police Larkana has taken notice of the incident and ordered the immediate arrest of the accused involved.

SUCP organizes more than 2800 Majlis: Under the patronage of Qaid-e-Millat Jafariya Pakistan Hazrat Ayatollah Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi and under the supervision of Shia Ulama Council Pakistan (SUCP) Central General Secretary and Chairman Zahra Academy Karachi, Allama Dr. Shabbir-ul-Hassan Maisami, more than 2800

Ashra majlis have been organized across Pakistan on the occasion of Muharram 1447 AH.

These majlis have been organized in various areas of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and districts of Sindh such as Larkana, Qambar, Shahdadkot, Jhal Magsi, Qubo Saeed Khan, Shahdadkot, Sukkur, Dadu, Usta Muhammad, Dera Murad Jamali, Nawab Shah, including small and big cities and villages of the country. In these gatherings, preachers are traveling from far and wide and are playing an important and effective role in spreading the message.



GAZA: Palestinian children line up to receive a hot meal at a food distribution point in Nuseirat.

Philippines biodiversity hotspot pushes back on mining

MANILA (AFP): A nickel stockpile towers over farmer Moharen Tambiling's rice paddy in the Philippines' Palawan, evidence of a mining boom that locals hope a new moratorium will tame. "They told us before the start of their operations that it wouldn't affect us, but the effects are undeniable now," Tambiling told AFP.

"Pangolins, warthogs, birds are disappearing. Flowers as well." A biodiversity hotspot, Palawan also holds vast deposits of nickel, needed for everything from stainless steel to electric vehicles. Once the world's largest exporter of the commodity, the Philippines is now racing to catch up with Indonesia. In 2021, Manila lifted a nine-year ban on mining licences. Despite promised jobs and tax revenue, there is growing push-back against the sector in Palawan. In March, the island's governing council unanimously passed a 50-year moratorium on any new mining permits.

"Flash floods, the siltation of the sea, fisheries, mangrove areas... We are witnesses to the effects of long-term mining," Nieves Rosento, a former local councillor who led the push, told AFP. Environmental rights lawyer Grizelda Mayo-Anda said the moratorium could stop nearly 70 proposed projects spanning 240,000 hectares. "You have to protect the old-growth forest, and it's not being done," she said. From 2001 to 2024, Palawan—dubbed the country's "last

ecological frontier" -- lost 219,000 hectares of tree cover, more than any other province, in part due to mining, according to Global Forest Watch. In southern Palawan's Brooke's Point, a Chinese ship at a purpose-built pier waits for ore from the stockpile overlooking Tambiling's farm.

Mining company Ipilán says increased production will result in greater royalties for Indigenous people and higher tax revenues, but that means little to Tambiling's sister Alayma. The single mother-of-six once made 1,000-5,000 pesos (\$18-90) a day selling lobster caught where the pier now sits. "We were surprised when we saw backhoes digging up the shore," she told AFP, calling a one-time compensation offer of 120,000 pesos (\$2,150) insulting. "The livelihood of all the Indigenous peoples depended on that area." On the farm, Tambiling stirred rice paddy mud to reveal reddish laterite he says is leaking from the ore heap and poisoning his crops.

Above him, swathes of the Mantalingahan mountains have been deforested, producing floods he describes as "fearsome, deep and fast-moving." Ipilán has faced protests and legal challenges over its logging, but its operations continue. Calls to parent company Global Ferronickel Holdings were not returned. For some in Palawan, the demand for nickel to power EVs has a certain irony. "You may be able to...

eliminate pollution using electric vehicles," said Jeminda Bartolome, an anti-mining advocate.

"But you should also study what happens to the area you are mining," In Bataraza, the country's oldest nickel mine is expanding, having secured permission before the moratorium. Rio Tuba employees armed with brooms, goggles, hats and scarves are barely visible through reddish dust as they sweep an access road that carries 6,000 tonnes of ore destined for China each day. Company senior vice president Jose Bayani Baylon said mining turned a barely accessible malarial swamp into a "first-class municipality". "You have an airport, you have a port, you have a community here. You have a hospital, you have infrastructure which many other communities don't have," he told AFP.

He dismisses environmental concerns as overblown. With part of its concession tapped out, the company is extending into an area once off-limits to logging but since rezoned. Thousands of trees have been cleared since January, according to locals, but Baylon said "under the law, for every tree you cut, you have to plant 100". The company showed AFP a nine-hectare plot it spent 15 years restoring with native plants. But it is unclear to what degree that will be replicated. Baylon concedes some areas could become solar farms instead.

Snake on a plane delays a flight in Australia

MELBOURNE (AP): An Australian domestic flight was delayed for two hours after a stowaway snake was found in the plane's cargo hold, officials said. The snake was found as passengers were boarding Virgin Australia Flight VA337 at Melbourne Airport bound for Brisbane, according to snake catcher Mark Pelley. The snake turned out to be a harmless 60-centimeter (2-foot) green tree snake. But Pelley said he thought it could be venomous when he approached it in the darkened hold.

"It wasn't until after I caught the snake that I realized that it wasn't venomous. Until that point, it looked very dangerous to me," Pelley said. Most of the world's most venomous snakes are native to Australia. When Pelley entered the cargo hold, the snake was half hidden behind a panel and could have disappeared deeper into the plane. Pelley said he told an aircraft engineer and airline staff that they would have to evacuate the aircraft if the snake disappeared inside the plane. "I said to them if I don't get this in one shot, it's going to sneak through the panels and you're going to have to evacuate the plane because at that stage I did not know what kind of snake it was," Pelley said. "But thankfully, I got it on the first try and captured it," Pelley added. "If I didn't get it that first time, the engineers and I would be pulling apart a (Boeing) 737 looking for a snake still right now."

Pelley said he had taken 30 minutes to drive to the airport and was then delayed by security before he could reach the airliner. An airline official said the flight was delayed around two hours. Because the snake is native to the Brisbane region, Pelley suspects it came aboard inside a passenger's luggage and escaped during the two-hour flight from Brisbane to Melbourne. For quarantine reasons, the snake can't be returned to the wild. The snake, which is a protected species, has been given to a Melbourne veterinarian to find a home with a licensed snake keeper.

US halting some shipments of military aid to Kyiv

WASHINGTON (AFP): The White House said it is halting some key weapons shipments to Ukraine that were promised under the Biden administration for Kyiv's battle against the Russian invasion. Stopping the delivery of munitions and other military aid including air defense systems likely would be a blow to Ukraine as it contends with some of Russia's largest missile and drone attacks of the three-year-old war.

"This decision was made to put America's interests first following a DOD (Department of Defense) review of our nation's military support and assistance to other countries across the globe," White House Deputy Press Secretary Anna Kelly told AFP in an email. The curtailment of military aid signals a possible shift in the priorities of US President Donald Trump, who has pressed for Russia and Ukraine to speed up stalled peace talks. The Republican has moved on to playing a greater role in orchestrating a possible ceasefire in Gaza and toning down Iran-Israel tensions after a deadly 12-day conflict between the arch foes.

The Pentagon review determined that stocks had become too low on some previously pledged munitions, and that some pending shipments now would not be sent, said a US official who spoke on condition of anonymity, according to Politico, which first reported the halt of military aid. "The strength of the

United States Armed Forces remains unquestioned -- just ask Iran," Kelly said, making a reference to the recent US bombings and missile strikes against the Islamic republic's nuclear facilities. Politico and other US media reported that missiles for Patriot air defense systems, precision artillery and Hellfire missiles are among the items being held back. Last week at a NATO summit in the Netherlands, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with Trump and appeared to get a vague response from the US leader on Patriot air defense systems.

"We're going to see if we can make some available," Trump said of the missiles that Kyiv desperately seeks to shoot down Russian attacks. "They're very hard to get," Trump added. A Russian drone attack on Ukraine's Kharkiv region killed one person and wounded another, its governor said. The attack follows Ukrainian drone strikes which killed three people and wounded dozens in the Russian city of Izhevsk, striking more than 620 miles (1,000 kilometers) from the front line -- one of the deepest attacks inside Russia to date. An AFP analysis published found that Russia dramatically ramped up aerial attacks in June, firing thousands of drones as Ukraine's stretched air defense systems and exhausted civilian population felt the Kremlin's increased pressure.

An April report from the

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) found that Ukraine is being outgunned by Russia, despite spending more of its GDP on defense than any other country in the world. Ukraine's military expenditure in 2024 was \$64.7 billion, SIPRI said, and Kyiv has relied heavily on its allies in Europe and the United States for weapons and aid. Russian leader Vladimir Putin blamed the West for fanning the flames of war with that support, telling French president Emmanuel Macron that the West has "for many years ignored Russia's security interests." The White House's tone has openly shifted on Ukraine with the Trump presidency.

Back in 2022, then president Joe Biden affectionately embraced Zelensky at the White House as his administration announced another \$2 billion in weapons for Ukraine. During Zelensky's Washington visit earlier this year, he was belittled on-camera by Trump and Vice President JD Vance during an Oval Office meeting, who ganged up to accuse the Ukrainian leader of ingratitude. Asked by AFP for comment on the halt of shipments and why it was occurring, the Pentagon did not respond directly. But its chief spokesman Sean Parnell said "America's military has never been more ready and more capable thanks to President Trump and Secretary (Pete) Hegseth's leadership."

Canada turns to drones for reforestation after wildfires

OTTAWA (AFP): A large aerial drone flies over the charred remains of Canadian forests devastated by wildfires, bombarding the ground with seed capsules to accelerate reforestation. This area of northern Quebec province was ravaged by megafires in the summer of 2023 and for the second year in a row a pilot project has been using drones to plant new black spruces and jack pines.

Rather than simply dropping seeds from high above, the company Flash Forest, which is leading the initiative, uses seeds protected in capsules that also contain water and nutrients, as well as fungi, to maximize their growing potential. "There is a niche that's appropriate for drone reforestation which we've spent the last five years narrowing in on," Flash Forest cofounder Cameron Jones explained.

The company focuses its efforts on forests that were scorched in the last year or two and excludes older burn sites that already have vegetation that can crowd out new seeds. It is no longer feasible to wait for Canada's forests to bounce back all on their own with millions of hectares of forests destroyed each year.

In 2023, Canada experi-

enced a record year of wildfires with blazes affecting every province, ultimately burning nearly 18 million hectares (44 million acres). Quebec, and particularly this area in the north of the French-speaking province, was hit especially hard that year. Drone operator and geospatial data scientist Owen Lucas says the method uses artificial intelligence to map out the sites ahead of time. "Then we pick our sites based on climate variables, physical attributes, topographic variables, to make sure we're putting the seeds in the right place," he said, his eyes fixed on the drone's remote controls.

The company also has projects in another Canadian province, Alberta, and in Colorado in the United States. Each drone can deliver seeds to plant 50,000 trees per day. "When you're out here planting you don't see the impact, but when you come back in the fall and you see them growing, you know you're doing a positive thing," Lucas said. In 2023, like this year, which has already seen more than 4.2 million hectares burned across the country, megafires are being fueled by drought, which experts say is linked to global

warming. "It's sad to have lost so much forest," lamented Angel Mianscum, one of the Indigenous leaders of a nearby Cree community. She was, however, pleased to see there are now "innovative ways of doing things." The Cree community has worked directly with Flash Forest to plan the local reforestation. Indigenous communities are the most affected by fires in Canada because they are often remote and deep in the boreal forest.

"We are increasingly forced to reforest in Canada. Boreal forest trees are adapted to fires, but today the conditions are becoming more complicated," said Maxence Martin, professor of forest ecology at the University of Quebec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. He points out that in 2023, for example, very young forests burned. "If the forest is too young, it will take a very long time to start regenerating, so planting is the only option." While the use of drones can help reach certain areas more quickly, it also has its downsides: many seeds end up wasted. "And today there is a seed problem because they are complicated to harvest," and therefore Canada is short of them, Martin said.

Polish supreme court ratifies nationalist's presidential vote win

WARSAW (AFP): Poland's Supreme Court said it had validated the result of last month's presidential election won by the nationalist opposition candidate, despite numerous appeals over the conduct of the vote. In the country's highly polarised political landscape, concerns had also been voiced over the legitimacy of the court chamber which will issue the verdict.

Karol Nawrocki, backed by the Law and Justice (PiS) party, scored 51 percent of votes to win the June 1 runoff election, according to official results -- a major blow for the pro-EU government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk and LGBTQ rights campaigners. Warsaw mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, the candidate put forward by the government, lost out by 369,000 votes in the country of 38 million people. "All of the circumstances clearly demonstrate that Karol Tadeusz Nawrocki garnered more votes than Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski during the sec-

ond round of the vote," judge Krzysztof Wiak announced after a hearing, also confirming the election result. Prosecutors had alleged that the vote count was falsified in Nawrocki's favour at some polling stations, fuelling calls for a national recount.

PiS dismissed doubts about the vote as an attempt to "steal the election". According to the Polish constitution, the Supreme Court had to validate the ballot before the winner could be sworn in at a joint session of parliament -- a ceremony planned for August 6. However, European courts and legal experts have questioned the legitimacy of the Exceptional Supervision and Public Matters Chamber, the Supreme Court body that issued the ruling. The European Court of Human Rights said in 2023 that the Chamber does not fulfil the definition of "an independent and impartial tribunal established by law". Justice Minister

Adam Bodnar, who is also the prosecutor general, had asked in vain for all of the chamber's judges to be excluded. Tusk has criticised the chamber, but recognised that "it is the Supreme Court's responsibility to rule whether an election is valid or not". "It is not possible... for the Supreme Court to be replaced in this matter... by the prosecutor general or the government," the prime minister said.

The Supreme Court had received around 56,000 election protests since the second round of voting. Judges have already dismissed, without taking further action, more than 50,000 complaints, many of which were based on protest templates shared on social media. Supreme Court chief justice Malgorzata Manowska criticised the sending of template-based protests as an "operation meant to... paralyse the Supreme Court".

Bodnar complained that prosecutors were not given

access to all of the 56,000 protests and suggested that the chamber's examination of those could be nothing more than a "facade". Still, the court ordered the results from 13 polling stations to be recounted earlier this month. National prosecutors later said that in some of those polling stations votes were transferred from one candidate to another, mainly in Nawrocki's favour.

Government coalition lawmaker Roman Giertych authored one of the protest templates, claiming that votes had been reassigned to Nawrocki and alleging ballot rigging. Giertych and several experts have demanded a national recount and called for the presidential inauguration to be postponed in order to clarify the alleged irregularities. These experts assert that the previous nationalist government and outgoing president Andrzej Duda introduced reforms which have undermined the rule of law in Poland.

Egyptian driver who killed 19 heads to trial

CAIRO (AP): Egyptian prosecutors referred a driver to trial on charges of involuntary manslaughter after he crashed his truck into a minivan last week, killing 18 girls and their driver. Crash on a newly constructed highway stirred up public outrage over the poor transportation safety record in the world's most populous Arab country. Many, including pro-government commentators and lawmakers, lashed out at the government and called for accountability. Most criticism was directed at Transportation Minister Kamel al-Wazir, with some calling for his resignation.

A statement from the office of chief prosecutor said the truck driver was accused of abusing drugs and driving the truck without a relevant license. Prosecutors also requested the court to initiate a misdemeanor procedure against the truck's owner for allowing the man to drive the vehicle while knowing that he didn't have the required license. The trial is scheduled to start on July 8, the statement said. The truck collided with a microbus - a mass transit minivan - on a highway in the Nile Delta city of Ashmoun. The microbus was carrying girls to a vineyard where they worked as informal laborers.

Three other girls were injured in the crash, according to the Labor Ministry. The crash happened on part of the highway that was under maintenance. Deadly traffic accidents claim thousands of lives every year in Egypt, with many caused by speeding, bad roads or poor enforcement of traffic laws. Egypt's official statistics agency says 5,260 people died in road accidents last year, compared to 5,861 in 2023 - a 10.3% decrease. But 76,362 were injured in 2024, up from 71,016 the previous year - an increase of 7.5%.

Two Chinese nationals charged with spying

WASHINGTON (AP): Two Chinese nationals have been charged with spying inside the United States on behalf of Beijing, including by taking photographs of a naval base, coordinating a cash dead-drop and participating in efforts to recruit members of the military who they thought might be open to working for Chinese intelligence.

The case, filed in federal court in San Francisco and unsealed, is the latest Justice Department prosecution to target what officials say are active efforts by the Chinese government to secretly collect intelligence about American military capabilities - a practice laid bare in startling fashion two years ago with China's launching of a surveillance balloon that US officials ultimately shot down over the coast of South Carolina. "This case underscores the Chinese government's sustained and aggressive effort to infil-

trate our military and undermine our national security from within," Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement announcing the case. "The Justice Department will not stand by while hostile nations embed spies in our country - we will expose foreign operatives, hold their agents to account, and protect the American people from covert threats to our national security."

Officials identified the defendants as Yuance Chen, 38, who arrived in the US on a visa in 2015 and later became a lawful permanent resident, and Liren "Ryan" Lai, 39, who prosecutors say lives in China but came to the US sporadically, including this past spring as part of an effort to supervise clandestine espionage operations on behalf of China's Ministry of State Security or MSS. The two were arrested on charges of secretly doing China's bid-

ding without registering as foreign agents with the Justice Department, as required by law. It was not immediately clear if they had lawyers. A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

According to an FBI affidavit filed in connection with the case, investigators believe Lai had been developing Chen to be a Chinese intelligence asset since at least mid-2021. Their activities, the FBI says, included coordinating on a dead-drop of at least \$10,000 in cash to another person who was operating at the direction of the MSS. They also participated and arranged surveillance of a Navy recruiting station in California and Navy base in Washington state, including through photographs that Chen is accused of taking and that investigators believe were transmitted to Chinese intelligence.

