

PTI-backed MNA disqualified
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The ECP on Tuesday disqualified PTI-backed legislator Abdul Latif Chitrali and declared his National Assembly seat (NA-1, Chitral) vacant following the denotification of his electoral victory, according to the official notification. The Anti-Terrorism Court in Islamabad has sentenced Chitrali to 10 years in prison following his conviction over involvement in the May 9 events.



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By-elections on Sept 24
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The ECP has announced that by-elections on 52 vacant LG seats across Sindh - including several constituencies in Karachi will be held on September 24. The schedule has been issued for the by-polls in multiple districts, including Shikarpur, Kashmore, Ghotki, Sukkur, Naushahro Feroze, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Matari, and three districts of Karachi — West, Keamari and East.

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LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visiting newly inaugurated CIP Lounge, waiting halls and other facilities at Railway Station.

World recognises Pakistan's victory over India, says PM

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that Pakistan and China were moving forward on new avenues of development, with full coordination underway for the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He emphasized that bilateral ties between the two countries were stronger than ever and continued to serve as a cornerstone for regional growth and cooperation. He added that efforts were also underway to rebuild and strengthen relations with the United States.

He expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Pak Business Express Train at Lahore Railway Station. Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, Federal Minister for Information Attaulah Tarar, and senior railway officials were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction over the transformation of Lahore Railway Station, saying that Pakistan Railways was undergoing a visible and positive change. He praised the Pak Business Express for offering modern, European-style travel facilities not just for the elite, but also for the common man. The train, he noted, featured a digitized ticketing system, modern passenger lounges, and upgraded reception facilities.

Shehbaz Sharif lauded Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi for reviving the railway system, calling it a long-awaited dream now becoming a reality. "This is only the beginning," he said. "Such services will soon be expanded to other cities. We must continue working day and night to reform institutions and drive national progress," he said.

The Prime Minister stressed that the nation's future lies in hard work and integrity. "With sincerity and determination, even the most difficult goals can be achieved," he said,

Shehbaz hails historic reduction in DISCOs losses

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday termed the substantial decline in power distribution companies' (DISCOs) losses as a highly encouraging development and the first of its kind in decades. The prime minister chaired a significant meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Energy at the Prime Minister's House, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated that this financial improvement would greatly facilitate the privatization of these power companies. "The reduction in losses marks a turning point for the energy sector, making the road to privatization smoother and more realistic," he remarked.

He commended Federal Minister for Power Division Sardar Owais Ahmad Leghari, Federal Secretary Dr Muhammad Fakhare Alam, and their team for their commendable work in advancing reforms in the power sector. He directed that letters of appreciation be sent to the Chief Executive Officers of the high-performing DISCOs responsible for cutting losses effectively. According to a briefing by the Power Division, total losses in power distribution companies have decreased by Rs193 billion, with an overall improvement of Rs242 billion reported. Among the top performers in reducing financial losses were Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) and Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO). The briefing also highlighted that the circular debt flow stood at Rs780 billion.

promising to recognize and celebrate the Railways Minister's performance.

He also acknowledged the efforts of former Railways minister Khawaja Saad Rafique during the PDM government, noting his contributions in land recovery and infrastructure improvements.

Touching on national defence, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated the nation on what he termed a "clear victory" in recent Pak-India war, stating that the armed forces displayed bravery, skill, and technological excellence in defeating the enemy. "Pakistan gave India a historic defeat, and the world witnessed our military capabilities," he said. He added that Pakistan's growing military strength had elevated the country's global standing.

He also referenced US President Donald Trump's repeated claims that the US helped prevent a full-scale war between Pakistan and India. "Every time he says this, Modi's

wounds are reopened," the Prime Minister remarked. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to national security, he said, the country's nuclear assets were the guarantors of peace and no adversary could dare challenge its sovereignty.

Discussing the economy, PM Shehbaz Sharif said the country had made gains on the economic front as well, citing a visible decline in inflation. He described the improvement in economic indicators as a result of collective effort and teamwork, expressing confidence that further progress would follow.

Earlier, the Prime Minister toured various sections of the Lahore Railway Station, including the newly upgraded passenger lounge and reception desk. He later inspected the coaches of the Pak Business Express, which would operate between Lahore and Karachi, completing the journey in approximately 18.5 hours.

Two held as donkey meat seized in Battagram

F.P. Report

BATTAGRAM: A slaughtered donkey was recovered and the alleged perpetrators were arrested in the Kuzabanda area of Battagram district on Tuesday.

According to District Food Controller (DFC) Shad Muhammad, Additional Assistant Commissioner and Food Inspector raided a location in Kuzabanda based on intelligence information. The raid resulted in the recovery of the slaughtered donkey and the arrest of two individuals, belonging to Hunza and Mansehra. The arrested people claimed they were supplying the meat to Chinese officials working on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

However, the DFC emphasised that an investigation is necessary to determine the actual purpose of the meat. Notably, the arrested individuals neither belong to the butcher community, nor do they have a shop. An investigation has been initiated and a letter sent to the food department. The DFC also highlighted that even if the arrested persons' claim is correct, slaughtering a donkey in public is not allowed. Instead, it should be done within residential premises.

The authorities will investigate further to bring more facts to light and determine the circumstances surrounding the incident. DPO Batgram told media that a case has been registered against the accused and an investigation has been started. The first information report (FIR), two people have been booked under Sections 272 (Adulteration of food or drink intended for sale) and 273 (Sale of noxious food or drink) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

The DRO said it is yet unclear whether or not any attempt was being made to supply the meat. Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik speaking to media said: "As Muslims, this act of giving someone else donkey meat to eat is impure and undesirable." He added that enforcement was needed to curtail such crimes. On Sunday, in a major crackdown on illegal meat trade, the Islamabad Food Authority seized about 1,000kg of donkey meat from a farmhouse located in Tarnol. Over 50 live donkeys were also confiscated during a raid on the premises and a foreign national was taken into custody on the spot.

Section 144 imposed in Bajaur

F.P. Report

KHAR: The district administration of Bajaur has imposed Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code in parts of Tehsil Loe Mamund to ensure public safety during anticipated targeted operations against militants.

According to an official order issued by the Deputy Commissioner, all forms of individual movement — including on foot, vehicles, and on roads or outside houses — have been strictly prohibited from July 29, 2025 (5:00 AM) to July 31, 2025 (5:00 PM) in the following villages: Bad-e-Siah, Tarkho, Irab, Gat, Agra, Khurchai, Dawagai, Kalan, Legharai, Kikot, Gilla, Nakhtar, Zarai, Dambarai, Amanata, and Zagai.

The order has been enforced following recommendations from the District Intelligence Coordination Committee, which cited the need to prevent any untoward incidents during counter-militancy operations. Authorities have warned that any violation of this order will be dealt with under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code. The directive has been widely circulated through government and private media channels and affixed at prominent public places across the district.

UK plans to recognize Palestinian state

LONDON (Reuters): British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Tuesday that Britain was prepared to recognise a Palestinian state in September at the United Nations General Assembly unless Israel takes several steps to improve life for Palestinians.

Britain, if it acts, would become the second Western power on the UN Security Council to do so after France last week, reflecting Israel's deepening isolation over its conduct in its war against Hamas in Gaza, where a humanitarian disaster has set in and the Palestinian death toll has risen above 60,000. Starmer said Britain would make the move unless Israel took substantive steps to allow more aid to enter Gaza, made clear there will be no annexation of the West Bank and commits to a long-term peace process that delivers a "two-state solution" - a Palestinian state co-existing in peace alongside Israel.

"The Palestinian people have endured terrible suffering," Starmer told reporters. "Now, in Gaza, because of a catastrophic failure of aid, we see starving babies, children too weak to stand, images that will stay with us for a lifetime. The suffering must end." Starmer said his government would assess in September on "how far the parties have met these steps", but that no one would have a veto over the decision.

He took the decision after recalling his cabinet during the summer holidays on Tuesday to discuss a new proposed peace plan being worked on with other European leaders and how to deliver more humanitarian aid for Gaza's 2.2 million people.

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

With warnings from international aid agencies that people in Gaza are facing starvation, a growing number of lawmakers in Starmer's Labour Party have been asking him to recognise a Palestinian state to raise pressure on Israel. The issue came to the fore after President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday France would recognise Palestine as a state in territories Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

Israel, a staunch supporter of the United States, blasted France's move, branding it a reward for Palestinian Hamas fighters who ran Gaza and whose attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, triggered the current war. At the start of the Gaza war in October 2023, when Starmer was the opposition leader, he fully backed Israel's right to defend itself. But his stance has shifted over the years to a tougher approach to Israel, especially since his election as prime minister just over a year ago.

His government dropped the previous government's challenge over arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and has suspended some weapon sales to Israel. Last month, Britain sanctioned two far-right Israeli cabinet ministers, Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, accusing them of repeatedly inciting violence against Palestinians.

Gandapur dares rivals to topple KP govt

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has challenged the federal government and his rivals to topple his administration through political and democratic means, asserting that he stands firmly with PTI founder Imran Khan.

Speaking to the media during his appearance at Islamabad district courts, Gandapur said, "We are with Imran Khan and will remain with him. On August 5, people from across the country will come out to protest. The PTI founder will be released, and we are not afraid of false cases against us."

Gandapur claimed the cases against him were baseless, adding, "This case has been ongoing since 2016. Weapons and bottles were falsely attributed to me, but at that time, I was not even present, nor was the vehicle mine. This is a battle for truth, and we will win." During the hearing of the alcohol and arms recovery case, Gandapur surrendered before the court, following which his arrest warrants were canceled.

Judicial Magistrate Mubashir Hassan Chishti allowed him to leave the

August 5 will be a major surprise for illegitimate govt

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stated that August 5 will prove to be a major surprise for the illegitimate government. He said the anxiety of the fake regime is evident from their trembling stance as preparations for the day intensify under the directives of Chairman Imran Khan, not only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but across the country.