Europe swelters as surprise early summer heatwave spreads

BRUSSELS (AFP): Nearly 2,000 schools were shut in France, monuments closed to tourists, and cities across Europe put on high alert as a record-breaking early summer heatwave spread across the continent.

Withering conditions that have baked southern Europe for days crept northward where such extremes are much rarer, with Paris on "red alert" and warnings issued in Belgium, Switzerland and Germany. Tens of thousands of people have died in Europe during past heatwaves, prompting authorities to issue warnings for old and young, the sick, and others vulnerable to what experts call a "silent killer". Police in Spain said a two-year-old died in the country's northeast after being left in a car in the sun for several hours. The EU's Copernicus Climate Change

Service (C3S) warned that millions of Europeans were exposed to high heat stress, and that temperatures would remain "well above average" across most of the continent in coming days.

"This event is unusual because it's extreme, because it's very early on in the summer period, and climate change has almost certainly made it worse than it otherwise would have been," climate scientist and C3S deputy director Samantha Burgess told AFP. Records have already tumbled, with the Netherlands experiencing its hottest opening day of July, France and Portugal their highest-ever single-day temperatures in June, and Spain and England their warmest June months.

Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Europe, went above freezing, a rarity for this time of year. The summit of the

Eiffel Tower was shut for a second straight day while in Brussels the city's Atomium monument -- famed for its giant stainless steel shells -- was exceptionally shut as temperatures reached 37 degrees Celsius (98 degrees Fahrenheit). Under scorching skies, Paris imposed its first "red alert" in five years, empowering officials to limit or ban sporting events, festivals and school outings for children. The heat is expected to peak, with Paris facing highs of 38C, but authorities have extended the alert.

"We're living a bit like moles," Nicole, 85, told AFP in the stifling air of her apartment in a tower block in Paris. Some parks will remain open all night, pools have extended visiting hours, and cooling centres in churches and museums are offering respite from the lack of greenery and concrete sur-

faces that amplify the heat. Nearly 2,000 schools were closed at midday across France, according to the Ministry of Education, with teachers complaining that overheated and unventilated classrooms were making students unwell. Authorities are fanning out to check on the elderly, chronically ill and the homeless.

"When it's cold, I add blankets and hats. But when it's hot like this, what can I do?" said Jo, a 55-year-old homeless man in Bordeaux, in southwestern France. As far north as the Netherlands, some regions were on the second-highest alert, with temperatures forecast to reach 38C. "I also live in a rooftop apartment, which means it gets insanely hot during the day, and it's unbearable," student Liva Freimane told AFP in the Hague.

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Mamdani may get a lesson

PERHAPS he will hunt them down at the tables of Masa, where sushi can go for almost \$1,000 a head. Or maybe he'll track them to the bar at the Plaza hotel, or else evict them from their penthouses overlooking Central Park. It is not yet clear how the radical Democrat nominee for mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani, intends to act on his apparent desire to cleanse the city of billionaires if he wins power. But one point is surely clear. If he succeeds, he will find it impossible to pay for almost any of his expensive promises. And what might be termed the Mamdani Fallacy will be painfully exposed.

Mamdani certainly does not mince his words. During a TV interview, he argued that nobody should have 10 zeroes or more on their bank statement: "I don't think that we should have billionaires because, frankly, it is so much money in a moment of such inequality, and ultimately, what we need more of is equality across our city and across our state and across our country." Of course this is a perfectly legitimate point of view for someone who describes himself as a socialist. Most of the major Left-wing thinkers of the last couple of hundred years have staked out very similar positions.

And yet there is a catch. While he wants the billionaire class to be abolished, he also effectively wants them to pay for all his expensive campaign pledges. He wants free childcare right across the city, government-run grocery stores to lower the cost of food, and rent controls and subsidies to reduce the price of somewhere to live. How is it all going to be paid for? With higher taxes on the rich apparently, including an extra 2 per cent city income tax, on top of federal and state taxes, for anyone earning more than \$1 million a year, and a higher rate of corporate tax as well. While this would also punish many of the merely wealthy, the reality of the income distribution is that he would be relying on large sums being raised from New York billionaires, too.

So Mamdani wants to have his billionaire cake and eat it. The plutocrats should be wiped out, but at the same time they should cheerfully pay extra taxes to fund extravagant social programmes. It is a view that is increasingly common across the Western world. In Britain, the governing Labour Party both wants to get rid of non-doms (as wealthy foreigners with a special tax exempt deal are known), while also raising billions in extra taxes from the rich. In France the radical Left wants greater equality, but it also wants wealth taxes to pay for some of the world's most generous social benefits. The message is always the same.

The rich are to be destroyed, but also pay for everything. We all know what will happen. Mamdani will get half of what he is arguing for. The rich will indeed be driven out of New York. After all, it is hard to see that many billionaires, or even mere millionaires, will want to stick around in a city that plans to tax them to extinction. They can easily move to low tax Miami or Dallas, or if that is too far then Boston is only a short flight away. They will all leave very quickly. But the other half of what Mamdani wants - all that extra tax revenue he is relying on to pay for his spending - will flee New York along with the private jets. His agenda will have been exposed as crude populism. And it is the New Yorkers with only a couple of zeros on their bank statements who will suffer the most as the experiment collapses in failure.

British political class

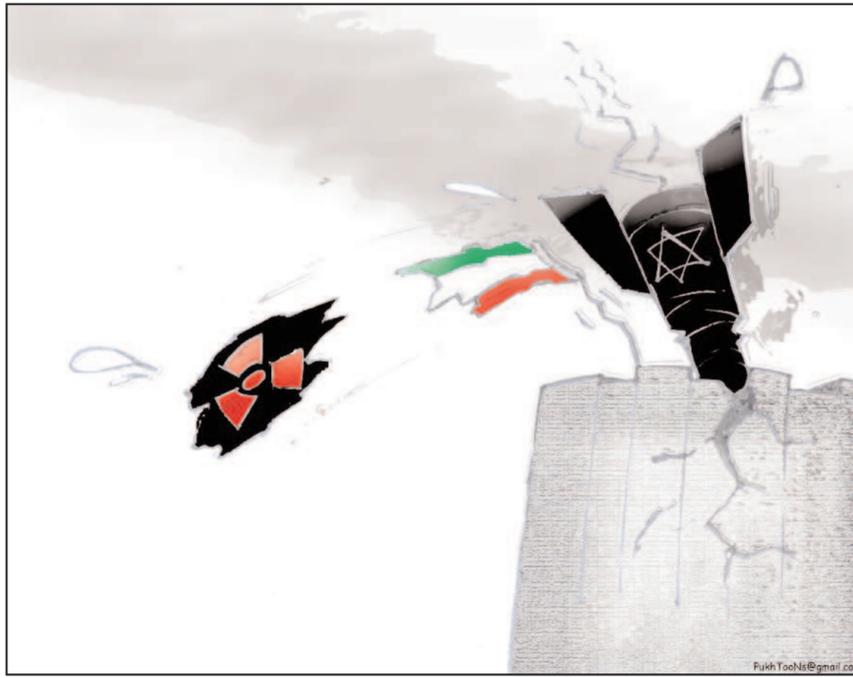
THE result should never have been in doubt. That whips and ministers were nervous at all should be testament enough as to how badly this government is being run. The welfare reform Bill was finally passed with a majority of 75, about 100 less than Labour's notional majority. But there is something missing from ministers' and MPs' reactions to this "victory": the cheers, such as they were, sounded forced. The smiles were wan. The congratulations looked half-hearted. Because this is a Bill whose passage means many losers and zero winners - a rare achievement in parliamentary politics.

Of course, the real losers are those future claimants of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) who, depending on the detail of the latest concessions granted by Keir Starmer, will find it much more difficult to have their claims approved. But there are many more political losers. There are the rebels themselves, at least some of whom might have hoped for personal advancement in their political careers and who must now face years of being nominated for the crummiest, dullest standing committees - the traditional punishment for those who won't take their whips' advice.

Then there are the Conservatives, who voted against a measure many of them clearly supported. There was even a shadow cabinet meeting last week at which Kemi Badenoch asked each member how the party should vote. That such a question even needs to be asked suggests there was at least some support for a more principled, less cynical stance. Then of course there is the Government, which, before this debate and vote, was in a slightly stronger, slightly more popular position than this evening and which now has achieved the passing of a measure that even ministers can no longer see the point of. It has spent a lot of its political credibility in securing a Bill that was originally sold as a genuinely reformist measure (it is not) and which would save the Treasury billions (it will not). Not the Commons' finest moment. A damaged legislature, a damaged government and, most importantly, a damaged prime minister. Happy anniversary, Sir Keir.

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



By sacrificing Palestine, Europe betrays itself

Andrea Teti

'Law is interpreted for friends and applied to enemies,' Italian statesman Giovanni Giolitti once said. There are few better examples of this than the way the European Union bends over backwards to avoid addressing Israel's severe breaches of international law and the terms of its association agreement with the bloc.

On May 20, the EU's Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) voted to conduct a review of whether Israel was denying Palestinians' human rights by preventing humanitarian aid from entering Gaza. A month later, the same body concluded: "There are indications that Israel would be in breach of its human rights obligations under Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement."

On June 26, EU heads of government at a European Council meeting concluded that they "noted" those indications and invited the FAC to "continue discussions" in July. It is understandable that some initially welcomed the vote to review the EU-Israel Association Agreement back in May. It is only human to hold on to anything that gives hope that action will finally be taken to protect the human rights of the Palestinian people.

Unfortunately, the entire "debate" over the EU-Israel Association Agreement is simply a sham. It does not represent serious action on by the EU to address the atrocities Israel is committing in Gaza and elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territory. It deflects growing criticism by giving the impression that the EU may finally be thinking of doing something. More importantly, it distracts from the obligations which the EU and its members are legally bound to fulfil. Twenty months into Israel's devastating war in Gaza, Israel's breaches of human rights and international law are so extensive that there can be no doubt about their relevance to the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

They are so numerous that they must be organised into categories to capture the depth and breadth of destruction wrought onto every aspect of life in Gaza. Israel has been accused of intentionally creating conditions calculated to destroy the possibility for

Palestinian life in the Strip, which amounts to genocide. This includes domicile and the laying to waste of Gaza's urban landscape; medicine - systematically dismantling the healthcare system; scholasticism - destroying schools, universities and libraries; ecocide - wiping out Gaza's agriculture and nature; econocide - the devastation of Gaza's economy; and unchilding - making childhood impossible. More than 90 percent of Gaza's population, or 1.9 million people, have been displaced, and in the past three months alone, over 600,000 people have been displaced again, as many as 10 times or more. A full blockade was imposed by the Israelis since March 2, and meagre aid deliveries were reinstated only in late May. Famine is widespread; 66 children have died of starvation, and more than 5,000 were hospitalised with acute malnutrition in May alone.

Under pressure from European public opinion, which is increasingly rejecting European support for Israel, the EU finally decided to do something. But that something involved a fair bit of talking and - so far - no action. The bloc decided to vote on reviewing the EU-Israel Association Agreement. But this was nothing out of the ordinary because all association agreements should be subject to regular reviews, which can trigger either advances or scaling back the depth and breadth of relations. In fact, those who called for the vote knew very well that suspension of the agreement requires a unanimous vote by 27 member states, which is currently impossible. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and member states, such as Germany, Italy and Hungary, have made crystal clear their unwavering support for Israel. In these circumstances, hoping for a unanimous vote to suspend the agreement is close to delusional. A qualified majority vote might suspend parts of the agreement on trade, but that is the most one can hope for.

This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the Union's commitment to human rights and "fundamental values". Instead, public invocations by governments and officials of Article 2 of

the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which states that all areas covered by the agreement itself "shall be based on respect for human rights", are no more than empty rhetoric. In reality, the EU never intended for these human rights conditionalities to be taken seriously. It is easy to see why; it never specified by what criteria human rights should be assessed, and it chose not to make these assessments routine, compulsory, and public. In this way, the EU leaves itself enough space to claim it values "human rights and fundamental values" while, in fact, "interpreting away" its own rules to avoid having to take any significant action.

Some European states have decided to take individual action, but what they have done has been just as meaningless as the EU agreement review. The United Kingdom suspended trade talks with Israel, but not trade. Its recent communique alongside France and Canada was trumpeted as "tougher" than the EU's statements. Yet, the communique opposes only Israel's "expansion of military operations in Gaza": It takes issue only with the extension and intensification of Israel's assault, not with the devastation wrought upon the Strip so far. Nor does it mention the war crimes Israel has been accused of, or declare a commitment to uphold the International Criminal Court's (ICC) arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. In fact, despite the UK summoning Israel's ambassador after its "tough" joint statement with France and Canada, it continued its surveillance flights over or close to Gaza's airspace, which are suspected of gathering intelligence for the Israeli army.

France, for its part, declared it would recognise a Palestinian state in June. June came and went without recognition. In October 2023, Spain claimed that it stopped selling weapons to Israel. In May, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez declared, "We do not do business with a genocidal state." And yet, a Barcelona-based think tank revealed recently the existence of more than 40 contracts between Spanish state

institutions and Israeli defence companies. Germany, France, the UK and Italy also continue to supply weapons in breach of the spirit of international law. If European governments were serious about responding to Israel's crimes, they could do that by simply abiding by their legal obligations under the various EU treaties and international law.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Lisbon Treaty require the bloc to embed respect for "democracy, human rights and fundamental values" into all EU policies. This is why all association agreements have human rights conditionalities in the first place. The Genocide Convention imposes a preventive duty to use "all means reasonably available" to prevent genocide. Already in January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) accepted that Palestinians' right to be protected from genocide may be being violated. The actions EU states can take include, but are not limited to: halting arms contracts with the Israeli government and Israeli companies; suspending intelligence cooperation; and cutting commercial, cultural and research exchanges with and funding for Israeli private and public institutions on occupied Palestinian land. They should also support the rigorous application of international law, including backing the case against Israel at the ICJ and enforcing arrest warrants issued by the ICC.

Currently, the EU is in flagrant violation of its legal duties and its own rules. That is a direct consequence of decades of ignoring gross abuses by Israel and other associated states, including Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. No amount of "interpreting" law or hiding behind procedure can mask the fact that the EU is in flagrant violation of its legal obligations and the spirit of its own rules. It has a track record of ignoring continued human rights abuses in associated states, including Israel, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan. This track record has reached an ignominious peak since October 2023. Inaction on Gaza reveals the limits of Europe's commitment to its self-proclaimed values: by sacrificing Palestine, Europe betrays itself.

Aljazeera

Ensuring Middle East becomes a WMD-free zone

Yossi Mekeberg

THERE are quite a few lessons to be learned from the 12 days of war between Iran and Israel last month, especially from their mutual readiness to inflict severe pain on one another. One is the need to embark on urgent discussions with full commitment to ensure the Middle East becomes a weapons of mass destruction-free zone.

The entire Cold War-era nuclear doctrine - and, with it, many other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological - was based on an understanding that these weapons were not to be used, but rather to deter the other side from using them. No rational actor in international relations would dare to use them if it would also mean a devastating retaliation - in other words, mutual assured destruction. There is a real danger that a nuclear arms race in the Middle East would be more likely to bring nuclear madness than mutual assured destruction.

It is still too early to assess the damage caused to the Iranian nuclear program and whether its piles of uranium enriched to 60 percent purity, which had brought the country closer to developing nuclear military capability, were destroyed or were safely hidden away. After the fatal exchange of blows between Iran and Israel that caused widespread death and destruction must come a period of reflection on the dangers of the presence of WMDs in the region and the need to eliminate them. The working assumption is that there is only one country in the region that is in possession of nuclear military capabilities - Israel - while others, including Iran, Iraq and Libya, have chemical weapons. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, it is estimated that Israel has about 80 nuclear weapons, although the country's official policy is one of nuclear ambiguity, claiming that it will not be the first country to "introduce" nuclear weapons to the Middle East. Yet, one of its Cabinet ministers proposed, at the beginning of the war on Gaza, to nuke the place - and it is hardly plausible that he would make such a threat unless Israel was in possession of nuclear weapons.

The 19th-century Russian playwright Anton Chekhov once wrote that, "if in the first act you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired. Otherwise, don't put it there." Thus far, nuclear weapons have been used "only" twice, toward the end of the Second World War. But this tells us very little about what might happen if the Middle East were to embark on a nuclear arms race. Just imagine that both Iran and Israel were armed with nuclear weapons and, at a certain point, each felt that their country's very existence was in danger. Could we completely exclude the possibility of them employing this doomsday weapon? Not a scenario that anyone would like to find themselves in.

Israel's ambiguity has, in a roundabout way, contributed to preventing a nuclear arms race in the region. By not announcing it publicly, it has not forced others to compete with it in this arena. Moreover, prior to becoming a major regional military power and signing peace agreements with Egypt and

Jordan - and, more recently, the Abraham Accords to normalize relations with the UAE, Morocco and Bahrain - Israel's nuclear capability was regarded as one of last resort. It was there in case it faced a cataclysmic scenario of being on the verge of military defeat, in addition to assuming it was being governed by a more rational government than the current one. It is hardly facing an existential threat anymore and the rationality of its current government is at best questionable. What also makes a Middle East WMD-free zone a matter of urgency is the inherent political instability and volatility of some parts of the region, let alone their appalling lack of respect for international law.

The idea of a WMD-free zone is not new. It was first introduced by Egypt in 1990, as an extension of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and later as part of a series of decisions derived from the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which 191 states have so far joined, but not India, Israel, Pakistan or North Korea. The 1995 NPT review conference called for "the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems." Regrettably, hardly any progress has been made toward a negotiated elimination of WMDs, including nuclear, despite five international summits being held on the issue, the last of them in November 2024.