Dr. Saif further added that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is personally overseeing all arrangements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Proactive measures have already been taken to counter any underhanded tactics by the fake government. He warned that if the authorities attempt to repeat actions similar to those of November 26, a strong and forceful response will follow.

He condemned the frequent use of force against unarmed civilians, calling it a routine practice of the illegitimate government. "Peaceful protest is a democratic, constitutional, and legal right of every citizen — a right that no power can take away," Dr. Saif emphasized.

He warned that any effort by the regime to deprive citizens of their constitutional right to protest would be met with strong resistance. "The public is now politically aware and will no longer tolerate fascist measures. We will resist all unconstitutional actions through legal and political means." Dr. Saif said the illegitimate government is terrified and visibly disoriented in the face of the upcoming protest, as the people have firmly resolved to secure the release of Imran Khan. "The passion and commitment of party workers towards the protest is truly remarkable," he added. "The people are participating in the preparations for the protest with full energy and enthusiasm. The days of this fake government are numbered, and no force can now stop the release of Imran Khan," Dr. Saif added.

court and withdrew the against Gandapur was registered at Bara Kahu Police Station in Islamabad.

‘Imran did not bar sons from visiting Pakistan’

RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday dismissed reports claiming that the party founder Imran Khan had barred his sons from traveling to Pakistan or engaging in efforts for his release.

Earlier this month, Imran's sister Aleema Khan revealed that Sulaiman and Kasim had planned to visit the United States before heading to Pakistan to join a campaign advocating for the release of former PM. Reports in local media suggested that Imran, during a conversation with journalists at Adiala Jail, stated his sons would neither visit Pakistan nor participate in any protests.

However, PTI Central Information Secretary Waqas Akram later refuted these claims, stating: "The news about Imran Khan's children is entirely baseless. He has not barred his sons from coming to Pakistan. I urge media personnel reporting from Adiala to accurately convey Khan Sahib's statements without distortion or selective interpretation."

SC establishes new bench for Imran's May 9 appeals

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A new three-judge panel at Pakistan's Supreme Court will address the post-arrest bail pleas of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan related to the May 9 incidents. The newly constituted bench, led by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi and including Justice Shafi Siddiqui and Justice Mian Gul Hasan Aurangzeb, is slated to convene on August 12. This follows a postponement from an earlier scheduled hearing before a two-judge panel, also headed by Chief Justice Afridi, due to the overseas travel of Khan's primary lawyer, Salman Safdar.

In a subsequent statement, Akram clarified: "Imran Khan's sons will come to Pakistan, there's no doubt about it; only the timing remains undecided. They have already informed their father of their decision, emphasising that they are not seeking his approval but merely notifying him. Such misinformation campaigns are futile and should be avoided." Earlier, it was reported that during hearing at the Adiala Jail, a reporter asked Khan if his sons would join the PTI's planned protest

on August 5. "No, they will not come," Khan responded, according to the media reports.

Imran Khan, who has been incarcerated at Adiala Jail since August 2023, is serving a sentence related to a £190 million corruption case and faces additional trials under the Anti-Terrorism Act linked to the May 9, 2023 protests. His party, the PTI, has planned massive demonstrations on August 5 across Pakistan to press for the release of the former prime minister. — Agencies

Pak reaffirms support to Palestinians' right to viable, contiguous state: Dar

NEW YORK (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar said Pakistan reaffirmed its unwavering and principled support for the Palestinian peoples' inalienable right to a viable, independent and contiguous state of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

He was speaking at the United Nations High-Level International Conference on "The Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution" in New York. He said, "For over 75 years, the Palestinian people have endured occupation, displacement and denial of their fundamental rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination."

"This prolonged injustice is not just a political failure but a moral stain and a persistent threat to international peace and security," he said, adding, "Today Gaza is a graveyard of international law and humanitarian principles." He said the death and destruction inflicted by Israel, including the killing of over 58,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, was an unconscionable breach of international humanitarian law, the United Nations resolutions and the binding measures of the International Court of Justice.

Blockade of aid, deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure includ-

ing refugee camps, hospitals and aid convoys crossed every red line of legality and humanity, he asserted. He said, "The collective punishment of Palestinians must stop now, and we must immediately act with purpose." "It is high time for credible and enforceable international action on key priorities."

He called for an unconditional, immediate and permanent ceasefire across Gaza and all Palestinian-occupied territories and implementation of UN resolution 2735. He commended the efforts of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and the United States on the Palestinian issue. He urged full and unimpeded humanitarian access, especially of life saving food and medicines to Gaza and the protection of humanitarian teams.

He underlined the need for financial and political support for UNRWA - a lifeline for millions of Palestinians. He called for international accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity and an end to impunity for Israel. He said a genuine and irreversible political process should be undertaken to end the occupation of Palestine.

"The Palestinian question is the test case for the United Nations and the world," he said, adding the conference must deliver actionable commitments, including reaffirming the centrality of the two-state solution, which was the only path to sustainable peace. Outlining the aims of the

conference, the Deputy Prime Minister said the international community must demand Israel's immediate withdrawal from Gaza.

Gaza should be reconstructed as envisaged in resolution 2735 and the OIC Arab plan, he said adding the international community should support the OIC proposal to provide international protection to the Palestinian people through the deployment of a protection mechanism, besides providing a timeline for building Palestinian institutional capacity and sovereignty. He said the conference participants must reject and halt any attempts to the forced displacement and demographic manipulation in Palestine.

The international community must oppose illegal Israeli settlements and annexations especially in West Bank and East Jerusalem, he emphasised. "We unequivocally condemn the Israeli Parliament's attempt to assert sovereignty over the Occupied West Bank." He called on the countries attending the conference to ensure the recognition of the state of Palestine and its full UN membership. Ishaq Dar said Pakistan stood ready to extend dedicated technical assistance and capacity building support towards Palestinian brothers and sisters in key sectors such as health, public administration, education and service delivery in accordance with the Palestinian leadership's decision.



Sharjeel urges federal action against K-Electric, HESCO, SEPCO



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that resolutions have been presented against K-Electric, HESCO, and SEPCO in every session of the assembly, but unfortunately, the authorities of the concerned institutions do not even pay heed to them.

Addressing the Sindh Assembly session, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government has initiated the provision of solar systems for citizens living in extreme temperatures reaching fifty degrees Celsius.

However, he emphasized

that this is not a permanent solution. A long-term and sustainable resolution to the electricity crisis must be found, as this country belongs to all of us.

Sharjeel Inam Memon suggested that electricity distribution companies should introduce a prepaid metering system, as it would not only help address consumer complaints but also curb issues such as electricity theft.

He stated clearly that either the companies should install prepaid meters or end the practice of collective punishment of the public.

He emphasized that institutions like K-Electric, HESCO, and SEPCO must adopt an effective mechanism that enables electrici-

ty to be provided to consumers on an individual basis. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that once everyone has a prepaid connection, there will be no room for complaints.

He strongly appealed to the federal government, the Prime Minister, and other relevant authorities to put an end to the collective punishment of entire cities or areas in the name of electricity defaulters, as a consumer who pays bills regularly should not be treated the same as those who steal electricity. Sharjeel Inam Memon asserted that the prepaid meter system is the only solution to end the electricity crisis and ensure transparent distribution.

Punjab approves Autism School and Resource Centre Act

LAHORE (APP): The Provincial Assembly of the Punjab has unanimously passed the Punjab Autism School and Resource Centre Act, 2025 during its 28th session, marking a significant step forward in inclusive education and support for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders in Pakistan.

The passing of the important law shows the government's strong commitment to supporting people with autism. It includes setting up a modern Autism School and Resource Centre in Lahore, the first of its kind in Pakistan.

The Centre will provide special education and therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It will also offer professional training, support research, and raise public awareness. The goal is to create a supportive environment that helps children with autism grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially, so they can live meaningful and dignified lives.

The Punjab Autism School and Resource Centre will be overseen by a strong and diverse Board of Governors, chaired by the Chief Minister of Punjab. The board will include the Chief Secretary, relevant department secretaries, autism specialists, parents of children with autism, and experts from education and public service, ensuring that affected families have a voice in decision-making.

The Centre will offer tailored education and therapy programs, train teachers and professionals, and work with international experts to improve autism research and curriculum development. It will also connect with autism units across Punjab and lead public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma.

The Act allows the Board to set up sub-campus across the province, create jobs, set rules, and use public and private resources to keep the Centre running. This reflects the Punjab government's strong commitment to inclusive education and equal opportunities for all.

Punjab Education Department Secretary Muhammad Khan Ranjha said that this Act is not only a legal instrument but a human-centered policy breakthrough that places children with autism and their families at the core of government planning. He added that the initiative would address long-standing gaps in diagnosis, care, and educational access, while also creating professional opportunities in special education and therapy. He further highlighted the department's dedication to implementing the Act with efficiency, transparency, and compassion, ensuring that the vision of an inclusive Punjab becomes a lived reality for every neurodiverse child and their family.

PHC directs submission of report for enlisting Swati in ECL in Kohistan scandal

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to submit a report in response to a petition filed by PTI leader Azam Swati, seeking removal of his name from the Exit Control List (ECL). The court also directed Swati to cooperate with NAB's investigation.

PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal heard the case. Barrister Waqar Ali, counsel for Azam Swati, and Special

Prosecutor NAB Arbab Kaleemullah appeared in court.

The counsel informed the court that the petitioner is a senator, had been included in the ECL on NAB's recommendation, which prevented him from traveling abroad for medical treatment.

The Special Prosecutor NAB informed the court that Azam Swati was part of the investigation into the Kohistan scandal and had been served a questionnaire. However, Swati failed to appear before NAB on July 24. The counsel for Swati explained that the petitioner had a

hearing in another court on the same date and could not appear before NAB.