The risks caused by the presence of WMDs in areas where conflict is ever-present, where enemies are usually defined in absolute terms and where threats are seen as existential are too dangerous to allow. They are made worse where there is asymmetry in terms of conventional military capabilities, as is the case in the Middle East. In the event of a side facing defeat, while in possession of nuclear weapons, there might be the temptation to use them either as a tool to change the course of the war or as some sort of Samson-like option of bringing the roof down on everyone.

If the dreadful consequences of using nuclear or other WMDs is one aspect of the need to ensure that countries do not pursue this route, there is also the futility of investing endless resources in developing and acquiring such lethal weapons. Such programs are expensive, meaning there are other more urgent and fundamental social and economic needs that are deprived of resources. And in the case of nuclear, it is in many cases a vanity project; or worse, as we just witnessed in the case of Iran, one that leads to needless wars. Last year, I participated in a nuclear disarmament workshop in Hiroshima, where we met with survivors of the nuclear bomb dropped by the US on the city 80 years ago next month. They told us of the horrific experience suffered by themselves, their families and their city, as could also be seen in photographic evidence in the local museum. Their message was very clear: there is no place in our civilization for such weapons. This should be a lesson for anyone who is contemplating developing or possessing nuclear weapons, whether in the Middle East or anywhere else.

Arab News

US chip restrictions backfiring

Djoomart Otorbaev

DESPITE the United States maintaining a significant lead in AI chip technology, China's rapid progress in AI chip production and development is noteworthy. However, efforts by the US to impede China's AI advancement through export restrictions may ironically yield counter-productive outcomes.

Jensen Huang, CEO of NVIDIA, normally refrains from making political remarks to avoid upsetting the US administration, but he issued a strikingly candid critique of the administration recently. Criticizing the administration for imposing harsh export restrictions to limit China's access to AI chips, he said the measures have been a "failure" because they have prompted China to accelerate its product development and launches. In a pointed denunciation of the successive US administration's chip policies, the head of

the leading AI processor manufacturer objected to Washington's decision to prohibit NVIDIA's innovations tailored explicitly for the Chinese market. The prohibition is projected to cost NVIDIA \$8 billion in sales in the second quarter of this year.

Huang said the US administration's export restrictions have benefited Chinese competitors, particularly Tencent and Huawei, as they have developed competitive AI hardware. He said that four years ago, NVIDIA held a 95 percent market share in China, but today, that figure has dropped to 50 percent. He added that the remaining market share is dominated by Chinese technology, suggesting that there is a wealth of local technology that would be utilized if NVIDIA were not in the picture. But Huang's remarks contain some inaccuracies. Chinese companies began developing chips

well before the US administration took any discriminatory measures. Why? They foresaw that the US would take such measures.

A key aspect of China's success is its commitment to long-term planning, often extending decades into the future. Years ago, the Chinese leadership realized their country would have to compete with the US, particularly in high-tech, modernization, and high-quality development. Last year, due to the US new round of export restrictions, four government-supported industry groups, accounting for a large percentage of China's semiconductor demand, released synchronized statements encouraging their members to reassess their purchase of US chips, referring to some as "less secure or reliable".

Acknowledging the advancements China has made in AI chip technology,

the United States has cautioned American companies against utilizing these chips, including Huawei's Ascend processors, to hinder global proliferation. China's Commerce Ministry condemned the move, urging the US to "immediately correct its mistakes" and cease "discriminatory" practices. Anticipating the possibility the US taking discriminatory actions, China has devised countermeasures to challenge US companies economically. For example, China is ready to ban the export of gallium and germanium to the US, in the production of which it has a near-monopoly. The ban on the export of just these two elements, according to US Geological Survey calculations, could cost the US\$3.4 billion.

The discriminatory policies of the US have caused considerable concern among US chip manufac-

turers, especially because Chinese enterprises' share is about 50 percent of the global smartphone market and 15 percent of the computer market. For instance, China accounted for 27 percent of Intel's sales and 13 percent of NVIDIA's sales last year. Qualcomm, too, earned about half of its \$39 billion annual revenue from China.

And Arizona-based onsemi estimates that its chips are used in half of the electric vehicles in China. Despite being the biggest purchasers of US-made chips for years, Chinese companies were investing heavily in chips R&D. As a result of rising localization, not only Chinese companies but also some foreign companies operating in China are purchasing semiconductors made in China. A notable example of such a foreign company is German auto parts manufacturer Bosch, which presented its "localized chip solution" for

a steering system at a supply chain exhibition in Beijing, while China's State Grid displayed electrical equipment powered by Chinese CPUs and microprocessors. According to Huang, the US should focus on maximizing and accelerating AI diffusion rather than restricting it.

This once again shows that interference in competition in global markets harms those who engage in it. In a bid to help US manufacturers, the administration's misguided efforts have led to the opposite outcome. Once again, it has been proved that long-term planning is a key strength of Chinese regulators and businesses. It has been proven time and again that companies can thrive only in a fair, competitive environment. But unfortunately, the US administration stubbornly "steps on the same rake". It's time it started learning from its mistakes.

The China Daily

Iran's acceptance of request to stop war provided a new opportunity for diplomacy

DECADES ago, when the Palestinian issue was first framed as a "central cause" in the Islamic world and the Arab sphere, few could have imagined that Iran would one day find itself at the heart of this cause, playing a decisive and active role. Today, just days after the Zionist entity called for a temporary halt to the war, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not only reaffirmed its influential position but has also demonstrated that a significant shift has occurred in the regional balance of power.

Regarding this shift, two pivotal points must be highlighted. First, the powerful resistance mounted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity - along with its decisive response to the Israeli aggression deep within the occupied Palestinian territories - has resulted in the collapse of the fabricated image of strength long projected by the Zionist entity, which has consistently relied on unwavering support from the United States and its allies.

Second, Iran's response was based on Resolution No. 69/51 issued during the 51st session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which was unanimously adopted by all member states - thus reflecting a unified stance and collective consensus. The OIC member states deemed the military operations directed against the Islamic Republic of Iran to constitute an "act of aggression," in accordance with Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. They also affirmed that the actions committed by the Zionist entity amount to a "war crime" under the rules of international humanitarian law.

Moreover, in another section of the resolution, fifty-seven Islamic countries called on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to condemn the attack on Iran's nuclear facilities by the United States and the Israeli entity. They also urged the agency to submit a report to the United Nations Security Council regarding this blatant and flagrant violation of international standards. What distinguishes the current state of the Islamic Ummah and our region from the past is that the scene of national unity and cohesion witnessed within Iranian society following these attacks has now extended to both the regional and broader Islamic arenas. A comparable moment of collective solidarity has not been seen since 1969, when Zionist forces stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque and set fire to parts of the "First of the Two Qiblas."

Although the UN Security Council at the time adopted Resolution 271 strongly condemning the actions committed by the Israeli entity, what had a more profound impact was the decision by the Organization of the Islamic Conference to convene its first-ever Islamic summit on the issue of Palestine. In my opinion, the Rabat Summit in September 1969, which established the Palestinian cause as the starting point for joint Islamic action, is being reactivated today through the recent meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Islamic countries. This has enabled a conver-

ing awareness after decades, allowing Islamic countries to lay the foundations for a new, realistic dialogue that reflects the aspirations of their peoples - a dialogue free from domination by national, sectarian, or linguistic affiliations, as well as political disputes, traditional rivalries, and geopolitical competitions.

The principle of "protecting the collective rights of the peoples and states of the region" has become a shared focus in the positions of countries over the past two weeks, raising new questions: Has the Islamic world become convinced

Araqchi

The Islamic Republic of Iran's response to the call for a ceasefire opens a new window for comprehensive diplomacy, offering all parties interested in peace an opportunity to reassess their approaches. However, entering negotiations and the success of diplomacy require the consideration of fundamental conditions. The first steps on this path involve addressing the issues of "ensuring security" and "achieving justice." Ensuring security can only be realized by legally formalizing the call for a ceasefire and requiring the aggressor to provide guarantees against future use of violence - an element that was absent in the cases of Gaza and Lebanon. This absence led to the Zionist entity's continued violations of the agreed ceasefire and its disregard for stability in the Mediterranean region. At this point, the UN Security Council must fulfil its responsibilities as mandated by the United Nations Charter and act swiftly and decisively to secure the necessary guarantees from the aggressor.

to take on an active role at a moment when a new, multipolar, and more independent world order is emerging? Have the issues of Palestine, dignity, and development not become a top priority in the collective concerns of the region's countries and Islamic societies? The past fifteen days, or the "Days of Empowerment," have on one hand tested the cohesion of Iran's deterrence strategy and regional diplomacy, and on the other hand served as a measure of the seriousness of the Islamic world in confronting shared threats. For the first time since the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Rabat, the Islamic world is shaping a new Islamic discourse characterized by realism and strength, with no member state left behind.

The fundamental pillar of deterrence is now embodied in cooperation among the countries of the region. Consensus in confronting shared threats, understanding on regional stability, economic security, and combating all forms of terrorism constitute the four cornerstones around which diplomatic negotiations should be conducted. The Islamic Republic of Iran's response to the call for a ceasefire opens a new window for compre-

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issued by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is valid; the International Atomic Energy Agency's explicit condemnation of the attacks carried out by the Israeli entity and the United States on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities - such as Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan - should translate into practical and enforceable measures. It should not be forgotten that the demand for this condemnation arises in the context of assaults targeting facilities fully subject to the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Ensuring security and achieving justice can be viewed as a starting point in a long journey that would link the "moment of ceasefire" to the "horizon of sustainable peace." There is no doubt that the West Asian region stands today at a critical historical crossroads: either continuing a never-ending cycle of violence or moving toward a firmly established peace. It is high time for the Islamic world to contemplate a more stable and sustainable future instead of relying on short-term policies. In the same context, the second step on the path to peace is closely linked to the pivotal position of Lebanon and Palestine as two countries within the Islamic world. This approach requires that the regions of Gaza and Lebanon - both of which have been the most affected by aggression, killing, and systematic occupation over the past year and a half - receive special attention from all parties involved.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, like all Islamic countries, views the immediate cessation of aggression and occupation against Gaza and Lebanon as the fundamental condition for managing the conflict, alongside urgent humanitarian aid and serious international involvement in the reconstruction of these two regions. Alongside the constructive practical steps mentioned, the issue of establishing and formulating an executive framework or platform must be taken into consideration. The creation of a legal and human rights body - such as an "Islamic Human Rights Court" - based on legal principles recognized within the Islamic world, like the 1990 Cairo Declaration, could serve as a complementary requirement in this context.

This court, much like the European Court of Human Rights, should receive broad international support. Establishing such a mechanism would enable the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to play a more effective role in the path of solidarity and collective action.

Turkey's current presidency of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation presents an opportunity to draft the statute as soon as possible, and to lend an organized and institutional character to the cooperation between the Islamic world and international institutions - such as the International Criminal Court - by focusing on specific cases like the Gaza issue. From the perspective of the Islamic Republic of Iran, collective peace and stability in West Asia - a region free of nuclear weapons - is not only possible and within reach through joint cooperation focused on shared destiny, but it is also essential.

IRNA

After welfare vote debacle

Rafael Behr

WHEN politicians can't admit they are losing, they say they are listening. Your anger has been heard, says the contrite minister after a byelection drubbing. We are addressing the concerns, says the government spokesperson on the eve of a backbench rebellion. Sometimes, it is even true. Usually, it is too late.

The optimal time for Downing Street to have started paying attention to Labour MPs' complaints about disability benefit cuts was before the uprising threatened to torpedo a flagship government bill. It was not, in the end, sunk, but it is listing low in the water. A humiliating Commons defeat was averted on Tuesday night by rolling concessions, diluting and deferring the policy with mounting, chaotic urgency as the vote drew near. 49 Labour MPs still voted to kill the bill anyway.

Serious engagement on the substance of the rebels' complaints only began once it became clear they were legion and resistant to the conventional whips' arsenal of threats, pleas and career-advancing inducements. By that stage, relations between No 10 and the backbenches were befogged with suspicion and resentment. Withdrawing financial support from people with disabilities was always going to be a hard sell to Labour MPs. Blurring the line between reform and fiscal parsimony didn't help. It is hard to persuade sceptics that the Department for Work and Pensions will prioritise compassion when cost-cutting under Treasury duress clearly dictates the pace and scope of policy. That mistrust aggravates misgiving about Keir Starmer's strategy and the faultlines of his political antennae.

Internal anxiety about Labour's purpose has grown as the party's popularity has shrivelled. There are many reasons for the steep collapse in support since the election. Two of the most commonly cited are lack of rigorous policy preparation in opposition and Starmer's struggle to inspire audiences with a clear sense of what he wants from power. Those might be the same problem. Vagueness on substance, ruthless message discipline and a horror of loose leftist talk that might spook swing voters were vital components in a campaign for ousting the Tories.

Last year's election-winning strategy neutralised potential concerns about the prospect of a Labour government, but without generating enthusiasm for the idea. Starmer was the instrument of a broad but incoherent anti-Conservative coalition that lost its galvanising energy as soon as the exit poll was published. Arguably, the dissipation happened even earlier. The sense of an imminent Labour landslide, with weeks of headlines forecasting Tory annihilation, may have

depressed turnout and encouraged left-leaning voters to prefer independents and Greens, safe in the knowledge that they wouldn't wake up on 5 July to find Rishi Sunak still in charge.

To a new government with a majority of 174, that looked like negligible voter attrition at the margins. The scale of the victory seemed to promise at least two terms in power. The official opposition was still the Tories, although Reform UK were already making menacing noises in the wings. Downing Street strategists were not worried about an exposed left flank. They could see frustration on that side of the spectrum where many had hoped Starmer's pre-election insipidity was a feint, but the more pressing concern was an ongoing mission to persuade voters in Labour's "red wall" heartlands that the party really was for them. That focus intensified once Reform started topping opinion polls.

But messages calibrated to Nigel Farage's potential recruits - reluctance to speak ill of Brexit; a pugnacious tone on immigration - failed to seduce the target audience while driving defections to the Lib Dems and Greens. MPs started warning that this would cost Labour seats. Downing Street didn't listen. That may now be changing. The rebellion on benefit cuts, coinciding with the first anniversary of the election, demands some strategic introspection.

No one can pretend things are going well. Steps the government has taken that ought to be popular with the party's base - big cash infusions for the NHS, transport, social housing; expanding provision of free school meals - haven't registered amid the rage against cuts elsewhere. Farage has seized the mantle of radical changemaker, at least in that corner of the political market where change implies tearing down institutions and breaking rules without much thought (or honesty from the leader) about what might replace them.

Starmer can't compete in a game of system-smashing. He is a pragmatic fixer by nature and also prime minister - the apex of the system being targeted. While he also can't ignore the concerns of Reform voters, polling evidence suggests they are a smaller, less biddable component of Labour's potential electorate than the liberal-left defectors. A recent poll commissioned by Stanley Greenberg, a veteran US Democratic party strategist with close ties to Labour, found that almost 15% of current Lib Dem voters and 10% of Greens say there is a fair chance they could back Starmer. The equivalent numbers for Tory and Reform are 3% and 1% respectively.

The same poll looks at issues that animate swing

voters and the messages that might appeal to them. Unsurprisingly, the NHS and cost of living crisis are top of everyone's list. Immigration is also crucial. There is no path to a second term that doesn't include credible reassurance that the nation's borders are securely managed. But there are also fruitful areas where Starmer could lean more to the liberal-left in terms that retain mass appeal. One is urgency around the climate crisis (as long as it is made clear that consumers won't be overburdened but will benefit from lower energy bills). Another is greater clarity about the destabilising effects of Donald Trump's misrule in the US, and the necessary mitigation through closer strategic alignment with Europe. Trump is reviled by supporters of every UK party, including Reform. The only foreign leader who beats him at repelling British voters is Vladimir Putin. Farage has publicly admired them both.

Given Greenberg's connections, it is safe to assume his polling and the strategic avenues they illuminate have been seen and taken seriously in Downing Street. The core observation will come as no surprise to Starmer's team. Local elections earlier this year had already revealed the fractious condition of British politics. Also, amid the volatility, a pattern of coalescence into two blocs - a liberal-progressive constellation of Labour, Lib Dem and Greens facing a populist-nationalist insurgency motored by Reform, with the Tories in a sidebar. Recognition of that dynamic explains Starmer's tendency to name Farage as his main rival and treat Kemi Badenoch as an irrelevance. On one level, that is just a description of facts as they appear from current polling. But it also anticipates a general election campaign, where Labour maximises tactical support from Lib Dems and Greens. The assumption is that a litany of grudges against the prime minister will be set aside once the task in hand is blocking Farage's entry into No 10.

It is a plausible bet but not a certain one. If Labour continues to aggravate its former supporters at the current rate there is a serious risk of them casting a protest ballot elsewhere or staying at home when the anti-Reform clarion summons them to action. Four years remain before that call goes out.

There is still time for Starmer to position himself as the candidate of a mainstream majority that doesn't want Britain to follow the US down the path of bigoted venality, climate denialism and democratic decay. But if the prime minister really does envisage the next election as a head-to-head battle for the soul of British politics, he needs to get canner at picking fights he can win, while also giving his long-suffering supporters something to cheer. His current method seems likely to do neither.

EU gave Romania's migrant workers chance to build a new life

IT would be reasonable to assume that people who move from one EU country to another in search of work and opportunity are among the union's most reliable supporters. Freedom of movement within the 27-nation bloc is, after all, one of the big advantages of EU citizenship. But Romania's diaspora has recently upended that theory.