PHC directed NAB to submit a detailed report on the investigation and directed Azam Swati to cooperate with NAB's investigation. The hearing was adjourned until July 31.

NAB informed the court that the Kohistan scandal involved corruption of Rs. 40 billion and that several accused had been arrested. NAB had recovered Rs. 25 billion in the scandal. The court directed Swati to join the investigation and cooperate with NAB.

Election Tribunal issues notice to ECP on Jhagra plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Election Tribunal Peshawar has issued a notice to the respondents in a petition filed by PTI candidate Taimur Saleem Jhagra, challenging the election results in his constituency, PK-79. The tribunal has adjourned the hearing until August 12, on Monday.

The Election Tribunal Judge Justice (R) Lal Jan Khattak heard the plea while the counsel Ali Gohar Durrani advocate informed that the tribunal had previously heard the case, but the judge had recused himself after one of the parties raised objections.

The counsel requested that the tribunal hear the case on a daily basis, citing the requirement under

the law that election cases be decided within 180 days.

The lawyer claimed that the election results had been manipulated, and that Taimur Saleem Jhagra had been declared unsuccessful despite being the actual winner according to Form 45. The counsel argued that the results had been altered, and that the petitioner had evidence to support his claims.

The tribunal issued a notice to the Election Commission of Pakistan and winning candidate while adjourned the hearing until August 12, seeking their responses to the petitioner's claims.

After the hearing, Taimur Saleem Jhagra told the media that the election results had been manipulated, and that he had been unfairly declared unsuccessful.

He expressed frustration that the tribunal had not yet decided the case, despite the 180-day deadline having passed. He vowed to fight the case to the end and claimed that everyone knew who had actually won the election.

Taimur Saleem Jhagra acknowledged that there were differences within the PTI, and that the leadership needed to take responsibility for resolving them. He emphasized that the party's differences were causing it harm, and that the leadership needed to think about the party's well-being.

Regarding the distribution of Senate tickets, Taimur Saleem Jhagra questioned whether the party workers were happy with the way tickets were being distributed.

Ombudsman's team inspect facilities at passport office

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Member In charge Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Karachi and coordinator for Sindh, Amir Ahmed Shaikh, Tuesday, directed the officers concerned to provide better facilities to citizens at the passport offices across the province.

Amir Ahmed Shaikh issued the directives during a visit of Directorate General Immigration and Passports Karachi along with FOS Grievance Commissioner Mousa Bukhsh Shaikh, Consultant Media Taqi Muhammad Soomro and Director Rashid Ahmed Shaikh.

The federal ombudsman team received briefing on the working and performance of the directorate general, inspected different sections of the office and interacted with people present in the office. He also issued instructions, on the spot, for resolution of issues raised by the applicants.

The member in charge, at the occasion, said that Karachi is the largest city of Pakistan with millions of population and the services of immigration and passport should be accessible to residents of every area of the metropolis.

He instructed to activate more bank counters to facili-



tate the applicants in payment of fees and suggested to promote use of digital systems for payment of fees so that applicants would be able to pay the fees with convenience.

Amir Ahmed Shaikh, also directed to set up a facilitation desk at the regional office to guide people about complete procedure and documentary and other requirements for the passport.

He stressed on starting an awareness campaign to sensitize the people about newly introduced initiatives like E-Passport to enable the citizens to avail the modern facilities.

Director Immigration and Passport Saeed Ahmed briefed the meeting about

functions and responsibilities of the regional office and informed that Directorate General South supervises the regional offices and Passport Processing Centers of Sindh province and coordinates with Security Printing Corporation.

He informed that following the decision of establishment of passport offices in all districts of the country, offices and centers were set up across all the districts of Sindh. Sindh government has provided land for construction of dedicated buildings of 13 Regional Passport Offices in different districts of the province and efforts were underway to start construction work on the buildings, he added.

Special Education Department Secretary Muhammad Khan Ranjha said that this Act is not only a legal instrument but a human-centered policy breakthrough that places children with autism and their families at the core of government planning. He added that the initiative would address long-standing gaps in diagnosis, care, and educational access, while also creating professional opportunities in special education and therapy. He further highlighted the department's dedication to implementing the Act with efficiency, transparency, and compassion, ensuring that the vision of an inclusive Punjab becomes a lived reality for every neurodiverse child and their family.

CM awards teaching licenses, calls for quality in education

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has stated that he respects his teachers just as much as he respects his parents because they shaped his future and enabled him to compete effectively in his field and emphasised that teachers must earn this kind of respect by providing proper education to their students."

He further urged all citizens to honour their teachers and to satiate their thirst for knowledge through reverence for these educators, emphasising that such respect must be earned by delivering quality education to students."

This he said, while speaking at the ceremony of awarding teaching licenses to successful candidates organised by the Education department here at CM House on Tuesday.

The ceremony was attended by Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah, Minister of Livestock Mohammad Ali Malkan, Secretary (School Education) Zahid Abbasi, diplomats, MPAs, educationists – Shahzad Raori of Zindagi Trust, members of civil society, Mr Shah expressed profound gratitude to all stakeholders, including teachers, officials, and development partners, for their unwavering commitment to educational excellence in the region. He reaffirmed his government of Sindh's dedication to quality education, highlighting that quality education begins with quality teachers.

The Chief Minister stated, "Sindh allocates the highest budget to education among all provinces," and emphasised the need to double or even increase educational expenditure significantly to provide proper education. He noted, "To increase this spending, we must generate more resources; it is not possible otherwise."

Mr Shah recalled that three years ago, the idea of issuing teaching licenses was proposed by Sardar Shah. He mentioned, "It was said that licenses should be given to those who are shaping our future," describing this initiative as a vital step toward ensuring competency and accountability within the teaching profession.

During the ceremony, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah awarded teaching licenses to 646 successful candidates, including 297 JEST and 195 preservice licenses. He



highlighted that only 646 out of 4,000 candidates passed the test, which reflects a low success rate of about 16 per cent. He remarked, "We have a lot of work to do to improve education standards."

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has reaffirmed the government's commitment to introducing highly qualified educators through the Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority (STEDA).

Moreover, he raised concerns over millions of children being out of school and stressed the need to assess the quality of education provided to those who are enrolled. He questioned, "How can we prepare children to live a good life in a competitive world?"

In addressing the long-term decline in educational quality, Murad Shah pointed out, "The education system has gradually deteriorated over the past 40 or 50 years." He reminisced about a time when primary schools provided excellent education and noted the disparity in teacher appointments based on merit.

The Chief Minister acknowledged the existing challenges, stating, "If all children attend school, we'll utilise all the resources to support them." He also addressed local grievances regarding the hiring process, illustrating the need for fairness in educational opportunities. Looking ahead, Murad Shah expressed aspirations to expand the Teaching License initiative to private institutions and early childhood education sectors. He reassured stakeholders of the government's commitment to overcoming logistical

hurdles and extending the policy's reach.

Mr Shah celebrated this milestone as a proud moment for Sindh, encouraging all education stakeholders to view this not as an endpoint, but the beginning of a new era in teaching professionalism. He concluded with a hopeful vision that licensed teachers will inspire the next generation and contribute to a bright future for Sindh.

Minister of Education Sardar Shah addresses the [Teaching Licence] ceremony Said that today marks a joyful day for him, as a dream envisioned three years ago has now become a reality. "Change is welcomed, but it is essential that it is effective," the minister emphasised. The minister highlighted that the implementation of teaching licenses would bring significant improvements to the education system. Referring to misconceptions, he noted that some individuals believed the licences were akin to

weapon permits for teachers. "Initially, we recruited teachers without licences as running schools was our priority," he explained.

Moving forward, all newly recruited teachers will undergo training before being issued licences. Only licensed teachers will be appointed in future recruitments, he confirmed.

"Teaching should be viewed not merely as a job but as a service and a responsibility," stressed Minister Sardar Shah. He further remarked that trained teachers are crucial for preparing the next generation. "I see myself not just as the Minister of Education, but as an administrator of education, making decisions under the guidance of educational experts," concluded Sardar Shah.

Those who spoke on the occasion were Secretary Education Zahid Abbasi, Dr Sajid Ali of Aga Khan University, Shahzad Raori, STEDA Executive Director Rasool Bux Shah.

Saed Ghani orders survey of 740 dangerous buildings

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Minister Saad Ghani has directed the immediate completion of the survey of 740 dilapidated and dangerous

buildings across the province. He emphasised urgent measures for the rehabilitation of residents displaced from 59 vacated buildings and instructed the Association of Builders and Developers

(ABAD) to prepare a comprehensive plan within a week for their long-term resettlement.

He announced that in the next session of the committee, one member from each parliamentary

party in Sindh Assembly would be specially invited to the meeting to receive a complete briefing on the steps taken by the provincial government so far for these affected buildings and their residents. The committee, after its upcoming meeting, will submit its report and recommendations to the Sindh Chief Minister, urging immediate action on the matter.

The meeting was attended by Sindh Additional Chief Secretary (Local Government) Waseem Shamsad, Karachi Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi, Sindh Building Control Authority DG Shahmeer Bhutto, ABAD Chairman Hassan Bakhshi, Vice Chairman Syed Afzal Hameed, Senior Vice Chairman of Pakistan Engineering Council Sarosh H. Lodi, member of Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners Architect Syed Arif Shah, Faryal Sikandar, South Deputy Commissioner Javed Khoso, Lyari Municipal Commissioner Hammad N.D. Khan, and others.