With about a quarter of its 19 million citizens living abroad, mostly in western Europe, Romania has the largest diaspora in the EU. About two-thirds are economic migrants: picking fruit in Andalusia, caring for elderly people in Vienna, laying bricks in Brussels. In 2023 alone they sent home 6.5bn in remittances, almost 3% of Romania's GDP, sustaining communities across the country. In Romania's tense presidential re-run in May, the pro-Europe candidate, Nicu?or Dan, carried the election, seeing off his far-right Eurosceptic challenger, George Simion, in the decisive round. After months of political chaos, the outcome drew sighs of relief across the EU. Complacency would be deeply unwise, however, because among Romanian voters abroad, Simion was the clear winner, scoring nearly 70% of the vote in diaspora-heavy countries such as Germany, Italy and Spain.

For years, Romania's diaspora mostly supported centrist, pro-European candidates. So why would nearly 1 million of them embrace a candidate who questions Romania's place in the EU? Simion's inflammatory past statements about the EU include: "We don't want to be secondhand citizens of this new Soviet Union."

Among Romanians working abroad, such sentiments appear to have struck a chord. The answer, for me, lies in years of political neglect: from Bucharest, host countries and Brussels alike, many Romanians feel invisible and unheard. The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis deepened their discontent, which the far right has fanned and weaponised through disinformation and emotional manipulation, turning it into a potent political force.

"I know how hard it was for you to leave - your parents, your children, your roots," Simion said in a campaign video addressed to diaspora voters in April. "You are our nation's greatest wealth. Without you, we cannot rebuild anything that will endure." Despite their crucial role in the prosperity of Romania and the EU at large, these migrant workers remain politically marginalised and underrepresented. The Turkish diaspora's support for Recep Tayyip Erdo?an offers a cautionary parallel: alienation abroad can harden into authoritarian sympathy at home. Had the Romanian election been solely an indictment of the country's political establishment, Dan, with a record of fighting corruption as Bucharest's mayor, would surely have won more diaspora votes than Simion. But the opposite happened, because this vote was perceived to be more about dignity, recognition and a deep emotional reckoning than it was about anti-establishment credentials. For decades, the state's message to Romanians abroad has been blunt: send remittances, give us your

Raluca Besliu

vote, but don't expect representation.

For years, state-funded organisations that supposedly support Romanians abroad have done little to meet the pressing needs of workers in host countries, such as legal aid, or Romanian language classes for children. Governments of the countries Romanians typically move to have not done much better. Despite theoretically enjoying equal treatment with workers in the host countries and protection from discrimination, Romanians in practice often face exploitative conditions, social exclusion and scant access to public services. For many of them, the promise of European opportunity has become a reality of European marginalisation.

The pandemic made matters worse, as many, especially those in precarious or seasonal work, were excluded from social protection, healthcare and financial aid in their host countries, while Romanian authorities actively discouraged them from returning home. Rising inflation and the cost-of-living crisis led to remittances falling sharply in 2024. This dual alienation created fertile ground for the far right - in which Simion has exploited since founding AUR (the Alliance for the Union of Romanians) in 2019. True, by the 2024 presidential race, Simion's outsider appeal had faded, and he finished fourth in the first round of voting.

But Simion was eclipsed by another ultra-nationalist, C?lin Georgescu, who called the EU a "pile of shards". Georgescu also channelled diaspora discontent, but

with even more radical language. Rejecting the "diaspora" label, he called workers abroad "the other Romania", saying they were the country's biggest investor and urging them to return. On social media, his promises were turbocharged by disinformation. It worked: in November 2024, Georgescu unexpectedly won the presidential election's first round. Romania's constitutional court annulled the election, citing foreign interference. Georgescu was consequently barred from entering the rescheduled 2025 race. For many abroad, this felt like yet another elite betrayal, which allowed Simion to inherit his base.

With Dan now president, the diaspora's grievances are still simmering. A real shift is required: Romania must treat its diaspora as a political constituency in its own right, with sustained engagement and representation. At the EU level, a similar rethink is needed: diasporas must be recognised not just as economic agents, but as full political actors. Action will certainly be difficult in an era where the far right is advancing not just at home, but in Brussels. The surge in votes for far-right parties in the 2024 European elections made that clear. But the warning signs are flashing red. Leaders from Bucharest to Brussels only have a narrow window to respond. The alternative - continued far-right mobilisation of diaspora communities - threatens not just individual countries, but the European project as a whole. If the EU cannot maintain the loyalty of its own migrant workers, its long-term survival must surely be in doubt.

The Guardian

Scorching heat

Zhang Xi

WHEN Europe's metallic roads start melting from the heat this summer, it will be wise not to miss the coat of protection that is heating up the surface. As the mercury rises, so does the urgency to tackle climate change. Yet the European Union's tariff barriers on Chinese electric vehicles risk upsetting the green momentum Europe claims to champion.

The EU imposed tariffs of up to 45.3 percent on Chinese-built battery-electric vehicles in October to stop them from "flooding" their market. Now, facing disruption because of the tariffs the United States has imposed, Beijing and Brussels have floated the idea of lifting the tariffs through possible commitments on minimum prices, known as price undertakings, for imported cars.

In the meantime, Chinese carmakers such as BYD and Chery are selling more plug-in hybrids in the EU to adapt to the tariffs. The two brands sold, respectively, 3,269 and 757 plug-in hybrids in the EU market in March, up from near zero sales in July 2024 when provisional tariffs were first introduced. What does this mean? Instead of fostering pure-electric innovation, Europe is inadvertently nudging Chinese manufacturers to focus on hybrids as a "backdoor" to

the market.

The EU's approach to climate leadership must evolve. Walls and levies on green technology will not help any country decarbonize. Imagine instead a Europe that opens its market more generously, encouraging fair competition in BEVs while partnering on shared innovation. Enabling global supply chains, sharing battery and EV technology, and importing Chinese efficiency could lower carbon dioxide across the board, not just within the bloc. New energy vehicles have emerged as the growth engine of China's vehicle exports, with 296,000 units exported in May, accounting for 43 percent of total exports. Cumulative January to May NEV exports reached 1.16 million units, up 33 percent year-on-year. Moreover, recent actions suggest China's carmakers are not standing still.

While the EU pushes tariffs, these companies are engaging in localization by establishing sales infrastructure, rolling out dual pillars of plug-in hybrid vehicles and BEVs, and even building European assembly plants. Hybrid-first strategies are no accident. They are adaptive strategies to navigate policy and demand. If Europe is serious about climate action, it must stop viewing

trade as a zero-sum contest and instead use global competition to its advantage. For example, the EU can phase down tariffs on BEVs, allowing high-efficiency and low-emission vehicles to proliferate regardless of their origin.

Efforts can also be made to encourage joint ventures and co-investment, supporting European battery and EV clean-tech while benefiting from Chinese scale. Also, harmonizing regulations on emissions, data security and vehicle standards would reduce fragmentation and unlock innovation. Meanwhile, the EU can use market openness as leverage. By offering access, the EU can nudge Chinese companies toward deeper commitments: localized R&D, supply-chain investment and shared intellectual property. Let us not miss the bigger picture. Climate change isn't waiting for European factories to catch up. It is here, and intensifying every summer.

Rather than combat global warming with green protectionism, Europe should embrace global collaboration and shared opportunities. Just as the sun's relentless rays scorch the continent, so must Europe's ambition burn through trade barriers to meet climate reality. A truly green economy demands open markets, not closed doors.



Court Notice

In the Court of Muhammad Adil Civil Judge V/Ilaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No. 45/1. Institution 3/3/2025. Date of hearing. 24/7/2025. Title: Dowlat Khan VS Said Karim Khan. Notice to no.4.Fehman Shah s/o Saidan Shah.29.Alyas Khan. 30.Sajid Khan sons Mersalam resident of Kowga Bazikhel tehsel Mandran district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 24/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Senior Civil Judge V/Alia Ilaqa Qazi(Family Court) Buner at Daggar.Suit No 95/FC Institution 2025. Date of hearing. 22/7/2025. Title:Mer Ahm ed VS Abdul Wahid.Notice to Abdul Wahid s/o Norhamed Gul resident of Ghazikhanyeh tehsel Gadezai district Buner .Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 22/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal. No. 26/13. Institution. 26/2/2024. Date of hearing. 22/7/2025. Title: Sadar Khan VS Ajmal Khan etc. Notice to No .70.Haqbar Khan s/o Sadar resident of Krapa tehsel Daggar district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 22/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal. No. 101/13. Institution. 10/9/2024. Date of hearing. 29/7/2025. Title: Hamidullah VS Abdul Jabbar etc. Notice to No.2. Khaista Rehman s/o Abdul Ghafar resident of Perabat tehsel Gadezai district Buner .Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 29/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Qurat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/ Judge Family Court Swabi, Hina Begum VS Muhammad Touqeer, Suit Number : 92/FC, Institution Date: 02-06-2025, Hearing Date: 11-07-2025, Subject: Suit for Recovery, Notice to: Muhammad Touqeer r son Nazir Muhammad F/o Turlandi, Teh. Razar, Distt, Swabi, Presently Teh, & Distt, Sialkot, P.O Markiwal, Haider Chowk, Police Station Kotli Lohari, Sialkot. Dependent. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 11-07-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal. No. 74/13. Institution. 6/6/2025. Date of hearing. 24/7/2025. Title: Mst Sher Banu VS Nowsherwan etc. Notice to No .39/3. Namroz Khan .39/5.Mian Jan sons of Naseb Jan. 55/1.Saifullah s/o Sher Zada. 67 .Himayatullah .69.Tehsenullah. 142/1.Saifullah son of Sher Zada. 84/4/2. Faisal Khan .84/4/3.Waqas Khan sons of Mst Gulzar late. 98/2.Faisal Khan. 98/3.Waqas Khan .102/2.Hayat Hakim.102/4.Tarq Hakim.102/6.Javed Hakim sons of Sultan Hakim 104.Naved Hakim.107. Nuaz Hakim sons of Aziz Hakim. 95. Dowlat Khan s/o Gulzar late.101.Niamat Hakim s/o Aziz Hakim.113.Bahrul Hakim s/o Aziz Hakim resident of Kowga Hujra Manizoch Wach Khwar tehsel Mandran district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 24/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

PSX soars to record high, crosses 130,000 mark

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a historic leap, the Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index shattered previous records on Wednesday, closing at an all-time high of 130,344.03 points. Continuing its bullish momentum, the index surged by 2,144.61 points—an impressive gain of 1.67 percent from the previous close of 128,199.43. The latest milestone underscores growing optimism in the financial markets, as the PSX continues to attract both local and foreign interest amid signs of economic recovery. A total of 1,026,117,776 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,032,756,027 shares the

previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 49.294 billion against Rs 44,008 billion on the last trading day. As many as 473 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 256 of them recorded gains and 192 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 89,872,005 shares at Rs 1.61 per share, Bank of Punjab with 89,872,005 shares at Rs 11.54 per share and Kohinoor Spinning with 46,349,499 shares at Rs 6.12 per share. PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a max-

imum increase of Rs1,778.37 per share closing at Rs19,562.10 whereas runner-up was Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs111.75 rise in its share price to close at Rs1,486.16. Bhanero Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 108.56 per share price, closing at Rs 977.06, whereas the runner-up was Raffhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 71.20 decline in its per share price to Rs 9,515.17. **Gold prices decrease by 600 to Rs356,200 per tola** The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.600 and was traded at Rs.356,200 on Wednesday

as compared to its sale at Rs. 356,800 on the last trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs514 to Rs.305,384 from Rs. 305,898 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went down by Rs.471 to Rs.279,945 from Rs. 280,416. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver decreased by Rs.18 and 16 and were sold at Rs.3,816 and Rs.3,271 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$6 to \$3,342 from \$3,348, whereas that of silver decreased by \$0.18 to at \$36.32, the Association reported.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships, GFS Prime, Hansa America, Rose-M, Amir Gas and Lynus Synergy carrying Container, Mogas, LPG and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal, Sui Southern Gas Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile four more ships, Blue Bird, Ejan, African Flamingo and Amna-M carrying Gasoline, LNG and Coal also arrive at outer anchorage during last 24 hours. Ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers ship 'GFS Prime' left the port on Wednesday, while another bulk cargo carrier 'Xin Hai Tong' expected to sail. Cargo volume of 155,084 tonnes, comprising 107,386 tonnes imports cargo and 47,698 export cargo carried in 3,436 Containers (1,377 TEUs Imports & 2,059 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. Nine ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Hansa America, Ejan and America Graeca carrying Container, LNG and Coal are expected to take berths at QICT, EETL and MW-4 respectively today (Wednesday).

WCCIS holds executive meeting

SIALKOT (APP): A meeting was held under the chairmanship of President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Maryam Nouman in which the executive members of WCCIS participated. The meeting focused on taking important and concrete steps to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs. Speaking on the occasion, President WCCIS Dr. Maryam Nouman said that "We at WCCIS are committed to promoting effective studies and initiatives that empower women entrepreneurs and promote economic development."

DG FAO commends Pak agri transformation agenda

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, held a one-on-one meeting with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Qu Dongyu, during the 44th Session of the FAO Conference in Rome. The minister expressed Pakistan's deep appreciation for FAO's longstanding support to Pakistan's agriculture sector, said a press release received here on Wednesday. He briefed the Director-General on Pakistan's ongoing reform efforts aimed at transforming its agri-food systems to become more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient in the face of climate change. Highlighting agriculture's critical role contributing 24 percent to GDP and employing 37 percent of the labor force—Rana Tanveer Hussain outlined major initiatives under Vision 2025 and the Prime Minister's Agricultural

Emergency Program. These include reforms in water conservation, seed systems, digital extension services, and targeted farmer subsidies. He also discussed new national policies on biotechnology, e-commerce integration for smallholders and soil health mapping. The minister noted significant outcomes such as the improved affordability of a healthy diet (from 37 percent of households in 2019 to 52 percent in 2024) and a drop in the real cost of healthy diets. However, he also underscored persistent challenges, including food insecurity affecting 36.9 percent of the population, rising input costs, and severe climate-induced stress. Calling for enhanced international cooperation, Mr. Hussain urged FAO to support Pakistan's access to climate financing, carbon markets, and adaptation mechanisms for vulnerable farming communities. Director-General Qu

Dongyu appreciated Pakistan's strong reform momentum and reaffirmed FAO's continued technical and policy support. He praised Pakistan's efforts in climate-smart agriculture, digital innovation, and capacity building. Qu welcomed the country's focus on smallholder inclusion and emphasized the importance of regional knowledge sharing and data-driven solutions. Both sides agreed to deepen collaboration in areas such as seed biotechnology, food system transformation, early warning systems, and institutional capacity strengthening, especially through Pakistan's research institutions and the Special Investment Facilitation Council platform. In closing, Rana Tanveer Hussain reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working closely with FAO and other UN agencies to build equitable, climate-resilient agri-food systems aligned with the SDGs and global food security goals.

Saudi Arabia, Morocco set to boost economic ties

JEDDAH (Arab News): Saudi Arabia and Morocco are set to enhance economic ties by expanding trade and cooperation in agriculture, renewable energy, and sustainable development following a Saudi business delegation's visit to Rabat. As part of a business trip that began on June 29 to Mauritania and Morocco, a delegation from the Saudi Federation of Commerce, led by chairman Hassan Moejeb Al-Huwaizi and joined by 30 top investors and company officials, visited Rabat to explore investment opportunities and enhance cooperation between the public and private sectors. The delegation held several meetings with ministers to discuss strategic trade and investment issues, according to the Saudi Press Agency. The visit aligns with the SFC's strategy to enhance economic cooperation and facilitate investment, reflecting the shared vision

for the future between the Kingdom and Morocco. Their trade volume reached \$R5 billion (\$1.33 billion) in 2024, with exports from Saudi Arabia totaling \$R4.3 billion and imports amounting to \$R640 million. According to the SFC, Morocco ranks as the Kingdom's 57th largest trading partner in terms of exports and 51st in terms of imports. Saudi Arabia's main exports to Morocco include cars and vehicles, insulated wires, chemical fertilizers, and women's clothing. The primary imports from Morocco comprise refined petroleum, cars and vehicles, vehicle accessories, and wheat. "The delegation began its meetings with the Minister of Industry and Trade, Ryad Mezzour, to discuss ways to enhance commercial cooperation and expand the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries," SPA reported. It added that the delega-

tion also met with Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, Water, and Forests Ahmed El-Bouari, who highlighted the significant potential in the agricultural and maritime sectors, opening new horizons for cooperation in production and export. The meetings included a session with Karim Zaidan, the delegate-minister to the head of government in charge of investment, convergence, and the evaluation of public policies, during which investment opportunities and joint projects contributing to sustainable development were discussed, as per SPA. The report said that the Saudi delegation also met with Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development Leila Benali to explore cooperation in renewable energy, with a focus on exchanging experiences and expertise in this vital sector.



MULTAN: Labourers unload fresh cauliflower from delivery truck at a busy vegetable market.

SCCI rejects massive increase in fuel prices

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has slammed the government over the recent massive increase in prices of petroleum products, which they claim is driving up the cost of business and industry that would directly make life miserable for poor people as well as traders' community. Fazel Moqem Khan, president, Abdul Jalil Jan, senior vice president, Shehryar Khan, vice president and members of the chamber's executive committee in a joint statement issued here on Wednesday stated despite drastic cut in prices in global market, government made a unprecedented hike petrol and diesel rates, which is completely unjustified and unfair.