ٹینڈرنوٹس

ڈسٹرکٹ ہیڈ کوارٹر ہسپتال پارہ چنار کی جنوب مغرب سائیڈ دیوار (باؤنڈری وال) کی مرمت، چلڈرن وارڈ اور گائنی اوٹی کی مرمت کیلئے پاکستان انجینئرنگ کونسل کے ساتھ رجسٹرڈ موزوں کنٹریکٹرز سے سربمہر ٹینڈر مطلوب ہیں۔

مذکورہ بالا ٹینڈر دفتر ہذا کو مورخہ 20-08-2025 (10 بجے صبح) تک پہنچ جانی چاہیے۔ جو کہ اسی روز بوقت 10-30 بجے متعلقہ کنٹریکٹرز یا ان کے نمائندوں کے روبرو رکھو لے جائیں گے۔

مقررہ تاریخ کے بعد آنے والے ٹینڈرز قابل قبول نہیں ہوں گے۔

ٹینڈر کے ہمراہ کال ڈیپازٹ مبلغ:-/100000 (ایک لاکھ) روپے بطور سکیورٹی لازمی منسلک کرنا ہوگی۔

نوٹ: ٹینڈر کے متعلق تفصیلات بڈنگ ڈائمنٹس میں موجود ہیں جو کہ ہسپتال کے اکاؤنٹنٹیشن سے کسی بھی روز دوران ڈیوٹی حاصل کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ڈاکٹر سید میر حسن جان

میڈیکل سپرنٹنڈنٹ ڈسٹرکٹ ہیڈ کوارٹر ہسپتال پارہ چنار

ZERO TOLERANCE TO CORRUPTION

INF(P)3314/25

NLC	TENDER NOTICE
National Logistics Corporation	
<p>1. Senior Project Manager PMU NLC Peshawar invites sealed applications for pre-qualification of supplies of under mentioned materials/equipment for projects of Construction of Girls Hostel at Hazara University Mansehra, Construction of Digital City Haripur, Const of Remaining Works at EXPO Center Peshawar, DHA Peshawar and all other projects of PMU Peshawar as per PPRA Rules. (Items will be procured as per req on site till completion of projects basis). Detail of work is available on www.nlc.com.pk and www.ppra.org.pk.</p> <p>2. The suppliers/contractors are required to submit their application to project on formal as shown at para 6 along with complete company profile, the application rates /company profile shall be scrutinized and firm who has sufficient experience in relevant field and satisfy other special conditions required for the job and area will be engaged. The tender must be received in the office of accepting officer by 15 August 2025 at 1100 hours through post/by hand in sealed envelopes.</p> <p>3. The interested parties can contact Senior Project Manager for further details 0830 to 1630 hours on all working days at office phone no. 091-3028566. This tender notice is also available at www.nlc.com.pk and www.ppra.org.pk.</p>	

To discuss bilateral ties and Pilgrim facilitation

Iranian Consul General, Ambassadors call on KP Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Iranian Consul General Ali Banafshekhah met with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House here on Tuesday. During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on Iran-Pakistan bilateral relations, regional developments, issues faced by pilgrims, and enhancing mutual cooperation. The Iranian Consul General also spoke about the expected visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan, describing it as a milestone that would further strengthen relations between the two brotherly countries. He expressed gratitude for the support shown by the Pakistani government and people during the recent Iran-Israel tensions,

calling the solidarity admirable. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi reaffirmed that Iran and Pakistan share deep-rooted fraternal ties, saying, "Iran stood by Pakistan in times of Indian aggression in collaboration with Israel." He emphasized that unity and cooperation among Islamic countries was the vision of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a vision now being pursued under the leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Both sides expressed concern over security issues in Balochistan, especially during the Arbaeen pilgrimage. The Governor stressed the need for effective measures to ensure maximum facilities for pilgrims.

He underscored the importance of close coordination and strategic planning among Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan to simplify visa, immigration, and administrative processes. He also welcomed the proposal for registration of group leaders (Salar) to better guide pilgrims and address their concerns. Meanwhile, The Consul General of Afghanistan, Hafiz Mohibullah, called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House. During the meeting, Governor Kundi emphasized the strong bond between Pakistan and Afghanistan, describing the two nations as connected by an unbreakable relationship of Islamic brotherhood and neighborhood. He said that lasting peace is essential for the

development and prosperity of both countries. The two sides also held discussions on various issues, including border management, the promotion of bilateral trade, exchange of parliamentary delegations, and enhancing overall cooperation. Similarly, The Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin, H.E Shafizoda Saidjon Ismoil Charge d'Affaires of Tajikistan to Pakistan, H.E Bakhrom Yusupov Trade and Economic Consul, H.E Olzhas Tobyshev First Secretary, Embassy of Kazakhstan, H.E Aminjon Gulzoda Second Secretary, Embassy of Tajikistan also met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and discussed bilateral ties between the two countries.



PESHAWAR: The U.S. Consul General in Peshawar, Shante Moore, called on the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah.

Ihtisham inaugurates largest solarization project

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali shared that under the Health Care Improvement Project (HCIP), 195 Primary Healthcare Facilities, including Category C and D hospitals, will be shifted to solar energy systems within the next six months. He added that currently, 9 health facilities are undergoing solarization across Peshawar, Nowshera, Swabi, and Haripur. In Peshawar, 3 health facilities, including RHC Regi Lalma, are being solarized in this phase. He emphasized that the solar system will ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to these facilities,

community. Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali shared that under the Health Care Improvement Project (HCIP), 195 Primary Healthcare Facilities, including Category C and D hospitals, will be shifted to solar energy systems within the next six months. He added that currently, 9 health facilities are undergoing solarization across Peshawar, Nowshera, Swabi, and Haripur. In Peshawar, 3 health facilities, including RHC Regi Lalma, are being solarized in this phase. He emphasized that the solar system will ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to these facilities,

allowing patients to access timely and reliable healthcare services 24/7. This initiative, he said, is not only a major step towards health system resilience but also a contribution to environmental sustainability. Ihtisham Ali further stated that in the next phase, these health facilities will undergo renovation and be equipped with modern medical equipment, enabling round-the-clock functionality. Highlighting HCIP's broader achievements, he informed that Rs. 3.3 billion have been spent so far to improve primary healthcare services across the four districts. These include Rs. 800 million for providing free medical treatment at

Nishtarabad Hospital, Peshawar, Rs. 870 million for deploying security and janitorial staff at BHUs and RHCs, Rs. 720 million for providing free medicines and family planning commodities, Rs. 254 million for training healthcare providers, Rs. 25 million for establishing Health Promoting Schools to raise awareness about hygiene and basic health among children. He concluded by saying that ensuring free, quality, and uninterrupted health services at the local level remains a top priority of the government, and all available resources are being mobilized to achieve this goal.

Uncontrolled population growth a national challenge, warns Liaquat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Population Welfare, Malik Liaquat Ali, has expressed grave concern over the unchecked population growth in Pakistan, warning that if effective measures are not taken, the country's population could surge to 490 million in the next 27 years—posing unmanageable challenges for future generations. Speaking at a Ulema Conference organized by

the Population Welfare Department in collaboration with UNFPA at a local wedding hall, Malik Liaquat emphasized that the growing population is exacerbating economic and social issues. "If we do not build a dam against this flood of population, the consequences will be beyond anyone's control," he remarked. The conference was attended by Director General of Population Welfare Rehman Gul Khattak, district officers of the department, and a large number of religious

scholars and khateeb from Mardan, Buner, and Swabi. Addressing the gathering, religious scholars highlighted the importance of population welfare in the light of Islamic teachings. They stressed the significance of breastfeeding and appropriate intervals between births. The scholars noted that population planning is permissible within certain limits when aimed at the welfare of society and humanity. Malik Liaquat Ali reiterated that "having children

is not an achievement—what truly matters is their proper care, upbringing, education, healthcare, and overall development." He noted that rapid population growth contributes to poverty, unemployment, and social evils, and urged for a comprehensive national strategy to address the issue. He appealed to religious leaders to use their sermons to educate the public on the importance of population balance and to help create awareness through a responsible and balanced narrative.

US Consul General Calls on CS

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The U.S. Consul General in Peshawar, Shante Moore, called on the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah. During the meeting, bilateral cooperation in various areas was discussed, with a focus on development cooperation and ways to further strengthen the continued partnership. Meanwhile, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan, Samuel Rizk, called on the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, here on Tuesday. During the meeting, key development priorities of the province came under discussion. Both sides expressed their commitment to continue working together for the socio-economic uplift of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Shafqat meets Junaid Akbar to discuss political situation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Science and Information Technology, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, called on the President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chairman Public Accounts Committee, Junaid Akbar Khan, at his office. MNA Asghar Ali and MPA Malik Adeel were also present on the occasion. The meeting involved detailed consultation on the evolving political situation in the country, the strategy for the upcoming August 5 protest, and ways to further advance

the ongoing movement for Haqeeqi Azadi (True Freedom) under the leadership of PTI's founding chairman, Imran Khan. Dr. Shafqat Ayaz stated that Chairman Imran Khan is the voice and hope of the people of Pakistan. Under his leadership, the nation has developed a true awareness of freedom, and now it is the duty of every party worker to take this movement forward with full commitment. He added that under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands firmly on constitutional and democratic grounds, and is actively working for public

welfare, development, and political autonomy in line with the party's vision. Dr. Ayaz further remarked that the protest on August 5 will be a major milestone in the country's history. Workers from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will participate with full enthusiasm, sending a strong message that the nation stands with Imran Khan's narrative. He appreciated the organizational efforts of party president Junaid Akbar Khan and his consistent engagement with grassroots workers, emphasizing that such continuity is essential for strengthening the party at the district and tehsil levels.

Atif Afridi tops Khyber Matric result

F.P. Report



PESHAWAR: Atif Afridi, a talented student from Khyber District, has secured the top position in both his school and the entire district by scoring 1138 marks in the recent matriculation examinations. He studied at Ghazali Public High School and College Jamrud. Speaking about his success Atif Afridi who hails from the tribal district of Khyber said that achieving the first position in the entire district is a moment of great pride and joy for him. He added that this achievement is not solely the result of his own hard work but also the outcome of his parents' prayers, the guidance of his teachers and the special grace of Almighty Allah. Atif Afridi further dedicated his success to all those who supported him in his academic journey encouraged him and stood by him through every challenging moment. He said that this is the first step toward realizing his dreams and God willing, he will continue to work hard in the future so he can bring pride not only to his parents but also to his country and nation.



Ayesha Ali, student of Class 9 at Government Girls Centennial Model School, Nauthia, Peshawar, has secured a prominent position by obtaining 524 marks out of a total of 600. She attributed her success to the excellent guidance of her teachers and the prayers of her parents.

Empowering data-driven governance Three-day workshop on commences

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 3-day capacity-building workshop titled "Data Interpretation and Use" commenced on Tuesday at local Hotel Peshawar, jointly organized by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The workshop, being held from 29th to 31st July 2025, is aimed at promoting evidence-based planning and policy-making by empowering provincial stakeholders to optimally utilize PBS's comprehensive databank. The event brought together over a hundred senior planners, statisticians and development experts from across key government departments including Planning & Development, Education, Health, Industries, Labour, Livestock, Local Govt & Rural Development, Finance, Communication & Works, Agriculture and other vital sectors. The workshop focussed on enhancing participants' technical capacity in utilizing socio-economic datasets for effective governance and resource optimization. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal (Sitara-e-Imtiaz), Senior Member (Support Services/Resource Management), PBS, in his inaugural speech, delivered an insightful presentation

on the breadth of PBS's data resources, including datasets from population and housing censuses, PSLM, HIES, labour force surveys and economic indicators. He highlighted real-time case studies to illustrate how robust data interpretation can translate into effective policy decisions. Mr. Gondal also invited participants to the upcoming Data Fest 2025 to be held on 11–12 November 2025 at Pak-China Friendship Center, Islamabad, encouraging cross-sectoral data collaboration and visualization. Presiding over the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Naeem uz Zafar (Sitara-e-Imtiaz), Chief Statistician of Pakistan, emphasized the critical role of reliable statistics in achieving sustainable development and ensuring good governance. He reaffirmed PBS's commitment to supporting provincial governments through enriched data services, digital dashboards, and institutional capacity development. Ms. Mahjabeen Qazi, UNFPA Provincial Head, underscored the importance of data-informed governance for accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She praised the proactive collaboration between PBS and KP govt departments as a promising model for other provinces. Mr. Fayyaz Alam,

Additional Secretary for Education, KP, on behalf of KP govt, appreciated PBS and UNFPA for conducting the workshop at a crucial juncture. He noted that in line with the Chief Minister's directive and the Chief Secretary's vision, all departments have been tasked with developing actionable roadmaps for governance reforms and that such workshops offer the tools to build them effectively. Throughout the workshop, participants are engaging in hands-on sessions covering key sectors such as health, education, WASH, labor, trade, prices, and living standards. Live demonstrations of PBS's interactive dashboards, custom time series, and sector-specific indicators are being delivered, alongside practical group exercises to enhance data application skills in real-world planning scenarios. An on-site Data Dissemination Desk has also been established to provide instant access to relevant datasets and guidance to all participants. This collaborative initiative marks a significant stride toward fostering a data-literate governance culture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, bridging the gap between numbers and narratives, and paving the way for strategic, inclusive, and transparent development.

Tourism projects will be organized according to historical importance

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur vision for Tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a meeting was held today under the chair of Dr. Abdul Samad, Secretary of the Culture, Tourism, and Archeology Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to finalize the master plan for Jamrud and Landikotal urban centers. The session took place in Peshawar, focusing on strategic development initiatives for the region. Imran Zahoor, Project Director of the Khyber Pass Economic Corridor, presented an overview of proposed tourism and economic activities for both Jamrud and Landikotal. He highlighted key opportunities to enhance local commerce and attract visitors through structured planning. Dr. Abdul Samad emphasized the historical significance of Jamrud and Landikotal, their potential as major tourist destinations. He mentioned that Totkham, near Jamrud, serves as a gateway to Central Asia, while Jamrud Fort holds special importance for Sikh pilgrims due to its association with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Additionally, he pointed out the region's health tourism potential, as many Afghans visit for medical services. The Secretary stressed the need for the Khyber Pass Economic Corridor to incorporate historical and cultural aspects into the master plan while ensuring a sustainable business model for long-term viability. The meeting concluded with directives to finalize the plan with a focus on tourism promotion, economic growth, and heritage preservation.

Muskan's outstanding achievement



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A shining example of hard work and dedication, Muskan Khan, daughter of Ismail Khan, has made her school and community proud by securing an impressive 559 marks in her 9th-grade examinations. Muskan, a student at Hayat Abad Model School, has consistently shown remarkable academic performance. Her recent results reflect her commitment to excellence and the strong support system provided by her family and teachers. Speaking about her achievement, Muskan expressed her gratitude to her parents and teachers for their constant encouragement. "I'm thankful for the guidance and motivation I received throughout the year," she said. The school administration also praised Muskan's efforts, stating that she is a role model for other students and an example of what can be achieved through focus and determination. As she looks forward to continuing her academic journey, Muskan Khan's success is an inspiration for students across the region.

Fading echoes of brass Peshawar's dying craft clings to legacy

PESHAWAR (APP): In the centuries-old narrow alleys of Misgaran bazaar, once alive with the musical rhythm of hammers striking glowing brass, only silence now reigns. The brass craftspeople are fewer, their tools rusting, and the once-vibrant craft of brassware, which were once the pride of Peshawar's cultural soul, is disappearing into history. Nestled near the historic Qissa Khwani Bazaar, Misgaran was once the epicenter of KP's brass artistry. Today, only a few artisans remain, clutching their heritage in aging fingers as plastic goods, mass-produced imports, and public neglect push their craft toward near extinction. "Fifty years ago, there were at least 200 brass shops here at Misgaran and Qissa Khawani bazaars," said 75-year-old Haji Muhammad Rafiq, a third-generation craftsman while talking to APP. "Now, barely 10 are left here." Sitting cross-legged on the floor of his dimly lit workshop, Rafiq gently buffs the rim of a half-finished brass bowl amid load shedding. The golden hue reflects both the luster of a glorious past and the sorrow of a fading present. "Plastic and imported goods may be cheap and trendy, but they have no soul and identity," Haji Rafiq, whose son also joined him in shop told APP. The roots of brassware in Peshawar stretch before the Mughal era who took keen interest in engraved samovars, ornate lanterns, ceremonial trays and teapots that once graced homes across South Asia, Afghanistan, Central Asian Republics and the Middle East. Merchants from Central Asia, who passed through Peshawar, stayed at Qissa Khwani buying these treasured goods and took them across borders and generations. Today, that rich history teeters on the brink due to sheer neglect by the PTI rulers. From hundreds of skilled craftsmen, only a few remain as some holding on for passion, others out of necessity. Known as Ustad G in brass work, Safar Ali, one of the great artisans, is still active in Peshawar, carrying the weight of a nearly century of family tradition. "In May 2005, Angelina Jolie visited our shop and called it 'beautiful' and praised our brass work," he said, beaming at the memory. "It meant the world to us." Safar Ali was later awarded the Pride of Performance by the government which was a great honour for his entire family. Safar's late brother Khwaja Akhter Ali was also nominated twice in the past for Pride of Performance. "There's no training and no support either from KP Govt or civil society. The youth are also not interested in adopting this ancient art. They're on their smartphones," he lamented. "And brass is expensive. It's easier to sell plastic." Despite the gloom, some sparks of revival are visible. A few NGOs and social enterprises are attempting to link artisans with modern consumers through online platforms. But without KP Govt support, their impact remains limited. Senior academics Anthropology at University of Peshawar and cultural expert Dr. Muhammad Jamil Khan believed Peshawar's brassware could thrive again if given the right platform and social media projection, adding KP Culture and Tourism Authority and Culture Department's role in this regard carried significant importance. "Tourists and collectors worldwide crave authenticity. Peshawar has that. What it lacks is promotion, preservation, and accessibility," Dr. Jamil said, adding preparation of small videos and photos of brass master pieces and its uploading on digital media can bring laurels. Another craftsman, 64-year-old Khadim Hussain, still operates a small brass factory set up by his father in 1948. Starting at just 10, Khadim has dedicated his life to the art, teaching two of his grandsons in hopes of passing the torch. "This is our identity. My father, my grandfather—they all worked this metal with their bare hands," he said, leaning on his cane, pride gleaming in his eyes. But today, brass costs up to Rs. 2,000 per kilogram. With the handwork and engraving, even a simple decoration piece can cost over Rs. 8,000 far out of reach for middle-class families. "I love brass products due to its unique designs and art work," said Nasir Khan, a property dealer. I came here to select few master pieces for decoration of my newly constructed house," said Nasir who at Qissa Khwani's brass shop. Security and economic challenges besides lack of public and Govt support have all played a part in the decline of this ancient art," he said and added that resultantly most workers have shifted to plastic or silver goods to stay afloat.



In brief

Scholarship ceremony held F.P. Report

LARKANA: Institute of Business and Commercial Education Jacobabad organized a ceremony to distribute the Diya Pakistan Scholarship in Larkana under the president ship of Principal Ali Bakhsh Kandhro, on Tuesday. The ceremony was attended by special guests Mureed Hussain Khakhrani, Regional Director of STEVTA Larkana, Gul Hassan Talani, Chairman of the Institute Management Committee, IBC Jacobabad, and other officials in large numbers. Addressing the ceremony, Mureed Hussain Khakhrani said that education is the foundation of the development of nations, while institutions like Diya Pakistan are a source of hope for our youth who want to move forward in the path of knowledge despite financial difficulties and STEVTA has always supported such initiatives. Addressing the ceremony, Gul Hassan Talani said that students need not only financial support but also encouragement and guidance because today's ceremony is not only a support for students but also an opportunity to highlight their hidden talents.