The government move would terribly hit all segments of society and intensify the hardships, particularly for the general public, besides terribly affecting the industrial production as the cost of doing business would obviously go up, the office bearers remarked. SCCI officials said this hike in petroleum commodities was not making any sense. We reject the recent record increase in petrol and diesel prices. Business leaders said the country needs an out-of-the-box solution to stabilise the economy instead of ruthlessly counterproductive decisions aimed at ruining the industries and consumers. Senior office bearers opined the government has no clue about the socio-economic repercussions of the massive hike in petroleum

prices which is bound to mount inflationary pressures beyond the control of any sector or industry to absorb. This would result in industrial shutdowns, decline in exports, dwindling domestic demand, social unrest, unemployment and low economic growth, they added. On the other hand, SCCI expressed serious concerns over recent increase in gas tariff, calling it would prove detrimental for industrial, commercial and domestic consumers. Office bearers asked the government to withdraw its decision and to make reduction in petrol and diesel prices in line with the international market in order to provide relief and facilitate the general public as well as boosting the national economy.

Meezan Bank's Deputy CEO earns PhD

KARACHI: Syed Amir Ali, Deputy CEO and CEO-designate of Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank, has earned a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Business Administration, following the successful completion of rigorous coursework and original research. This remarkable academic milestone makes Syed Amir Ali one of the youngest CEO-designates in Pakistan to earn a PhD, setting a powerful precedent for raising academic

and strategic standards across the highest levels of corporate leadership. His doctoral research, titled 'SME Financing through the Islamic Digital Banking Ecosystem,' explores how the fusion of digital innovation and Shariah-compliant financial principles can transform access to capital for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in emerging economies, particularly Pakistan. This work aligns closely with Meezan Bank's ongoing efforts to enable inclusive, ethical,

and digitally driven financial solutions. This doctoral qualification adds to the distinguished academic and professional profile of Dr. Amir Ali, who is a Chartered Accountant (Gold Medalist), CFA Charter holder, MBA (Gold Medalist), and LL.B., with a certification in Software Engineering and is an alumnus of the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School, one of the world's most prestigious executive education platforms.

Shahid assumes charge as LCCI acting president

LAHORE (APP): Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry has assumed the charge of Acting President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry as President Mian Abuzar Shad and Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman attend to important personal commitments, LCCI spokesman confirmed to media here on Wednesday. Shahid Nazir Chaudhry, known for his dedicated service and practical approach to resolving business issues, brings with him a strong background in advocacy for trader rights and economic reform. He is taking charge during a critical period when the business community is facing

significant challenges. Shahid Nazir Chaudhry said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry does not seek mere assurances or sweet talk from policymakers, but solid action. "We will continue to raise our voice forcefully and constructively to ensure that the unjust measures affecting the business community are rolled back, and pro-growth policies are introduced," he added. Former LCCI Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar and business community has congratulated Shahid Nazir Chaudhry for being LCCI Acting President. As Acting President, Shahid Nazir Chaudhry

would continue LCCI's robust policy engagements with the government, including issues of high taxation, energy costs, regulatory hurdles and the need for reforms to support domestic industry and SMEs. His prior involvement in important Chamber initiatives has earned him wide respect within the business circle, and the Executive Committee has extended its full support to him in this interim capacity. The LCCI Acting President is firmly committed to acting as a strong bridge between the private sector and the government, working for a business-friendly environment and sustainable economic development in Pakistan.

Global stocks mixed as markets track US trade deal prospects

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stocks were mixed Tuesday as markets monitored congressional progress on Donald Trump's massive tax and spending legislation and weighed the prospects for US trade deals ahead of Trump's July 9 tariff deadline. The Republican-led upper congressional chamber narrowly cleared Trump's mammoth domestic policy bill, sending the measure back to the House of Representatives, where the vote is also expected to be close. Equity market viewers have cheered the prospects of extending tax cuts while expressing misgivings about projections that the measure will add some \$3 trillion to the US national debt. The Dow advanced Tuesday, while both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq retreated from records. Earlier European mar-

kets had also ended mixed, while Japan's Nikkei suffered a 1.2 percent drop after Trump threatened new levies on Japan over a row about the country accepting US rice exports. "The next few days are going to be testing times for governments in many parts of the world as they try to hammer out trade deals with the US," said Dan Coatsworth, an investment analyst at AJ Bell. While few trade agreements have been reached so far, the week began with some optimism as Canada and the United States agreed to restart trade talks after Ottawa scrapped a digital services tax contested by US tech giants. Comments from Trump and some of his top officials also suggested the deadline was flexible, and that several pacts were nearly completed. "We expect risk senti-

ment to remain shaky until a deal is agreed... investors are on pause for now and are waiting for concrete news before making their next move," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at trading group XTB. The dollar extended its retreat against the euro and other major currencies. The Dollar Index, which compares the greenback to a basket of major currencies, fell 10.8 percent in the first half of the year, its steepest decline since the dollar became the global benchmark currency. Investors increasingly expect the Federal Reserve to cut rates at least twice this year -- with Trump having loudly criticized Fed chief Jerome Powell for not doing so sooner -- and all eyes will be on US jobs data due this week. Powell responded on Tuesday at a central bankers' gathering in

Portugal, insisting that the Fed must remain "completely non-political" to successfully pursue its strategy of financial and economic stability. Among individual companies, Tesla fell 5.3 percent as the electric car company's CEO Elon Musk sparred with Trump over the tax and spending bill. After Musk lambasted the legislation as wasteful and misguided, Trump warned of retribution against Tesla and other Musk ventures. "This high-profile feud introduces political risk," Briefing.com said of the tiff. "The personal nature of the conflict, amplified by Trump's comments implying Tesla's reliance on subsidies for survival, has sparked fears of broader policy shifts targeting Musk's business empire. This political uncertainty undermines investor confidence."

Exports increase by 4.67% to \$32.106b in FY-2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country increased by 4.67 percent during the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to previous year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Wednesday. Exports during July-June (2024-25) were recorded at \$32.106 billion against \$30.675 billion during July-June (2023-24), according to latest PBS data. On the other hand, imports into the country also went up by 6.57 per-

cent by growing from \$54.779 billion last year to \$58.380 billion during the fiscal year 2024-25. Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the period under review was recorded at \$26.274 billion against the deficit of \$24.104 billion last year, showing an increase of 9 percent. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports in June 2025 decreased by 0.59 percent to \$2.543 billion from \$2.558 billion in June 2024.

On the other hand, the imports also declined by 1.97 percent by falling from \$4.964 billion last year to \$4.866 billion in FY2024-25, according to PBS data. On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country came down by 4.79 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.671 billion during May 2025. The imports witnessed a decrease of 7.08 percent when compared to the imports of \$5.237 billion in May 2025, PBS reported.



In brief

Pak-India clash set for Sept 7

DUBAI (Web Desk): The much-anticipated showdown between cricketing rivals Pakistan and India in the Asia Cup 2025 has been scheduled for September 7 in Dubai, despite rising tensions following the Pahalgam incident. Contrary to recent rumors about the event's cancellation, the Asia Cup 2025 will proceed as planned in the UAE. According to reports, the tournament will begin on either September 4 or 5 and will be played in the T20 format, starting with a group stage followed by a Super Four round. If both teams qualify for the Super Four stage, a second Pakistan-India match is likely on September 14, with a potential final clash on September 21. Although India holds the official hosting rights, the event has been shifted to the UAE due to political and security concerns. India, however, will retain hosting status. An Indian broadcaster confirmed that "the tournament will take place in September and our team will participate," adding that India has never refused to play Pakistan in ICC events due to the high-value media rights, largely controlled by Indian networks. The last Pakistan-India encounter took place in Dubai during the 2025 Champions Trophy. India has not toured Pakistan since 2008, consistently choosing neutral venues for bilateral and multilateral tournaments. Despite India's rigid stance, cricket fans are eagerly awaiting the historic face-off between the arch-rivals in Asia Cup 2025.

Furqan secures bronze medal

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan's pride, Furqan Khan, won the Bronze Medal in the 130-kg Greco-Roman Wrestling category at the World Police & Fire Games 2025, held in Birmingham, Alabama, USA. Competing against some of the world's top athletes, Furqan Khan delivered a powerful performance, securing impressive victories against opponents from the United States and Mongolia. Despite a highly competitive and hard-fought match, he was edged out by India in the semi-finals. Nevertheless, Furqan's determination and skill earned him a well-deserved spot on the podium. Speaking after the event, Furqan Khan stated that he showed up with the best he had. Every drop of sweat was for my country, and I'm proud to bring the medal home for Pakistan. The remarkable achievement highlights the strength, talent, and fighting spirit of Pakistani athletes on the international stage. Furqan Khan's success is a proud moment not only for the national wrestling community but for the entire nation.

Chelsea sign Brazil striker Joao Pedro

LONDON (AFP): Chelsea signed Brazil striker Joao Pedro from Brighton in a deal worth a reported £60 million (\$79 million) on Wednesday. Pedro jetted to the United States, where Chelsea are playing in the Club World Cup, on Sunday after the terms of his eight-year contract were agreed. With the transfer now confirmed following a medical, Pedro is available to play for Enzo Maresca's side in their Club World Cup quarter-final against Palmeiras in Philadelphia. FIFA has given clubs involved in the Club World Cup knockout phase until July 3 to register new players for the tournament.

Bangladesh collapse hands Sri Lanka big win in ODI series opener

COLOMBO (AFP): Bangladesh suffered a stunning batting collapse under lights as Sri Lanka snatched a 77-run victory in the first one-day international in Colombo on Wednesday. Chasing a modest 245, the visitors looked to be cruising at 100 for one, before the wheels came off spectacularly—losing seven wickets for just five runs in the space of 26 balls to be eventually shot out for 167. It was a catastrophic implosion that saw the visitors go from cruise control to crisis mode in the blink of an eye. The turning point came with the run out of the set Najmul Hossain Shanto, who had been looking in ominous touch during a fluent 71-run stand with Tanzid Hasan. Shanto, fresh off twin tons in the recent drawn Galle Test, was beginning to assert himself when he called for a risky second run, only to be caught short by a bullet throw from debutant Milan Rathnayake from deep mid-wicket. That moment turned the tide—and Sri Lanka pounced. Enter spin twins Wanindu Hasaranga and Kamindu Mendis, who spun a web around the bewildered Bangladesh middle order. The pair shared seven wickets between them as Bangladesh cracked under pressure.

Hasaranga struck twice in his opening over—trapping Litton Das plumb in front for a duck and then watching Janith Liyanage pull off a blinder at mid-off to send Tanzid back to the pavilion for a top score of 62. Mendis, the ambidextrous spinner who bowls both right-arm off-spin and left-arm orthodox, then joined the act. His variation proved too much for the shell-shocked tourists. Hasaranga milestone It was a night to remember for Hasaranga, who brought up a personal milestone as he claimed his 100th ODI wicket—becoming the second fastest Sri Lankan to the mark in 64 games, just one behind Ajantha Mendis. He finished with four for 10. Sri Lanka were penalized with five penalty runs added to the extras for starting the 36th over of Bangladesh's innings late after being warned twice earlier in the evening. Skipper Charith Asalanka's fighting century held Sri Lanka's innings together after they were rocked early at 29 for three. The left-hander mixed caution with aggression to compile his fifth ODI hundred. Asalanka found handy allies in the lower middle order to steer Sri Lanka to 244 before being bowled

out with four deliveries to spare. His knock proved to be the difference on a day when composure under pressure separated the two sides. Bangladesh skipper Mehidy Hasan Miraz admitted his batsmen had not been up to scratch. "We started off so well and then the run out cost us dearly. Our middle order was a disappointment as we didn't handle the pressure well. We should have got a partnership going," he said. "It is tough to lose, but we are a better team than this. We will bounce back in two days' time." Asalanka was named man of the match for his 106. "I wanted to play according to the situation. We were disappointed with the way we finished in the last 10 overs. We knew we were a few runs short but the fielding was amazing today," said Asalanka. "We emphasise a lot on fielding. We believe catches win matches and it was there to be seen today. We have done well in ODIs in the last 12 months having beaten Australia and India. "We are ranked fourth in the world and we want to address a few shortcomings and finish this series strong." The second ODI in the three-match series will be played at the same venue on Saturday.



COLOMBO: Towhid Hridoy is bowled, Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh, 1st ODI.

Pakistan down Indonesia in AFC women's Asian Cup Qualifier

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan secured a historic 2-0 win over Indonesia in the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers, marking their first-ever victory in the tournament's qualification stage. According to details, Nadia Khan opened the scoring in the 8th minute, giving Pakistan an early lead. Suha Hirani then converted a penalty in the 18th minute to extend the advantage and seal a memorable win for the team. Pakistan will head into their final group match against Kyrgyzstan on July 5, kicking off at 1:30pm Pakistan Standard Time (PST).

Pak players qualify for Asian Jr Squash C'ships quarterfinals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Showcasing exceptional skills and determination, six Pakistani players have qualified for the quarterfinals of the 32nd Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships 2025, at South Korea. On Day two of the championships, in Boys U-19, Abdullah Nawaz [3/4] (PAK) beat Tavneet S M (IND) 11-4, 11-5, 11-6 (3-0); Yusha Nafees [9/16] (IND) beat Anas Ali Shah [3/4] (PAK) 7-11, 13-11, 11-3, 4-11, 11-5 (3-2). In Boys U-17, Subhash C [5/8] (IND) beat Muhammad Umair Arif [9/16] (PAK) 11-7, 11-9, 13-11 (3-0). In Boys U-15, Nauman Khan [1] (PAK) beat Muhammad I (MAS) 11-6, 11-2, 11-2 (3-0); Ahmad Rayyan Khan (PAK) beat Shreyansh J [2] (IND) 11-4, 11-5, 12-10 (3-0). In Boys U-13, Muhammad Sohail Adnan [1] (PAK) beat Mior E F AN (MAS) 11-3, 11-4, 11-5 (3-0). In Girls U-17, Chung Y L [3/4] (HKG) beat Mehwish Ali [9/16] (PAK) 11-13, 11-5, 13-11, 11-4 (3-1). In Girls U-15, Sehrish Ali (PAK) beat Chiu H C [3/4] (HKG) 14-12, 11-6, 6-11, 11-7 (3-1). In Girls U-13, Mahnoor Ali [3/4] (PAK) beat Cheung H K M (HKG) 11-8, 11-2, 11-7 (3-0).

Gonzalo sends Real Madrid into Club World Cup Quarters

MIAMI GARDENS, United States (Agencies): Gonzalo Garcia's 54th-minute header was enough to give Real Madrid a 1-0 win over Juventus at Hard Rock Stadium on Tuesday and book their place in the quarter-finals of the Club World Cup. The Spanish giants will face the winner of Tuesday's other game between Borussia Dortmund and Mexico's Monterrey in the last eight. It was an impressive display from Xabi Alonso's Madrid side and adding to a positive day, Kylian Mbappe made his return from illness, coming on as a 68th-minute substitute for his first appearance of the tournament. The first half was a finely-balanced contest with Igor Tudor's Juventus starting brightly before Real ended it on top. There was an early chance for Juve's Randal Kolo Muani after clever work from Kenan Yildiz to put him through on goal, but the French forward opted for an attempted chip

of Thibaut Courtois and his shot floated over the bar. The impressive Yildiz then burst through the middle and unleashed a fierce effort which deflected off Aurelien Tchouameni and flew wide. The Turin team, beaten 5-2 by Manchester City in their final group game, were moving the ball around with confidence but Real grew into the contest and they went close when Jude Bellingham forced a save out of Michele Di Gregorio from close range. Federico Valverde then tested the Juve goalkeeper from long range and Trent Alexander-Arnold whipped a low ball across the face of the goal as Madrid finished the half strongly. The interval did nothing to alter the momentum of the game with Real creating several chances—Bellingham laid off to Valverde, whose sweetly-struck shot was just wide and then Bellingham himself brought another good save out of Di Gregorio with a shot from the edge of the box. Dean Huijzen's rocket-

ing drive was parried out by the busy goalkeeper as Real laid siege to the Juventus goal and it was no surprise when the breakthrough finally arrived. Alexander-Arnold floated in a cross from the right which Gonzalo met with a perfectly-timed header for his third goal in four games in the tournament. Juve responded with Portuguese winger Francisco Conceicao bringing Courtois into action from a low shot the Belgian shot-stopper did well to get down to. But Real wanted to finish the contest off and Valverde tested Di Gregorio's reactions with an overhead kick before Alonso decided to introduce Mbappe to the delight of the 62,149 crowd. Juve's belief remained however and Nicolas Gonzalez flashed a 25-yard drive just wide. At the other end, Real's Turkish midfielder Arda Guler saw his crisp shot kept out by the feet of Di Gregorio, but the one goal was enough.



Sabalenka puts upsets out of mind to advance

LONDON (Agencies): World number one Aryna Sabalenka put this year's record number of Wimbledon upsets out of her mind in a hard-fought victory over Marie Bouzkova. Eight top-10 seeds across the men's and women's singles draws went out across the opening two days - the most at a Grand Slam in the Open era - but Sabalenka avoided that same fate with a gritty 7-6 (7-4) 6-4 win over the world number 48. The Belarusian is aiming to add a maiden Wimbledon title to her three other Grand Slam triumphs at the US and Australian Opens. After her win, the top seed told the Centre Court crowd: "I hope it is no upsets anymore in this tournament, if you know what I mean!" Sabalenka, 27, has reached the final of both majors so far this year, but lost to Madison Keys at the Australian Open and Coco Gauff at the French Open. "Honestly, it is sad to see so many upsets in the tournament in both draws," she added. "I'm just trying to take it one step at a time. I know if I'm focused, if I'm there, if I'm fighting, I know I'm going to have my chance in each match. "I think it's really important to focus on yourself

and to take it one step at a time - do not really look at the draw. "This is something that can create a lot of nerves and a lot of doubts." Sabalenka could face Emma Raducanu in round three, should the British number one overcome 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova later on Wednesday. Meanwhile, American Keys breezed into the third round with a comfortable 6-4 6-2 win over Serbia's Olga Danilovic. If the sixth seed and Sabalenka continue to progress they could meet in the quarter-finals in a repeat of their Melbourne final. After a scorching couple of days at SW19, handheld fans were replaced by umbrellas on a drizzly morning which delayed play on the outside courts by almost two hours. But the roof was off on Centre Court in time for Sabalenka's round two match with the sun beginning to peep through. The three-time major winner made tough work of the opening set, struggling to find consistency and, while not playing badly, she was not clinical in crucial moments. Having watched three of the top five seeds fall on day two, including French Open champion Gauff,

Sabalenka would have welcomed a draw that was beginning to open up. But eye rolling and shouting in frustration at times, she could not conjure a break point in the first set and instead went down a break when she double faulted at 5-5 to hand Bouzkova the lead. That was met with a big cheer from a Wimbledon crowd desperate to back the Czech underdog, but they were equally as animated when Sabalenka let out a huge roar as she dug deep to force the tie-break. A more straightforward second set followed as she secured the break in the fifth game, ramping up the aggression and executing each of her signature powerful groundstrokes with a loud grunt. Sabalenka is clearly well-liked among the Wimbledon fans but a potential third-round meeting against Briton Raducanu may, for once, put them against her. Elsewhere on day three, Donna Vekic and Leylah Fernandez became the latest seeds to fall. Croatian 22nd seed Vekic lost 6-1 6-3 to Spain's Cristina Bucsa, while Canadian Fernandez, seeded 29, was beaten 6-2 6-3 by Germany's Laura Siegemund.