Preparations reviewed F.P. Report

MARDAN: A high-level meeting was held here on Monday to review preparations for "Independence Week (Haftha-e-Azadi) and the Battle for Truth (Maarika-e-Haq)" scheduled from August 7 to 14. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Mardan, Wasif Rahman and attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance and Planning) Syed Fahad Iftikhar, Assistant Commissioners and relevant officers from all line departments. The session included a detailed assessment of arrangements for the upcoming week-long celebrations. Activities planned during the week at the district and tehsil levels included speech competitions in schools and colleges, major sporting events, large-scale tree plantation drives, and a cleanliness week. The main Independence Day event will be held on August 14 at the Pakhtunkhwa House, where a flag-hoisting ceremony will take place. Students will present tableaux and other performances to pay tribute to the martyrs of the freedom movement and heroes of the Maaraka-e-Haq. Special tribute will be paid to the sacrifices made by the Pakistan Armed Forces.

Minister chairs meeting F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A key meeting of the District Coordination Committee was held at the Deputy Commissioner's office under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Chaudhry Junaid Anwar and Member Provincial Assembly Colonel (R) Ayub Khan Gadhi. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naem Sandhu, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih, Assistant Commissioners, Deputy Director Development Ahmad Jawad Sardar, heads of district departments and other officials. During the meeting, the Deputy Director Development briefed the participants on 17 new schemes under the ADP 2025-26. These schemes include 4 for roads, 6 for local government, 4 for public buildings, 2 for sports, and one for rescue emergency.



MULTAN: Two motorcyclists transport bed frames and traditional charpais on their way to their destination at Naag Shah Chowk.

Climate change: Causes and effects

Hira Fatima

'Pakistan is being crushed under the weight of climate disasters it didn't create, yet solutions are within reach if action is taken now. While contributing less than 1% to global emissions and generating only 34% of its electricity from clean sources (including hydro), the nation suffers catastrophes of biblical proportions - the 2022 floods submerged one-third of the country, displacing 33 million and causing \$30 billion in losses.

But hope exists: The government's ambitious plan to boost renewables to 60% by 2030 could transform Pakistan's energy landscape, while initiatives like the Recharge Pakistan project aim to restore floodplains and absorb future climate shocks.

This month's tragedies in Swat (17 dead) and Gilgit-Baltistan (200 tourists trapped, 5 killed) reveal a cruel paradox: Pakistan ranks among the top 10 most vulnerable nations while the wealthiest countries, responsible for 75% of historical emissions, delay action. Yet local solutions are emerging:



Farmers in Punjab are adopting precision irrigation to cut water waste by 40%, while the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami project has already restored 1 million hectares of degraded land. The crisis is compounded by self-inflicted wounds - 500+ hotels in fragile northern regions disrupt ecosystems, while the furniture industry's 5.4 million cubic feet of annual timber consumption helps slash forest cover to just 5.4%. But change is coming: The government now mandates sustainable timber sourcing, and eco-tourism models are being tested in sensitive areas.

Meanwhile, traditional flood irrigation methods, unchanged for generations, waste 50% of Pakistan's precious water while increasing soil salinity that now affects 6 million hectares of farmland. Here

too, innovation offers hope: Solar-powered drip irrigation systems are doubling crop yields while using 70% less water in pilot projects across Sindh. The result? A nation at a crossroads: Climate disasters cost \$4 billion yearly, farmers lose \$1.3 billion to extreme weather, but solutions exist if scaled quickly.

Now is the time for decisive action: Scaling solar and wind energy to meet 60% renewable targets, expanding the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami to restore critical ecosystems, and implementing water-saving agricultural technologies nationwide.

The government must enforce sustainable industry regulations while developed nations fulfill their \$348 billion climate finance commitment. Communities need climate-smart infrastructure - from early warning systems to sponge cities that absorb floodwaters. Pakistan has the solutions; what's needed is global cooperation and urgent implementation before the next disaster strikes. The world cannot claim ignorance - the blueprint for Pakistan's climate survival exists. Will we use it before it's too late?"

PTI MPs announce protest drive for Imran's release

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers and local leaders in Lower Dir announced a protest campaign starting from August 5 to demand the release of former Prime Minister and party founder Imran Khan, calling it the "final round" of the party's movement.

At separate events in Lower Dir, PTI MPAs Malik Shafiullah Khan and DDAC chairman Ubaidur Rehman criticized what they termed the erosion of judicial independence in Pakistan. They alleged that the judiciary had become "hostage" to external influences following the 26th Constitutional Amendment, which they claimed led to a loss of public confidence in the courts.

A consultative meeting in this regard was held at the office of the District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) in Timergara, chaired by DDAC Chairman and MPA

Ubaidur Rehman. MPA Malik Shafiullah Khan, village council chairman, and senior PTI figures attended the session. The participants expressed strong resentment over what they called the "unjust imprisonment" of Imran Khan and vowed to continue their political struggle.

The lawmakers alleged that false and politically motivated cases were being used to target PTI's leadership in order to silence the party's call for constitutionalism and rule of law. "This is not just about Imran Khan—it is about restoring justice and democratic values," said MPA Shafiullah Khan.

He proposed that PTI MNAs, MPAs, and senators stage a sit-in at D-Chowk in Islamabad, and suggested road closures in Punjab to exert pressure if their demands are not met. He also urged party workers to conduct a door-to-door campaign to mobilize public support ahead of the

August 5 protest.

Speaking earlier at the inauguration of a road blacktopping project in Gharibabad, Malik Shafiullah Khan reiterated his commitment to corruption-free governance. "I follow Imran Khan's vision. I neither commit corruption nor tolerate it," he stated. He highlighted his development work in the constituency, noting the approval of a 31-kilometre road from Banda Gai to the District Jail Timergara. He vowed not to compromise on quality and warned that contractors involved in substandard work would be reported to the Anti-Corruption Department.

Both MPAs emphasized that peaceful protest was now the only effective way to press for justice, as they saw little hope of relief from the courts. They directed party workers to dedicate their full efforts to ensuring the success of the August 5 demonstration.

Swat Mayor denies land occupation allegations

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: City Mayor Babuzai tehsil Shahid Ali Khan has vehemently denied allegations of unlawfully occupying land and a bungalow previously owned by the former "Wali of Swat". Speaking at a press conference at the Swat Press Club, Shahid Khan clarified that he purchased the land in 2021 from the Wali's wife through a public advertisement, following his late father's will, to build a house for his sister.

Mayor emphasized that all legal documents, registry, and evidence are available to support his claim. He explained that he met the Wali's wife,

accompanied by his niece, sister, and others, after responding to the advertisement. He stated that the Wali's wife had previously attempted to sell the land to the royal family, but they were unwilling to pay the desired amount, leading to the public sale.

The mayor revealed that he sold his hotel in Green Chowk to purchase the land and built a house for his sister, which she occupied in October/November 2024. Khan dismissed allegations of occupying the bungalow as baseless, noting that the gate in question has been present since the time of the Wali Swat.

A four-member committee, comprising the royal family and their

trusted representatives, has been formed to resolve the dispute, with the goal of finding a solution based on the Quran, Sunnah, and principles of justice. Khan assured that he would not interfere in pending court cases related to some lands.

The mayor also clarified that Provincial Minister for Livestock Fazal Hakeem Khan has no connection to the land or construction, emphasizing that he purchased the property himself for his sister. Khan paid tribute to the services of the Wali's Swat family and the governor, expressing immense respect for them and denying any intention of occupying someone else's land.

Tank Peace Committee meets GOC F.P. Report

TANK: A representative delegation of the Kundi Peace Council participated in a jirga (tribal gathering) held under the chairmanship of General Commanding Officer 40 Division to discuss the law and order situation in the area, on Tuesday.

The jirga was convened at Captain Sikandar Shaheed Camp Tank and was attended by Sector Commander FC South, all wing commanders, Deputy Commissioner Tanveer Khan Khattak, District Police Officer Shabir Hussain Shah, and local elders.

During the jirga, a special prayer was also offered for the martyred minor girl who lost her life a few days ago in Wanda Zalo village. The participants, including security forces, district administration, and local elders, unanimously signed a peace agreement. Following successful negotiations. Meanwhile the protest scheduled by the elders for July 29 was called off.

The participants emphasized the role of society in the war against terrorism and the importance of national unity. The jirga assured the participants that traditions and customs would be fully respected. The jirga demanded decisive action against the Khawarij (banned outfit) and emphasized the need to establish Village Defense Committee Chegha Party.

All demands presented by the Kundi Peace Council were implemented. At the conclusion of the jirga/Meeting, the participants inaugurated a tree plantation campaign by planting a sapling " the Tree of Peace."

Three killed one injured in 2 incidents F.P. Report

BUNER: Almost two persons were killed over land dispute in Bajkatta village while one other was killed and another injured over domestic dispute in Torwarsak Jangdara Ghulotangy villages of Buner.

According to the details, Jamshed Khan was killed from one party and Dilghani was shot from the other party over land dispute in Bajkatta village in the premises of police station Gagra. Similarly, one Wakil Zada shot dead and Muhammad Amin seriously injured during firing over an old dispute between relatives in Torwarsak Jangdara Ghulotangy in jurisdiction of the police station Daggar.

The police have registered the cases and started an investigation. However, with the intervention of elders in Bajkatta, immediate reconciliation was achieved between the two parties. Both the funerals were held together and the condolence program has also started in the same Hujra. Due to which further enmity between the two families was stopped and no claims were made against each other, village elders confirmed.

Anti-encroachment operation conducted: Assistant Commissioner Khudukhel sub division in Buner district Farangis Azeem conducted anti-encroachment operation while removed permanent and temporary buildups, on Tuesday.

BISEM announces matric result with 75% of passing ratio

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Muhammad Athar Khan has clinched the top-position in results of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) annual examinations-2025 held by Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Mardan.

The Results of SSC annual examinations-2025 were announced here on Tuesday in a result-related ceremony held in auditorium hall of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Mardan (BISE) On the occasion, Commissioner Mardan division Nisar Ahmad Khan was the chief guest. Apart from the BISE chairman Prof. Jehanzib Khan and other relevant board officials, the top position holder-students along with their parents and other family members attended the ceremony.

As per the results announcement, Muhammad Athar Khan, student of the Quaid-e-Azam Public School and Montessori system Mardan has topped BISE Mardan by getting 1177 out of total 1200 marks. Three students have jointly gained the second position by securing 1172 marks. The second position-holder students were identified as Sidra Maham of the Quaid-e-Azam Girls Public School Swabi, Roza Siraj and Sania Falak both belonged to Ghazali School for Girls Mardan.

Similarly, the third-position was also shared by three students. All the three students who obtained 1170 marks each, were named as Aqsa Rehman of Ghazali School for Girls Mardan, Khaqan Ahmad of Iqra Model School Chargulli Mardan and Uroosa Anwar of the Quaid-e-Azam Girls Public School Swabi. According to the results of SSC, all the top three position-holders belonged to the Science Group.

In the Humanities group, Fakiha Faiz of the government Girls High School Beka Swabi has gained top position with 1119 out of a total 1200 marks. The second position was secured by Khadija of

Government Girls High School Khat Killi Nowshera by getting 1079 marks.

The two students identified as Areeba of government Girls Higher Secondary School Manki Sharif Nowshera and Zuhra Bibi of government Girls Higher Secondary School Akora Khattak Nowshera have jointly obtained the third position with 1074 marks. It is pertinent to mention that in the matriculation examination conducted by the board, 53,218 candidates appeared in the Science Group, out of which 10,255 failed. The pass percentage in the science group was 80.73%.

In the Arts Group, 23,682 candidates appeared, and 8,765 failed. The pass percentage here stood at 62.99%. According to the board's overall results, a total of 76,900 candidates appeared in the exams, out of which 19,020 were unsuccessful. The overall pass percentage remained 75.27%. On this occasion, the chief guest Commissioner Nisar Ahmed while addressing the participants said that the younger generation should focus all their energy on acquiring education because no society can progress without education.

"Exams are an essential part of the educational system; however, to succeed in practical life, students must look beyond merely obtaining high marks. Every individual should contribute to the betterment of society through their own capabilities," he added. Chairman of the BISE Mardan, Professor Jehanzaib Khan, stated that for the first time in the province's history, papers were checked and marked transparently.

Subject experts were given the responsibility to check the papers, and therefore, the board confidently challenges that if anyone has any doubts or suspicions about the position holders, the board is ready for any kind of audit. He added that students must break away from the rote-learning system. The real purpose of education is to make individuals beneficial to society, religion, and humanity — only then is the purpose of education truly fulfilled.

Govt commits to fulfill electoral promises

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs has under the vision of "Ongoing journey from promises to completion", along with the Chairman Tehsil Gumbat and former Nazims Arshad Gul and Sanaullah formally inaugurated the Railway Colony Road Gumbat in District Kohat which is completed at a cost of Rs.10 million.

The road has been completed with the funds of Law Minister Aftab Alam Advocate and MNA Shehryar Afridi. The area elders thanked the MNA Shehryar Afridi, Law Minister and Chairman Tehsil Gumbat whose personal interest and efforts made the completion of the said road possible, which was a long-standing demand of the people of the area.

Aftab Alam said that the development work will continue as per the commitments. He added that a viable and comprehensive developmental plan has been prepared keeping in view the needs of each area in consultation with the elders of the area and the local

party leadership, so that there is no waste of government money and maximum necessary problems of the people are solved.

Admin to celebrate Independence Day with e n t h u s i a s m : Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah has said that the upcoming Independence Day and Moraka-e-Haq will be celebrated with national zeal and fervor in light of the directions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chief Secretary and special programs to this effect will be arranged through out the Kohat Division.

This he said while talking to the members of the Grand Tribal Jirga which called on him at Commissioner House Kohat. In the meeting, implementation of the Kohat Peace Agreement, the active role of local elders in the general peace and security of other districts of the division and the proposed events in all districts in connection with the Independence Day and "Moraka-e-Haq" were discussed in detail.

All the members expressed their resolve that

all possible cooperation with the Pakistan Army, Police and Civil Administration will be ensured in the complete implementation of the Kohat Agreement and in maintaining the general peace and order, and all the citizens will fully participate in the events organized in connection with Independence Day and "Moraka-e-Haq" to express their heartfelt and sincere love and devotion to their beloved homeland Pakistan.

Commissioner Kohat, while appreciating the patriotic spirit of the members of the Jirga, said that this God-gifted state of Pakistan is the fruit of the great sacrifices of our ancestors and InshaAllah, we will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for its protection and glory. Commissioner Kohat, while referring to the Moraka-e-Haq, said that our courageous Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force proved by defeating the enemy that it is the best army in the world and Inshallah, in the future the cunning enemy will not even dare to look at Pakistan with a dirty eye.

Flood victims decry Minister's visit as 'too little, too late'

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Senior Punjab Minister Maryam Aurangzeb's recent visit to the flood-affected areas of Hafizabad has drawn sharp criticism from local residents and victims, who described the visit as a mere photo opportunity that failed to address the ground realities. Many have called the gesture "a drop in the ocean" compared to the scale of devastation faced by thousands of flood-hit families.

The Minister's visit was limited to the village of Nouthain, where the district administration hastily set up a temporary relief camp overnight. Selected individuals were invited to receive ration packs in a tightly controlled environment, carefully staged for media coverage and official praise. However, residents of over 140 flood-affected villages in and around Pindi Bhattian, where the devastation has been far more widespread, were left waiting in vain for assistance or even acknowledgment.

Farmers and families, who lost their homes, crops and livestock, continue to endure scorching heat and humidity under the open sky without proper shelter, clean water, or food. Their

pleas for help have gone largely unheard.

According to local sources, district officials and political representatives intentionally diverted the ministerial visit away from the worst-hit areas to avoid public scrutiny. Victims claim that the administration prioritized optics over genuine relief, using hand-picked beneficiaries and isolated locations to portray a misleading picture of effective governance.

This unfolding crisis raises serious questions about the government's preparedness and sincerity in handling natural disasters. With the next monsoon season approaching, residents fear that without a meaningful and inclusive strategy, more lives and livelihoods may be at risk.

Senior Punjab Minister visits rain-affected areas on CM's directives: On the special directive of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Senior Provincial Minister Maryam Aurangzeb conducted an emergency visit to the rain- and flood-affected areas of Hafizabad on Friday.

During her visit, the Minister met with flood victims individually to inquire about their wellbeing and

issued on-the-spot instructions to address their urgent problems. As part of the relief efforts initiated by the Government of Punjab, she also distributed one-month food ration packages to hundreds of affected families.

She further added that CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered transparent and efficient disbursement of financial compensation and has vowed that the Punjab Government will not leave the victims alone under any circumstances. "All possible measures will be taken to compensate for their losses," she assured. The Senior Minister also visited the field camps of Rescue 1122, Livestock, Medical, and Municipal Committees and directed all departments to remain on high alert.

Unannounced Power Outages Cripple Daily Life: Contrary to official claims, prolonged and unannounced power outages have paralyzed daily life in Hafizabad, causing immense hardship to the residents. The local power utility, GEPCO, has reportedly been shutting off electricity under the pretext of "permit-based maintenance" twice a week, a practice that has become routine.



JDEIDET YABOUS: Syrian citizens who were displaced in Lebanon arrive at Syrian border crossing point.

Outweighs health risks for Philippine e-waste dismantlers

MANILA (AFP): Dexter Barsigan has spent the past 13 years making a living with his bare hands and a pair of pliers, stripping scrapped laptops and air conditioners for metal he can sell to junk shops in the Philippines.

But since his hands began aching and his vision started to blur three years ago, there have been days he can only watch his wife and nephew do the job for him. The 47-year-old father of three is a "mambabaklas", the Filipino word for informal dismantlers who scavenge electronic waste for the nickel, aluminum and copper inside.

"Dismantling helps us put food on the table. It provides the money to send my kids to school," Barsigan told AFP while sitting along a kilometre-long stretch of Onyx Street, home to hundreds of fellow "e-waste" dismantlers. Their work frequently involves burning away rubber wire casings, releasing a toxic brew of chemicals including lead, mercury and cadmium into the air. Both the Philippine government and the Basel Convention, a global waste management treaty signed by 191 countries, consider e-waste hazardous.

"It poses serious threats to human health and the environment," said Irvin Cadavona, a hazardous waste management officer with the environment department, citing health risks ranging from cancer and neurological diseases to respiratory illnesses and birth defects. The World Health Organization said last year exposure

to e-waste chemicals can lead to incidents of asthma and reduced lung function in children, while pregnant women are at higher risk for stillbirths and premature delivery.

"It's very hard to recycle these (chemicals). When you dismantle (e-waste), you must intricately break it down. It can be very hazardous," Gelo Apostol, an environmental health specialist from Ateneo de Manila University, told AFP. Exposure to the substances can lead to anaemia, kidney and thyroid diseases, and nerve damage, he said.

The Philippines is among the top e-waste generators in Southeast Asia, according to the United Nations' Global E-waste Monitor, accounting for 540 million kilograms (about 600,000 tons) in 2022. Dismantlers who work at the country's accredited facilities are required to follow stringent guidelines. But their informal counterparts lack the training, regulations and protective equipment needed to properly protect themselves.

"I strongly believe that some Filipinos are getting sick because of the exposure to e-waste," Cadavona said. Barsigan, who doesn't wear a mask while working, prefers dismantling computer circuit boards with aluminum and copper because they fetch as much as P470 (\$8) per kilogram. But circuit boards have especially high concentrations of toxic metals that can cause nerve damage when breathed in, Apostol said.