Ruthless Alcaraz ends Tarvet's Wimbledon fairytale

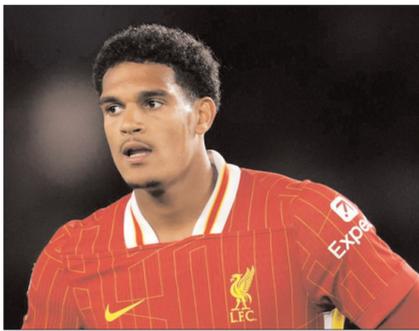
LONDON (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz ended Oliver Tarvet's Wimbledon fairytale as the defending champion moved into the third round with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win over the British amateur on Wednesday. After a record-breaking number of seeds crashed out at the All England Club in the first round, Alcaraz avoided a seismic shock on Centre Court. The world number two had battled to a five-set win over 38-year-old Italian Fabio Fognini in a first-round clash lasting over four hours on Monday. He once again looked below his best, taking two hours and 17 minutes to subdue world number 733 Tarvet, who produced flashes of his emerging talent to delight the partisan crowd. "First of all I have to give big praise to Oliver. In his second match on the tour, I just loved his game to be honest," Alcaraz said. "I knew I had to play my best tennis. I was really happy with my performance but big praise to him as well." Alcaraz has won his past 20 matches since losing to Holger Rune in the Barcelona final in April, a blistering streak that has brought him titles at the Rome Masters, the French Open and Queen's Club. The 22-year-old Spaniard, who fought back from two sets down to beat Jannik Sinner on clay in an epic final at Roland Garros last month, has won 31 of his 34



Tour-level matches on grass. His last defeat at Wimbledon came against Sinner in the fourth round in 2022. "I found the right way. I try to enjoy every match. It doesn't matter if I'm winning or losing. That is the key," Alcaraz said. "The last few months have been a great winning streak. I just try to keep it going. "I'm trying to make the most of my time in Wimbledon. Let's see how far I can go." Standing ovation Having vanquished Novak Djokovic in the past two Wimbledon finals, Alcaraz is looking to join an elite group of Wimbledon icons. He hopes to become the fifth man in the Open Era to win at least three consecutive Wimbledon titles after seven-time champion Djokovic, Bjorn Borg, Roger Federer and Pete Sampras. In stark contrast to Alcaraz's fame and fortune, the unheralded Tarvet is just starting his tennis career and cannot even collect all of his Wimbledon prize money. As a student of the University of San Diego, the 21-year-old has to maintain amateur status and will have to give up most of his earnings. While Alcaraz is a five-time Grand Slam champion Tarvet was playing just his second major main draw match after coming through three qualifiers and beating Leandro Riedi in the opening round. More accustomed to playing in front of a few hundred spectators on the US college circuit, Tarvet defied the vast rankings gap to Alcaraz and had 15,000 Centre Court fans cheering his every move. Alcaraz was always in control but he appreciated the underdog's tenacious performance. He wrapped Tarvet in a warm hug after the last point and applauded him off the court as fans gave the plucky Briton a standing ovation.

Liverpool defender Quansah signs for Bayer Leverkusen

MUNICH (AFP): Centre-half Jarell Quansah has joined Bayer Leverkusen from Premier League champions Liverpool for a reported club record fee, the Bundesliga side announced on Wednesday. According to British and German press, the transfer fee for the 22-year-old could go up to 40 million euros (\$47 million), including 10 million euros in add-ons. German specialist media Kicker and The Athletic also reported the inclusion of a 60-million-euro buy-back clause in the contract, which Liverpool could activate from summer 2027 to re-sign Quansah. "We are very happy to be able to sign Jarell Quansah, one of the most promising English central defenders," said Leverkusen managing director of sport Simon Rolfes. "He made a very impressive contribution to



a Liverpool defence full of world-class players. Jarell will give our defence extra dynamism, tempo and strength." Quansah becomes the most expensive signing in Leverkusen's history, following on from the previous record arrival of midfielder Kerem Demirbay for 32 million euros in 2019. The 2025 European under-21 champion with England joined

for much of the 2024/25 campaign. Quansah arrives at Leverkusen to replace departed former captain Jonathan Tah at the heart of the Bundesliga club's defence. "The ambitious targets here were clearly explained to me during the negotiations. It's a great role and challenge for me to be part of the current Leverkusen rebuild," said Quansah. After creating league history by winning the Bundesliga undefeated in 2024, Leverkusen endured a difficult title defence last term, finishing 13 points adrift of winners Bayern Munich. He went on to appear 58 times for the Merseysiders, winning the League Cup in 2022 and 2024, as well as the Premier League title last season. After playing second fiddle to first-choice defensive duo Virgil van Dijk and Ibrahima Konate



In brief

IRSA releases 279,306 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 279,306 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 431,901 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1510.15 feet which was 108.15 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 283,300 cusecs and 150,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1177.30 feet, which was 127.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 29,295 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 197,817, 190,316, 103,609 and 50,950 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 49,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 37,856 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF arrests 8 suspects

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), while conducting 6 operations across the country, recovered as many as 255.020 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 162.8 million and arrested 8 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Wednesday. He informed that 8,350 kgs of ice were recovered from the luggage of a Bahrain-bound suspect at Karachi International Airport. In another operation, 520 grams of heroin and 550 grams of ice were recovered from the trolley bag of a Bahrain-bound passenger from Islamabad International Airport. As many as 14 kg of charas was seized from a truck near Iqbal Shaheed Toll Plaza, GT Road, Attock and three suspects were arrested. Similarly, 3.6 kgs of charas were recovered from two motorcyclists near Faizabad, Islamabad. Near Al-Asif Square, Sohrah Goth, Karachi, 2 kg of charas was recovered from the possession of a suspect. As much as 226 kg of morphine, concealed for smuggling purposes, was recovered near Killi Daman area, Chaman. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.

Transgender killed in Rawat

RAWALPINDI (APP): A transgender was killed on Wednesday after a dispute turned violent within the Rawat police jurisdiction. Police reached the scene soon after receiving information. According to initial investigation, the murder was result of a petty dispute. The victim's body was shifted to the hospital for a post-mortem, while evidence is being collected from the crime scene. Those responsible for the crime will be arrested and brought to justice. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani has taken notice of the incident. He directed SP Sattar to submit a detailed report.

5 held for violating Tenancy Act

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested five individuals during a search operation as part of a crackdown on violations of the Tenancy Act. The operations were carried out in the areas including Rawat and Waris Khan police stations here Wednesday. According to police, the arrested individuals had failed to register their tenancy details as legal requirement. The action was taken to monitor suspicious activity and ensure public safety.

Trade corridor via rail & road needed: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to enhance trade through rail, road, and air routes. Addressing the Ministerial Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tianjin, China, he expressed Pakistan's keen interest in establishing trade corridors through China, Afghanistan and Iran, highlighting the country's strategic role in regional connectivity and trade activities, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

He emphasized that under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan has achieved major milestones in road infrastructure. "Our focus now is to expand trade beyond the borders of Afghanistan and Iran with fully functional international-standard cargo ports in Gwadar and Karachi," he added. The minister also underscored the significance of Khunjerab in the North and the coastal gateways of Gwadar and Karachi in Pakistan's trade expansion strategy.

Highlighting regional development initiatives, Abdul Aleem Khan noted that the proposed



Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project would be a transformative step for the entire region. He confirmed that Pakistan supports the construction of Silk Road Stations with China's cooperation and that the Khunjerab-Sust Route will now remain operational year-round from year 2023.

It is worth mentioning that 10 Member countries are participating in the ongoing SCO Ministerial Conference while India once again opted not to attend. As per details from India Anand Prakash was listed to attend this SCO who remained absent and his seat was left vacant.

Talking about this, Abdul Aleem Khan remarked that such irre-

sponsible behavior on a global forum is regrettable and shows India's unwillingness to face its regional counterparts. "Pakistan has always advocated for mutual respect and cooperation while as a nuclear power, India must adopt a responsible attitude and behave like a good neighbor," he stated. SCO delegates from other countries also expressed surprise and disappointment over India's absence in this Ministerial Session of SCO.

In his address, the Federal Minister informed that Pakistan is actively pursuing the digitalization of its Transport Systems and moving rapidly toward smart transport solutions.

He added that Pakistan has implemented a visa-on-arrival policy for citizens of 126 countries with over 20,000 visas issued so far under this initiative.

Abdul Aleem Khan expressed satisfaction with the proceedings of the SCO Conference and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fully implement its decisions. He stressed that the region's progress hinges on mutual trust, cooperation and modern transport connectivity. As a permanent member of the SCO since 2017, Pakistan is dedicated to improve communication infrastructure and forming an integrated transport network with other Member States.

LESCO guard suspended, arrested after assault on woman

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Power Division has taken strict action against Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) guard, following a disturbing incident in Sheikhpura where he manhandled an elderly woman on June 30.

According to an official spokesperson, the guard was immediately suspended and an FIR was also registered against him. He is currently in police custody.

"This kind of behavior — breaking the law and humiliating citizens — will not be tolerated under any circumstances," the spokesperson said, emphasizing that electricity consumers deserve the highest respect.

The Power Division has also launched departmental proceedings to terminate the guard's employment and has ordered a full inquiry to be completed within three days.

In response to the incident, all power distribution companies (DISCOs) have been directed to take immediate preventive measures and issue clear instructions to their offices to ensure public dealing is handled with dignity and respect.

"We extend our sincere apologies to the elderly woman and other consumers affected by this unacceptable act," the spokesperson added.

ICT admin urges citizens to report over price violation issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration took action against a major supermarket in the Shalimar area for charging customers more than the official prices and failing to cooperate with the DC counter system. According to the spokesman of ICT administration here, three staff members were arrested and taken to the police station following the operation.

He said that the Assistant Commissioner (AC) Shalimar launched a surprise inspection at a large retail store after receiving complaints from customers about being overcharged. During the visit, it was found that the mart was violating the official price list and not supporting

the District Commissioner (DC) counter initiative, which is designed to keep a check on the quality and pricing of essential items.

Authorities confirmed that the mart's staff was not displaying the approved price list and was selling items at rates higher than those notified by the district administration. Despite earlier instructions, the DC counter—set up to handle price and quality-related complaints—was either inactive or completely ignored by the mart's management.

As a result, three employees were arrested on the spot and shifted to the local police station for further investigation. Officials said the arrests were made to set an example for other retailers and to send

a message that violations of consumer rights would not be tolerated. The DC counter is a mechanism established at various shops and markets to help customers register their complaints about overpriced or low-quality items. However, its effectiveness depends on the cooperation of retailers and active participation of the public.

In a public message issued after the action, AC Shalimar urged residents to remain vigilant and report any instances where shops are found charging more than the fixed prices or selling substandard products. Citizens have been asked to inform the district administration immediately if they notice any violations at DC counters or elsewhere in the market.

ITP chalks out special traffic plan on Muharram 6

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) have announced special traffic arrangements for the 6th Muharram procession scheduled.

An official told APP on Wednesday that the procession will start from street number 22 before concluding at Imambargah Jafriya in I-9/1.

He said that during the procession, the service road adjacent to I-9/1 will remain closed for all types of traffic to ensure the safety of participants.

He said commuters may use alternative routes including IJP Road and Warsak Road near the I-9 Markaz to avoid inconvenience.

He further stated that Street 18 and the service road near Imambargah I-9/1 will also be closed for vehicular movement during the event.

He advised citizens to use the alternative routes, including Mangal Bazaar I-9 and the IJP Principal Road, for smooth travel during the procession.

"Citizens are requested to avoid illegal parking around the procession route," said CTO Captain (R) Zeeshan Haider, adding that all vehicles should be parked in designated areas.

He urged the public to cooperate with traffic police officials and follow instructions to maintain order and safety throughout the procession.

Islamabad Police Solve 15 high-profile cases, win praise from Mohsin Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant breakthrough, the Islamabad Police have successfully solved 15 high-profile cases including the widely publicized murders of social media influencer Sana Yousaf and political analyst Sardar Faheem earning commendation from Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for their swift and professional work.

In a special meeting held in Islamabad, Minister Naqvi met with the key members of the police teams behind the investigations. He lauded their performance, saying, "Well done, Islamabad Police, we are proud of your performance." He further praised their effective use of modern technology and surveillance, particularly in solving the blind murder case of Sardar Faheem.

The minister met with Inspector General (IG) of Islamabad Police Ali Nasir

Rizvi, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Jawad Tariq, SSP Operations Muhammad Shoaib, SSP Investigation Usman Tariq Butt, SP City Suleman Zafar, SP Sattar Kazim Naqvi, ASP Ali Raza, Assistant Director Abbas Mehdi, DSP Suleman Shah, and SHOs and investigators involved in the resolved cases. Each was personally commended for their dedication and investigative acumen.

"Islamabad Police have demonstrated exceptional professionalism and commitment, solving complex and sensitive cases in record time," said Naqvi. "The speed and precision with which these crimes were resolved are a testament to the force's capabilities."

Among the cases highlighted were the murder of Sana Yousaf, which had sparked widespread public concern, and the killing of Sardar Faheem, an incident that raised alarms within the

capital's security circles.

IG Islamabad Police Ali Nasir Rizvi took the opportunity to spotlight the efforts of Constable Rana Waseem, a long-serving member of the force who played a crucial role in the investigations. Minister Naqvi, acknowledging Waseem's 21 years of service at the same rank, instructed the IG to promote him in accordance with departmental rules.

The event was also attended by Minister of State for Interior Tahir Chaudhry, Federal Interior Secretary Khuram Agha, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad.

Minister Naqvi expressed confidence that the Islamabad Police would continue to uphold the highest standards of service and remain steadfast in protecting the lives and property of citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Awarazeb Khichi, Special Assistant to PM Huzafa Rehman and Asad Rehman Gilani call on Senator Irfan Siddiqui. —APP Photo

Sumeta urges citizens to take preventive measures against monsoon mosquito threat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Spokesperson for the Government of Sindh Sumeta Afzal Syed Wednesday said that the provincial health department has launched a public awareness campaign to educate citizens about the risks associated with mosquito-borne diseases during the monsoon season.

In an exclusive talk with a local news channel, she called for public awareness and urged full cooperation between citizens, particularly in Karachi and civic bodies, to tackle the growing number of mosquito bite cases during the monsoon.

She warned that illnesses such as malaria, dengue and chikungunya tend to see a rise during this period due to stagnant water

and increased mosquito breeding. While the number of cases is climbing, she assured that the overall situation is currently under control.

Sumeta Afzal Syed emphasized the importance of public cooperation in maintaining hygiene and supporting civic efforts. She urged citizens, particularly in urban areas like Karachi, to take preventive measures and work closely with local authorities to help contain the spread of these diseases.

She emphasized that public awareness is the need of the hour, especially regarding standing water during the monsoon, which serves as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

She added that the government has initiated fumigation drives across vulnerable areas and is actively collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO) to strengthen preventive efforts and ensure a timely response.

While responding to a query, Sumeta said that the government is providing training to healthcare staff and launching media campaigns to inform the public about preventive measures.

She advised citizens to keep their surroundings clean, avoid water accumulation, use mosquito repellents, and ensure proper waste disposal to help reduce the risk of disease transmission during the monsoon season.

Parental vigilance key to child protection and nation's future, Says DG MoHR

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an exclusive interview, Director General of the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), Abdul Sattar here on Wednesday, outlined recent developments and ongoing challenges in the Ministry's efforts to uphold child rights and human rights commitments at both national and international levels.

Speaking on institutional frameworks, Abdul Sattar highlighted the critical role of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) in protecting vulnerable children, especially girls. "These girls are not enjoying their rights the way they should. That's where our national commissions play a vital role," he said.

He drew attention to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2016, and the newly introduced Early Child Marriage Restraining Act, which sets the legal age for marriage at 18. "The new legislation strengthens protections, but the real challenge is implementation, especially in remote areas," Sattar noted.

Addressing these implementation gaps, he explained that the 18th Constitutional Amendment

had devolved human rights responsibilities to the provincial and district levels. "Now, human rights are a provincial subject. Each district, especially in Balochistan and Sindh, has its own department or social welfare setup. Our role at the federal level is now focused on policy, coordination, and international reporting," he stated.

Sattar also elaborated on Pakistan's international obligations: "We've ratified seven out of nine core human rights conventions and regularly submit reports under these frameworks. We're also responsible for defending Pakistan's human rights record in international forums."

About the query of help line, the DG said that the Ministry's 1099 Helpline has become a central mechanism for addressing complaints related to child abuse, early marriages, and other violations. "Complaints are received, digitally registered in our IT system, and followed up with relevant departments across the country," said the Director General.

On child labor and begging, particularly involving Afghan refugee children, Sattar stressed the need for coordinated action. "We play an advisory role, but law enforcement and local gov-

ernments are the primary implementers. In Islamabad, the Chief Commissioner's Office and Police are actively working to address child labor," he shared.

He also emphasized the work being done under Pakistan's GSP+ trade status, which is linked to the country's human rights performance. "Our compliance with international treaties and conventions is directly tied to our trade incentives. Human rights protections are not just moral obligations—they are also economic imperatives."

In addition to legislative reforms and human rights monitoring, Director General Abdul Sattar emphasized the rising importance of cybersecurity, particularly in safeguarding children from online threats such as exploitation, cyberbullying, and harassment. "With increased internet usage, children are more vulnerable than ever to online abuse. It is crucial that parents and guardians closely monitor their children's digital activity, including social media, gaming platforms, and chat applications," he warned.

To address these concerns, the Ministry of Human Rights, in coordination with other relevant bodies, has taken proactive

steps. "A special Cyber Wing has been established to respond to cases of online abuse, cyber harassment, and exploitation of children," Abdul Sattar confirmed. "This wing works in coordination with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and other law enforcement institutions to ensure rapid action and digital protection," he added.

The Cyber Wing not only investigates cybercrime cases but also plays an educational role. "We are raising awareness about digital literacy and safe internet practices through schools, public campaigns, and community outreach," he added. "It's not just about punishing offenders—it's about preventing cybercrime before it happens, further he added.

He urged families to remain vigilant. "Children today have access to technology, but not always the judgment to use it safely. It is the shared responsibility of parents, teachers, and the government to create a safe digital environment for child."

The Ministry is also collaborating with civil society and tech platforms to implement reporting mechanisms and content regulation. "When a child is exposed to harmful content or

contacted by suspicious individuals online, we want to ensure there's a clear and safe way to report and resolve the issue immediately." As Pakistan continues to develop its digital infrastructure, Sattar stressed that cybersecurity must remain a national priority. "Digital rights are human rights. Just as we protect children in schools and homes, we must also protect them in the digital world."

In closing, Abdul Sattar reiterated the Ministry's commitment: "Laws are in place, institutions are working, and international obligations are being fulfilled. But without stronger local implementation and awareness, our vision for a rights-respecting society will remain incomplete."

Sattar urged parents across Pakistan to take a more active role in the upbringing and supervision of their children—both at home and in society. Emphasizing the importance of strong moral and social guidance, he stated: "Parents should keep a close eye on their children—not just to protect them from mobile addiction or harmful digital content, but also to ensure they don't fall into bad company. Good training at home is the first line of defense. Children are the

future of Pakistan, and it is our duty to raise them with care, discipline, and values."

He stressed that alongside schools and the state, families have a crucial role to play in ensuring a child's emotional and psychological well-being.

Abdul Sattar also highlighted the need for community-level vigilance, especially in cases of child abduction or missing persons. He encouraged citizens to take swift action if a child goes missing or is suspected of being kidnapped. "At the grassroots level, people should immediately contact the emergency helpline 15 to alert the police in case of any suspicious activity or abduction. Time is critical in such cases, and quick reporting can save lives."

The Ministry of Human Rights is working to strengthen collaboration between law enforcement agencies and communities to ensure quicker responses and better child protection outcomes. The Ministry also promotes public awareness campaigns on safe parenting, child safety, and reporting mechanisms. "Protecting children is a shared responsibility. From home to street to school—every space must be made safe for our children," Abdul Sattar concluded.

2-year-old girl drowns in pond

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A two-year-old girl has died after falling into a pond in the Khogyani district of southern Ghazni province, an official said on Wednesday. Police spokesman Abu Khalid Sarhadi told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident occurred on Tuesday in Khasha village of Khogyani district. He said the child had fallen into a water reservoir near her home and drowned. Similar incidents have been reported in various provinces in the past.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 07, 1447 — Thursday, July 03, 2025

Rocket shell blast kills 2

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): Two children have been killed and a third injured when an unexploded rocket shell detonated in Ghor, an official said on Wednesday. Maulvi Abdul Rahman Badri, spokesman for the Ghor police, said the incident occurred on Tuesday morning in the Band-i-Bain area of Ferozkoh, the provincial capital. According to Badri, the shell was a remnant of past conflicts and exploded when the children, while playing, attempted to move it.

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

Afghanistan to attend next Moscow format as full member

KABUL (Pajhwok): Russia's special representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov says the next meeting of the Moscow format of consultations on Afghanistan will be held in September-October 2025, with the exact date yet to be determined, reports TASS. He also announced Afghanistan will participate at this meeting as a full member.

held in the Qatari capital of Doha under the auspices of the UN. "We, together with our regional like-minded partners and the Ambassador [of Russia to Afghanistan Dmitry Zhironov], have already discussed here the possible content [of the consultations] and further coordination of joint actions," Kabulov said, adding that "Afghanistan will participate in this meeting as a full member."

On October 4, 2024, the sixth meeting of the Moscow format on Afghanistan was held in Moscow with the participation of special representatives and senior officials of Russia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Torkham prepares for influx of deportees

KABUL (TOLNews): Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal, head of Omari Camp in the Torkham township, says full preparations are in place for the reception of Afghan nationals being forcibly returned from Pakistan.

According to officials, if needed, in addition to other basic facilities, up to 5,000 tents will be installed in the camp for returnees. Maiwandwal stated: "If the number of returnees increases, we are prepared to provide up to 5,000 tents."

Bakht Jamal Gohar, head of migrant transportation in Torkham, told TOLNews: "As of today, Tuesday, the return of migrants has been proceeding normally, and we have not encountered any problems. All necessary services for returnees are available here."

Meanwhile, several recent returnees expelled from Pakistan described the situation of Afghan migrants in that country as concerning. Sada Gul, deported from Pakistan, told TOLNews: "All our belongings were left behind, including clothes. I had debts, perhaps around 600,000 or 700,000 rupees, that were left unpaid. They told us to leave immediately."

Other returnees called on the caretaker government and aid organizations to provide comprehensive support and assistance, saying they were deported by Pakistani police without any support and returned empty-handed.

Karimullah, another deportee, said: "We have come to Afghanistan, but we have no place to live. We don't know where to go. Land should be allocated for those who are homeless."

Lal Pacha, another returnee, added: "We had a shop in Pakistan. Everything we owned was left behind, and we were expelled."

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IE appeals to int'l relief organizations for aiding destitutes in Afghanistan

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, met with Alexander Mathieu, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

According to Bakhtar News Agency, citing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement, during the meeting, the Foreign Minister appreciated the services of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Afghanistan and emphasized the necessity of effective cooperation with needy compatriots in relevant sectors.

Mawlawi Muttaqi also called on all international charitable organizations and institutions, including the International Red Crescent Society, to support the needs of Afghans.

He specifically noted that, due to the recent increase in the return and arrival of Afghan refugees



from Pakistan and Iran, effective steps must be taken to provide them with shelter, clean drinking water, healthcare services, and overall economic employment.

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan also requested the establishment of equipped and standard clinics inside the country for the treatment of children

suffering from heart defects. Alexander Mathieu stated that currently assistance is being provided to about 300 clinics and hospitals in Afghanistan and promised to expand this aid further. Mathieu also thanked the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan for cooperation in the fair delivery of activities and services. He further pledged to make

rapid efforts to provide more services to patients with heart defects and to continue helping the poor and needy Afghans.

At the end of the meeting, extensive discussions were held, and assurances were made regarding continued joint cooperation, increased humanitarian aid, and the financing and equipping of health centers in Afghanistan.

250 new emerald mines discovered in Panjsher province

PARAKH (Pajhwok): About 350 new emerald mines have been discovered in the Pariyan district of central Panjsher province, and nearly 3,987 carats of emeralds from this province have been sold for over \$524,000.

In a statement, the governor's house said more than 250 emerald mines

have recently been discovered in the Pariyan district. Out of these, 100 mines have been registered, and official licenses have been issued for six of them.

It said that currently, 15,000 people are employed in the existing mines, and with the commencement of operations in the newly discovered min-

es, job opportunities will be provided for an additional 2,000 individuals.

Al-Haj Hafiz Mohammad Agha Hakim, the governor of Panjshir, welcomed the expansion of mining areas in the province and assured that serious and well-planned efforts are underway to ensure technical and stan-

dard extraction of these mines.

The statement added that 3,987 carats of emeralds extracted from Panjshir mines, valued at 524,350 dollars, were sold to domestic traders through an auction. According to the source, a Chinese trader also attended today's auction ceremony.

Shaflogh Dam project launched in Uruzgan province

TRENKOT (BNA): The construction of Shaflogh Dam begins in Chenartu district of Uruzgan at a cost of over 165 million Af.

According to a report by Bakhtar News Agency, the construction of the Shaflogh Dam has begun in the Chenartu district of Uruzgan province, with a budget exceeding 165 million Af.

At the inauguration ceremony, Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor, the Minister of Energy and Water, stated that the purpose of building the Shaflogh Dam is to manage water resources, strengthen groundwater reserves, expand agricultural activities, and control seasonal floods.

During the event, Mawlawi Enayatullah Shoja, the governor of Uruzgan, also described the project as a vital need for the people of the province. He added that once the dam is completed, thousands of jerbis (traditional unit of area) of land will be irrigated, the economic condition of the people will improve, and the risks posed by floods will be reduced.



He expressed gratitude to the Islamic Emirate, the Ministry of Energy and Water, and the National Development Company for awarding this important project to the province.

Mawlawi Abdul Wali Adel, Administrative Deputy of the National Development Company, said that construction of the Shaflogh Dam will be carried out in full transparency, in accordance with professional standards, and within the set

timeline. He emphasized that this dam will provide a permanent and reliable source of water for agriculture and support the economic advancement of the local population.

According to him, the dam is being built at a cost of 165.9 million Afghamis, with a height of 23 meters and a width of 155 meters. He noted that the dam will have the capacity to store 854,106 cubic meters of water, and once completed, it will irrigate 259 hectares

of agricultural land.

Meanwhile, some residents of Uruzgan consider this project a significant step toward development and hope that with the completion of the dam, a sustainable water supply for agriculture will be secured and flood risks in the region will be mitigated.

It is worth mentioning that detailed design and technical assessments are also underway for another large dam in the province, named Aghajan Dam.

Afghanistan delegation arrives in Azerbaijan



KABUL (BNA): A high-ranking delegation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, arrived in Azerbaijan to participate in the 17th Summit of the Heads of State of the Economic Cooperation

Organization (ECO). According to Bakhtar News Agency, quoting the statement from the Economic Deputy Office of the Prime Minister, the high-ranking delegation of the Islamic Emirate was warmly received by Azerbaijani officials at Heydar Aliyev International Airport.

The Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs is scheduled to deliver a speech at the ECO summit in addition to attending the meeting.

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund is also expected to meet with several Azerbaijani officials on the sidelines of the ECO summit.

'Passport distribution active in 27 countries'

KABUL (TOLNews): The Afghan Embassy in Azerbaijan has announced that passport distribution for Afghan citizens residing in the country has resumed after a four-year halt.

Meanwhile, Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, stated that the printing and distribution of passports is currently underway through 27 political missions of the Islamic Emirate in various countries.

Fitrat added: "The process of printing and distributing passports is actively ongoing in 27 diplomatic missions of the Islamic Emirate across neighboring

countries, Arab nations, and even European countries."

Nazar Nazari, a migrant rights activist, told TOLNews: "Passport distribution can help legalize the presence of Afghan citizens in host countries and improve their access to various services."

A number of Afghan migrants residing in neighboring and regional countries have welcomed the move and are calling for greater facilitation in obtaining passports, visas, and electronic national ID cards (Tazkira).

Noor Ahmad Yurtadash, an Afghan migrant in Turkey, said: "Without a

passport, we cannot renew our residency permits, obtain work licenses, or apply for university admission. If we face other issues and visit government offices in host countries, the first thing they ask for is a passport."

Experts also note that continuing and expanding this process to other countries could help reduce some of the challenges Afghan migrants face abroad.

Earlier, the Afghan Embassy in Ankara had also announced in a statement that passport distribution for Afghan citizens had resumed after a four-year suspension.

Construction work kicks off on Shalfogh dam



KABUL (Pajhwok): Construction work has been initiated on the Shalfogh dam at a cost of 165 million Afghamis in Chinartu district of central Uruzgan province, the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) announced on Tuesday.

In a statement issued today, the ministry said the project to build Shalfogh Dam has started with an estimated cost of 165.9 million Afghamis. "The Shalfogh Dam will

be constructed with a height of 23 metres and a width of 155 metres. It will have the capacity to store 854,106 cubic metres of water and will irrigate 259 hectares of agricultural land," MoEW said in the statement.

Speaking at a ceremony held to mark the launch of the project, Acting Minister of Energy and Water Mullah Abdul Latif Mansour said the dam was being built to manage water

resources, strengthen underground water reserve and control seasonal floods. He added that the ministry also plans to implement solar power projects in Uruzgan province.

At the same event, Uruzgan Governor Mullah Enayatullah Shuja said the time had come for both the government and the people to join hands and work together towards national development and self-sufficiency.

Afghanistan braces for new heat wave

KABUL (Amu TV): The Taliban-run meteorological department issued a warning on Tuesday for a new wave of extreme heat expected to hit large parts of the country in the coming days.

In some areas, residents have reported concerns over public health, water shortages and damage to crops.

Temperatures are forecast to rise significantly across northeastern, northern, western, southern, and central provinces from July 2 to 7 (11 to 16 Saratan).

The warning was echoed by UN's FAO, which noted that an intense heat wave is expected to impact parts of Afghanistan between June 29 and July 5.

Experts have warned that continued high temperatures could harm agricultural production, strain already limited water resources, and heighten the risk of drought in vulnerable regions.

Watermelon yield shrinks in Khost due to drought

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): Farmers in southeastern Khost province report a drastic decrease in watermelon harvest due to drought this year and are asking the government to provide water for their crops as well as assist them in areas of improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.

Fazal-ur-Rahman, a farmer in Babrak Tani area of the Alisher Tarizo district, told Pajhwok Afghan News the climate of the province was suitable for growing watermelons, but this year the yield declined due to lack of water, improved seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or cold storage facilities.

"The government has done nothing to support farmers in areas of seeds, fertilizers, cold storage, medicines, and water. We

do everything ourselves. We receive medicines that are of poor quality. If good medicines are provided to us, our yields will improve".

Bakhtullah, another farmer, explained his watermelon plants did not grow properly this year due to drought while the government had banned digging deep wells.

"We approached the relevant authorities several times, but they do not allow us to dig deep wells. We have only asked them for permission to clean our wells".

Climate change has a profound negative impact on Afghanistan's agricultural sector, resulting in reduced agricultural yields, agricultural experts say.

Climate change has affected not only Afghanistan but the entire world, so if the government builds water storage dams in remote areas of the country, the problem of water shortage could be partially resolved.

Officials of the Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Department explain watermelons were cultivated on about 130 hectares of land in Khost last year, but this year the cultivation was fewer due to drought.

Bahir Gul Saberi, an advisor to the Department, told Pajhwok extension centers have been established in the capital and all districts to address the problems of farmers.

"This year, farmers have grown fewer watermelons due to the drought, because

watermelon plants require enough water", Saberi added.

Meanwhile, the spokesman for the provincial governor, Mustaghfer Gurbaz, told Pajhwok acting Minister for Water and Energy had promised during his recent visit to the province that he planned to build a water storage dam in each district, which would increase the water level.

Based on the plan, he added, various dams have been built in the provincial capital, Khost City, and some districts and the plan's full implementation would largely resolve farmers' problems.

Totally, watermelon harvest was 3,900 tonnes in the province last year, but this year figure is estimated at 2,600 tonnes.



ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant General Wiseman Simo Mbambo, Chief of South African Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad.

PAF Chief holds strategic talks with US officials

Chief of South African Air Force visits Air HQs

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant General Wiseman Simo Mbambo, Chief of the South African Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad.

Upon his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to Lieutenant General Wiseman Simo Mbambo. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff emphasized the shared values and aspirations that form the foundation of the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and South Africa. The Air Chief reiterated PAF's commitment to bolster aerial combat capabilities of the South African Air Force through tailored training and capacity-building initiatives.

Lieutenant General Wiseman Mbambo lauded PAF's robust operational readiness, its multi-domain warfare capabilities and its success in maintaining a credible deterrence posture. Recognizing the shared values and interests between the two Air Forces, the South African Air Chief articulated a strong desire to further strengthen and institutionalize the formal relationship between South African Air Force and PAF. One of the central themes of the discussions was the revamping of South African Air Force's training regime.

In this context, Lieutenant General Mbambo sought Pakistan Air Force's support in developing a modern and comprehensive training framework, commencing at the academy level. The visiting dignitary also expressed his earnest desire of participation of South African Air Force officers as observers in PAF's major operational exercises. Acknowledging the technical excellence and cost-effective

maintenance capabilities offered by PAF's engineering infrastructure, he also conveyed the intent of South African Air Force to undertake the inspection and maintenance of its C-130 fleet in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, in a significant development aimed at strengthening bilateral defence cooperation and advancing mutual interests, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, undertook an official visit to the United States of America - the first by a serving PAF Air Chief in over a decade. The high-profile visit marked a strategic milestone in Pakistan-US defence cooperation and proved instrumental in deepening institutional ties in addition to addressing key regional and global security issues.

During the visit, Chief of the Air Staff held a series of high-level meetings with senior US military and political leadership. At the Pentagon, he called on Ms. Kelli L. Seybolt, Secretary of the Air Force (International Affairs), and General David W. Allvin, Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force. During the meetings the discussions centered around advancing bilateral military cooperation, enhancing interoperability and exploring avenues of joint training & technology exchange. Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the historic and multifaceted relationship between Pakistan and United States, particularly in the domains of defence and security cooperation.

He reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing ties in the realms of military-to-military cooperation and training between the Air Forces of the two countries. The two sides also agreed upon the continuation of high-level military engagements in future through senior-level interactions. These interactions are deemed crucial for maintaining momentum in

the ongoing cooperative endeavours in the areas of joint training, operational exercises and military exchange programs between the two nations.

At the US State Department, the Air Chief met with Mr. Brown L. Stanley from the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and Mr. Eric Meyer from the Bureau of South & Central Asian Affairs. The meetings served as a forum to underscore Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional stability, its firm commitment to counterterrorism efforts and its nuanced perspective on the evolving geopolitical dynamics of South and Central Asia. As part of his engagements at Capitol Hill, Chief of the Air Staff held substantive dialogues with prominent members of the US Congress including Mr. Mike Turner, Mr. Rich McCormick and Mr. Bill Huizenga. These interactions reinforced the importance of robust engagement in strengthening bilateral relations and provided a valuable opportunity to share Pakistan's views on strategic challenges, regional security frameworks and the impact of emerging technologies on defence cooperation.

Emphasizing Pakistan's status as a peace-loving nation, the Air Chief reaffirmed the country's enduring sacrifices and notable operational achievements in the global war on terror, while also outlining Pakistan's evolving security calculus in response to the rapidly shifting regional geopolitical landscape. The landmark visit not only reaffirmed Pakistan Air Force's commitment to promoting regional and global peace, but also laid the groundwork for renewed institutional collaboration, strategic dialogue and enhanced interoperability between Pakistan Air Force and the United States Air Force.

Israel says it's serious about reaching ceasefire

Hamas says open to Gaza truce but stops short of accepting Trump-backed proposal

TALLINN (Reuters, AP): Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said on Wednesday that his country was serious about reaching a deal with the Palestinian Hamas group to end the war in Gaza and return the hostages held there to Israel.

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Israel had accepted the conditions needed to finalize a 60-day ceasefire with Hamas after what he called a "long and productive" meeting of his representatives with Israeli officials. At a press conference in the Estonian capital Tallinn, Saar said: "We are serious in our will to reach a hostage deal and a ceasefire. We said yes to (US) special envoy (Steve) Witkoff's proposals.

"There are some positive signs. I don't want to say more than that right now. But our goal is to begin proximity talks as soon as possible," said Saar, who spoke after holding talks with Estonia's Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna. "But it must be clear: Hamas is not only responsible for initiating this war on October 7 (2023). It is responsible also for its continuation. Pressure must be applied on Hamas. The international community must now back the American initiatives. It must shatter any illusions that Hamas may have," he said.

In a statement on Wednesday, Hamas said it was studying new ceasefire offers it received from the mediators Egypt and Qatar but stressed it aimed to reach an agreement that would ensure an end to the war and an Israeli pullout from Gaza.

Meanwhile, Hamas suggested Wednesday that it was open to a ceasefire agreement with Israel, but stopped short of accepting a US-backed proposal announced by President Donald Trump hours earlier, insisting on its longstanding position that any deal bring an end to the war in Gaza.

Trump said that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and urged Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen. The US leader has been increasing pressure on the Israeli government and Hamas to broker a ceasefire, and hostage agreement and bring about an end to the war. Trump said the 60-day period would be used to work toward ending the war — something Israel

says it won't accept until Hamas is defeated. He said that a deal might come together as soon as next week.

But Hamas' response, which emphasized its demand that the war end, raised questions about whether the latest offer could materialize into an actual pause in fighting. Hamas official Taher Al-Nunu said that the militant group was "ready and serious regarding reaching an agreement."

He said Hamas was "ready to accept any initiative that clearly leads to the complete end to the war." A Hamas delegation is expected to meet with Egyptian and Qatari mediators in Cairo on Wednesday to discuss the proposal, according to an Egyptian official. The official spoke on condition of anonymity, because he wasn't authorized to discuss the talks with the media.

Throughout the nearly 21-month-long war, ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas have repeatedly faltered over whether the war should end as part of any deal. Hamas has said that it's willing to free the remaining 50 hostages, less than half of whom are said to be alive, in exchange for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and an end to the war.

Israel says it will only agree to end the war if Hamas surrenders, disarms and exiles itself, something the group refuses to do. An Israeli official said that the latest proposal calls for a 60-day deal that would include a partial Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a surge in humanitarian aid to the territory. The mediators and the US would provide assurances about talks to end the war, but Israel isn't committing to that as part of the latest proposal, the official said.

The official wasn't authorized to discuss the details of the proposed deal with the media and spoke on condition of anonymity. It wasn't clear how many hostages would be freed as part of the agreement, but previous proposals have called for the release of about 10. Israel has yet to publicly comment on Trump's announcement. On Monday, Trump is set to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, days after Ron Dermer, a senior Netanyahu adviser, held discussions with top US officials about Gaza, Iran and other matters.

BD former PM Hasina sentenced

DHAKA: Bangladesh's self-exiled former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been sentenced to six months in prison for contempt of court by the country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

The three-member tribunal, headed by Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, handed down the verdict in Hasina's absence on Wednesday. The sentence will take effect upon her arrest or voluntary surrender, Chief Prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam told reporters. Hasina, who fled to India following a student-led uprising last August, faces several charges. This marks the first time she has received a formal sentence in any of the cases.

Shakil Akand Bulbul, a senior figure in the Awami League's banned student wing, Chhatra League, was also sentenced to two months in the same case. The contempt charges stem from an audio recording in which Hasina was allegedly heard saying, "There are 227 cases against me, so I now have a licence to kill 227 people." A government forensic report later confirmed the tape's authenticity.

The ICT was established in 2010 by Hasina's own government to prosecute war crimes committed during the country's 1971 independence war. It has since been repurposed by the interim government, led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, to pursue allegations of rights violations and corruption under Hasina's rule.

The tribunal has issued three arrest warrants for Hasina, including charges of crimes against humanity linked to the crackdown on the student-led protests last year, which toppled her government. Her Awami League party remains banned, with ongoing trials against former officials.

Hasina's supporters insist the cases are politically motivated, describing them as part of a broader effort to silence opposition. However, the caretaker government argues the legal process is necessary to restore public trust in the country's institutions and ensure accountability. — Aljazeera

Pakistan earns respect globally: Asif

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday said that Pakistan has earned renewed recognition and respect both regionally and globally.

Khawaja Asif said that Pakistan's military achievements, diplomatic progress, and active participation on global forums have strengthened its position. He said, "Pakistan is now being viewed with a new sense of dignity and stature. Our recent performance, especially by our armed forces and diplomatic achievements, has played a crucial role." He added that Pakistan's newfound place on the international stage must not only be protected but also further strengthened.

Referring to the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, the minister highlighted that Pakistan's position received broad support from member states. He said that Pakistan's constructive engagement and principled stance were acknowledged and respected across the platform. "India found itself isolated, while Pakistan's position was backed by other member states," he noted.

Bilawal calls for India-Pakistan dialogue

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, in his inaugural address at the International Conference on "Pakistan Fighting War for the World Against Terrorism", said that when his grandfather, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, stood before the world, he spoke with the moral authority of a young republic. Unwilling to be dictated to by the powerful or the cynical, he told the mighty that history stands with those who dare, not with those who drift.

Today, in his spirit, I rise to remind the world that Pakistan is not drifting through the storm of global terrorism. Chairman Bilawal said. We are steering, often alone, through waves that would have capsized even larger vessels. We did not invite this carnage. Yet when terror's black banners crossed our frontiers, from the peaks of our mountains to the markets of Quetta, we did not flinch. We chose to resist.

Chairman PPP said that in the grim arithmetic of the last two and a half decades, Pakistan has buried 92,000 sons and daughters, soldiers and civilians alike. Our economy has forfeited more than \$150 billion in lost growth, shattered infrastructure, and displaced livelihoods. And still, we fight because the alternative is surrender, and surrender is not a word in the Pakistani dictionary. Just last year, 2024, was our deadliest in a decade. At least 685 of our service members embraced martyrdom in 444 separate attacks. 1,612 Pakistanis—teachers, traders, traffic wardens—never returned home. These are not mere statistics. They are vacant chairs at breakfast tables. Yet each tragedy strengthens our resolve.

Every fallen comrade plants a flag that digs deeper into the soil extremists covet but will never own.

Let us be clear, any so-called shura may issue threats in Pashto, but its digital propaganda is subtitled in every language of discontent, Chairman PPP said. A bomb in Peshawar today draws its ideological fuse from a chatroom in northern Africa, its wiring diagram from a tutorial filmed in Damascus. Terrorism is borderless. The fight we wage is not Pakistan's private quarrel. It is civilizational self-defense on behalf of all humanity. When the Tehrik-e-Taliban or the Majid Brigade tweets its manifesto, the algorithm that amplifies it does not stop at the Durand Line. It ricochets through Paris, Perth, and beyond. If we stand down, who will stand up?

Bilawal said that across two decades, Pakistan's armed forces, backed by an iron-willed citizenry, have broken the back of al-Qaeda networks, dismantled so-called caliphates like Daesh, and driven the TTP from fortresses to foxholes. Operation Zarb-e-Azb drained the northern swamp. Radd-ul-Fasaad uprooted sleeper cells in our cities. Today's operations in Balochistan and elsewhere have severed the nexus between separatism and foreign-funded terror. These campaigns are not cinematic missions staged from offshore carriers.

They were boots in the dust, medics in the mud, schoolteachers reopening classrooms behind the front lines. While the world enjoys conferences that debate violent extremism, Pakistan confronts it daily on the front lines. Our roads are scarred with IED craters and suicide bomb strikes,

the tariff we pay so the rest of humanity may commute in peace.

Is it too much to ask that visa desks respect the Pakistani passport that guards their peace? That multilateral lenders price our courage into their risk models? That media houses spell "Pakistan" without the lazy prefix "troubled"? Respect is the minimum dividend of sacrifice, Chairman Bilawal said.

Across the Durand Line, the Taliban regime was greeted by many as an inevitable fact. They promised stability. They delivered instead a 40% surge in militant attacks on Pakistani soil and a sanctuary for the TTP, the BLA and more. We say to Kabul: sovereignty confers duty. Stop the exits of fighters. Choke the arms traffic. Honour the blood-price Doha commitments, or be judged by the company you keep.

We need equitable burden sharing. Counterterror financing, what used to be called the Coalition Support Fund, cannot be a tip left on the counter of war. We ask for structured investment in counterterrorism and counter-violent extremism. We need modern technology, advanced equipment, and the hardware of resilience. We must view development as a shield. Every school built in Waziristan is a bullet we never have to fire. Let the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) be joined by peace—a people's economic and cultural corridor that funds micro-enterprise, women's colleges, and solar grids in areas facing the brunt of this new wave of terror, from ex-FATA to the shores of Balochistan. No counterinsurgency has ever succeeded without first winning hearts and minds.

Negligence in rescue operation PHC summons Commissioners, RPOs

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has taken notice of the recent drowning incident in the Swat River, where 17 tourists lost their lives. The court expressed strong displeasure over the lack of timely rescue efforts and the alleged negligence of the authorities, on Wednesday.

A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Syed Muhammad Atique Shah and Justice Faheem Wali heard the case. The Chief Justice expressed outrage over the loss of lives, questioning the lack of safety measures for tourists and the failure to provide timely rescue efforts.

The court summoned the Commissioners of Malakand, Hazara, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan, as well as the Regional Police Officers (RPOs) of the respective districts, to appear before the court today.

The court also sought a detailed report from the provincial government on the incident and the measures taken to ensure tourist safety. The court questioned the lack of safety measures for tourists, including the provision of life jackets and the absence of effective rescue operations.

The court noted the alleged encroachments on the riverbanks and the construction of hotels and shops, which may have

been contributing to the risk of accidents. PHC will resume the hearing today, with the summoned officials expected to provide explanations and justifications for their actions.

Court adjourns hearing on 26th Constitutional Amendment: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has deferred the hearing on petitions challenging the 26th Constitutional Amendment, citing that similar cases are already pending before the Supreme Court, on Wednesday.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Khurshid Iqbal heard the case. The petitioners' counsel argued that the 26th Constitutional Amendment undermines fundamental rights and the independence of the judiciary, affecting not only the public but also the judiciary itself.

The Additional Attorney General informed the court that similar petitions are already pending before the Supreme Court, which has issued notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan and the Advocates General of the four provinces.

The Supreme Court has directed that all related cases be heard together and has ordered the formation of a full bench to hear the matter. Peshawar High Court deferred the hearing of the case indefinitely, considering the Supreme Court's ongoing proceedings on the same matter after arguments.

Iran president signs law suspending coop with IAEA

TEHRAN: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has signed a law suspending cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), amid growing tensions between Tehran and the UN nuclear watchdog following Israeli and US attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities last month.

"Masoud Pezeshkian promulgated the law suspending cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency," Iranian state TV reported on Wednesday. The announcement comes a week after Iran's parliament passed legislation to suspend cooperation with the IAEA, citing Israel's June 13 surprise attack on the US and later strikes by the US on Iranian nuclear facilities.

According to the parliament resolution, IAEA inspectors will not be allowed to visit nuclear sites without approval from Iran's Supreme National Security Council. In response to Pezeshkian formally enacting the suspension, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar urged European signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal to trigger the "snapback" mechanism and reinstate all UN sanctions on Iran.

The snapback, set to expire in October, was part of the nuclear accord that collapsed after the United States withdrew in 2018. Iran began scaling back commitments a year later. Germany said Iran's decision sends a "disastrous signal". "For a diplomatic solution it is essential for Iran to work with the IAEA," foreign ministry spokesman Martin Giese told reporters.

The IAEA in a statement said it was "awaiting further official information from Iran". Since Israel launched its assault on Iran last month, Tehran has sharply criticised the IAEA. Iran's foreign minister earlier this week said IAEA chief Rafael Grossi was no longer welcome in the country.

Officials have also criticised Grossi over a June 12 resolution passed by the IAEA board accusing Tehran of non-compliance with its nuclear obligations. Iranian officials said the resolution was among the "excuses" for the Israeli attacks that began on June 13 and lasted for 12 days.

Iran has also rejected a request from IAEA chief Grossi to visit nuclear facilities bombed during the war. "Grossi's insistence on visiting the bombed sites under the pretext of safeguards is meaningless and possibly even malign in intent," said Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on X on Monday. "Iran reserves the right to take any steps in defence of its interests, its people and its sovereignty."

Earlier this week, Pezeshkian decried Grossi's "destructive" conduct, while France, Germany and the United Kingdom have condemned unspecified "threats" made against the IAEA chief. Iran's ultra-conservative

Kayhan newspaper recently claimed that documents showed Grossi was an Israeli spy and should be executed. Iran has insisted no threats were posed against Grossi or the agency's inspectors. The 12-day war began when Israel carried out a surprise bombardment of Iranian nuclear facilities and military sites and assassinated several top military commanders and nuclear scientists. Tehran responded with waves of missiles and drones at Israel.

On June 22, Israel's ally, the US, launched unprecedented strikes of its own on Iranian nuclear facilities at Fordow, Isfahan and Natanz. A ceasefire between Iran and Israel took hold on June 24. At least 935 people were killed in Israeli attacks on Iran, according to judiciary spokesperson Asghar Jahangir, citing the latest forensic data. The deceased included 132 women and 38 children, Jahangir added. Iran's retaliatory attacks killed 28 people in Israel, according to authorities.

Heatwave across Europe leaves 8 dead

BARCELONA (Reuters): Four people died in Spain, two in France and two in Italy as an early summer heatwave continued to grip much of Europe on Wednesday, triggering health alerts and forest fires and forcing the closure of a nuclear reactor at a Swiss power plant.

Spanish officials said a wildfire in Catalonia had killed two people a day earlier, and authorities reported heatwave-linked deaths also in Extremadura and Cordoba. France's energy minister reported two deaths linked to the heat, with 300 others taken to the hospital. Italy issued red alerts for 18 cities, while in Germany, temperatures were forecast to peak at 40 degrees Celsius in some areas, making it the hottest day of the year.

Two men over the age of 60 died in separate incidents on the beach in Sardinia from the heat, ANSA news agency reported. Weather forecaster Météo France said red alerts remained for several areas of central France. The risks were greatest for vulnerable members of the population, and Catherine Vautrin, France's health and families minister, said authorities should remain vigilant.

"In the coming days, we'll see the consequences, particularly on the most vulnerable, and I'm thinking particularly of the elderly," she said. Turkiye, which battled blazes on several fronts, forcing the temporary evacuation of about 50,000 people earlier in the week, said its fires were largely contained. Tuesday's fire in the Catalonia region of Spain destroyed several farms and affected an area stretching about 40 kilometres before being contained, officials said.

Italy, France and Germany warned of the risk of heavy storms due to excessive warming in unstable atmospheres. Violent storms in the French Alps late on Monday triggered mudslides, disrupting rail traffic between Paris and Milan. Swiss utility Axpo shut down one reactor unit at the Beznau nuclear power plant and halved output at another on Tuesday because of the high temperature of river water.

Water is used for cooling and other purposes at nuclear power plants, and restrictions were expected to continue as temperatures are monitored. The extreme heat would likely impact the region's economic growth, which was expected to slow by half a percentage point in 2025, Allianz Research said in a report, likening the financial toll of one day with temperatures exceeding 32°C to half a day of strikes.