While illegal, Onyx Street's e-waste dismantlers also routinely burn wires to extract copper, which is faster than peeling them by hand. Rosana Milan, physician-in-charge at Manila's Pedro Gil Health Center, said her clinic has diagnosed half of the 12,000 people living along the street with respiratory issues, most of them children. "It's very risky for the babies, the toddlers and even the school children... they're sitting beside their father while the father is... burning the rubber," Milan told AFP.

"Mostly they have pneumonia, upper and lower respiratory illness, even if they have vaccines," Dismantler Sammy Oligar said his one-year-old grandchild had been diagnosed with pneumonia that a doctor attributed to pollution caused by the burning. "The smoke would enter from our window and the child would inhale it," Oligar told AFP, adding that many of his neighbors were dealing with lung illnesses.

Medecins du Monde (MdM), a French humanitarian organisation providing gloves, masks and safety orientations for the dismantlers of Onyx Street, is calling for the recognition of informal e-waste workers. "Health is clearly not their first priority. Their priority is to have food on the table," Eva Lecat, general coordinator of MdM, told AFP. "If (their work) was legal and recognised and regulated, there would be ways to protect people and communities."

Terror threat to Singapore 'remains high'

SINGAPORE (Reuters): The terrorism threat to Singapore remains high, said its home affairs ministry in a report released on Tuesday, pointing to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and "continued traction of radical narratives".

While there was no current intelligence of an imminent attack against Singapore, the ministry said Islamic State uses propaganda to exploit the war in Gaza and local grievances to reinforce its narrative of armed violence. Since the surprise attack by Hamas on Israel in October 2023, six Singaporeans have been found to support or were making preparations to take part in armed violence because of the conflict, said the report.

"Singapore and our interests continue to be viewed as attractive and legitimate targets by terrorist and extremist elements, due to our friendly relations with Western nations and Israel, the presence of iconic structures in Singapore, and our status as a secular and multicultural state," it said. The ministry said a key threat was online self-radicalisation, in a variety of extremist ideologies, especially of youths.

Since 2015, Singapore has used the Internal Security Act against 17 youth aged 20. Most recently it was used against two teenagers - one planned to shoot mosques, the other planned to join Islamic State. The law allows suspects to be held for lengthy periods without trial, or to be given a restriction order limiting travel and internet access, among other conditions. The threat assessment report also said artificial intelligence was emerging as a terrorism enabler for "generating and translating propaganda, producing convincing synthetic multimedia, creating personalised recruitment messages at scale, and planning and developing attacks".

NZ introduces law that makes it harder to vote

WELLINGTON (Reuters): The New Zealand government on Tuesday introduced a law that will prevent people from enrolling to vote on election day and bar prisoners from casting their ballot while in jail, in a move critics say could reduce voter participation.

The proposed law, which passed its first of three readings in parliament on Tuesday, will allow people to enrol to vote only up to 13 days before an election. Currently potential voters can enrol up to and on election day. The law will also ban all prisoners from voting and require voting to open 12 days ahead of the official election day.

"This bill overhauls a number of outdated and unsustainable electoral laws. The package of amendments will strengthen the system, helping to deliver timely election results, manage the costs, clarify rules and provide more efficient services to voters," said Minister of Justice Paul Goldsmith, who proposed the bill.

However, a report by Attorney General Judith Collins concluded that the bill "appears to be inconsistent" with the country's Bill of Rights, including the right to freedom of expression and the right to vote.

The changes are, in part, prompted by delays in results at the 2023 election, when it took nearly three weeks before an official result was released due to the high number of special votes. Special votes are cast by New Zealanders living or travelling overseas, voting outside their constituency or newly enrolled.

The Attorney General's report, which was released publicly on Friday, said in the last election special votes included over 97,000 people who registered for the first time during the voting period, and nearly 134,000 people who changed electoral districts during the voting period. "This gives some indication of the number of people who may be affected."

First group of Syrian refugees returns home from Lebanon

JDEIDET YABOUS, Syria (AP): The first group of Syrian refugees returned home from Lebanon on Tuesday under a new plan the United Nations developed with the Lebanese government following the downfall of Bashar Assad's rule in December.

Syria's uprising-turned-conflict displaced half of the country's pre-war population of 23 million over the last 14 years. Lebanon hosted an estimated 1.5 million refugees, at one point making up roughly a quarter of its six million people, with many having been smuggled across the border and unregistered with the UN. The new plan has the UN refugee agency offering \$100 in cash to each repatriated Syrian refugee and the Lebanese authorities waiving any fees or fines they owe. The UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration will provide them with buses for their return journey. The UNHCR also says it will help returning Syrians with "cash grants, legal assistance for civil documents, psychosocial support, livelihood opportunities, and other protection services."

Lebanese authorities have repeatedly requested the repatriation of Syrian refugees over the years, a call that grew louder with the widespread poverty in the Mediterranean country and shrinking funding for aid agencies. But Syria under Assad was not yet

safe for their return, according to major rights organizations.

Many Syrians had also previously said the war, forced conscription under Syria's former government, and unpaid residency fines in Lebanon have held them back from returning. But Syria now has a new government under President Ahmed al-Sharaa, who led the surprise offensive that ousted Assad, and the Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's government hopes Syrians will sign up for the joint repatriation plan.

The UNHCR estimates that over 205,000 Syrians have crossed back into the country from Lebanon since December, of which at least 126,000 were confirmed to be full returns, said Abou Khaled. UNHCR Lebanon spokesperson Lisa Abou Khaled says about 17,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon have already signed up to go back to their home country, though the vast majority have opted not to take the buses.

Tuesday's repatriation was a "test run," she said, with only 72 people, mostly going to Syria's third-largest city of Homs and rural Damascus. Syrian border authorities greeted the returning refugees with roses and water bottles, as they filled out forms after exiting the bus. Some took pictures in front of Syria's new green flag. Among them was Rasha, who told The Associated Press she

was elated to return for the first time in 14 years.

"We're going home with nothing, but it's easier than having to keep paying rent," she said, using only her first name. She and her husband are heading to Homs. Before, she wouldn't leave because her sons were at the age of conscription, which she described as "sending your son to his death." They also couldn't afford to pay all the fines for overstaying in Lebanon for 14 years.

Raghad fled to Lebanon when she was 10 years old after her father was killed in Homs, and is returning for the first time to her family home with her siblings and their children. "We're hoping to fix it so we can live there for a bit," she said. "I can't imagine myself living there without Dad."

Despite Washington lifting decades-long sanctions, Syria is still reeling from an economic crisis that has pulled the vast majority of its population into poverty. It's still also trying to rebuild hundreds of billions of dollars in battered infrastructure after the conflict. Abou Khaled, the UNHCR Lebanon spokesperson, warns that this might hinder long-term returns if not resolved soon.

"We must acknowledge that there is a real humanitarian crisis in Syria that remains very significant," she explained. "Millions of people will need urgent help to be able to return in a sustainable way."

Iraq's prime minister seeks closer US ties

BAGHDAD (AP): The prime minister of Iraq has kept his country on the sidelines as military conflicts raged nearby for almost two years. This required balancing Iraq's relations with two countries vital to his power and enemies with each other: the US and Iran.

The feat became especially difficult last month when war broke out between Israel, a US ally, and Iran — and the US struck Iranian nuclear sites. Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said he used a mix of political and military pressure to stop armed groups aligned with Iran from entering the fray. In an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, Al-Sudani explains how he did this, how he plans to keep these groups in check going forward and — as he seeks a second term — why he wants to get closer to the Trump administration, even as he maintains strong ties to Iran-backed political parties that helped propel him to power in 2022.

After Israel launched airstrikes on Iran and it responded by firing missiles at Tel Aviv, armed groups in Iraq attempted to launch missiles and drones toward Israel and at bases in Iraq housing US troops, al-Sudani said. But they were thwarted 29 times by Iraqi government "security operations" that he did not detail. "We know that the (Israeli) government had a

policy — and still does — of expanding the war in the region," al-Sudani said. "Therefore, we made sure not to give any justification to any party to target Iraq."

Al-Sudani said his government also reached out to leaders in Iran "to urge them toward calm and to make room for dialogue and a return to negotiations." The US and Iraq last year announced an agreement to wrap up the mission of an American-led coalition in Iraq fighting the Islamic State — and in March al-Sudani announced that the head of IS in Iraq and Syria had been killed in a joint Iraqi-US operation. The first phase of the coalition's drawdown was supposed to be completed by September 2025, but there has been little sign of it happening.

Al-Sudani said the US and Iraq will meet by the end of the year to "arrange the bilateral security relationship" between the two countries. He also hopes to secure US economic investment — in oil and gas, and also artificial intelligence — which he said would contribute to regional security and make "the two countries great together." A variety of militias sprung up in Iraq in the years after the 2003 US invasion that toppled former autocratic leader Saddam Hussein. And since the war between Israel and Hamas began in October 2023, sparking nationwide conflicts, an

array of pro-Iran armed factions have periodically launched strikes on bases housing US troops.

Al-Sudani said the presence of the coalition forces had provided a "justification" for Iraqi groups to arm themselves, but that once the coalition withdrawal is complete, "there will be no need or no justification for any group to carry weapons outside the scope of the state." One of the most complicated issues for al-Sudani is how to handle the Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of mostly Shiite, Iran-backed militias that formed to fight IS. This coalition was formally placed under the control of the Iraqi military in 2016, although in practice it still operates with significant autonomy.

The Iraqi parliament is discussing legislation that would solidify the relationship between the military and the PMF, drawing objections from Washington. The State Department said in a statement last week that the legislation "would institutionalize Iranian influence and armed terrorist groups undermining Iraq's sovereignty." Al-Sudani defended the proposed legislation, saying it's part of an effort to ensure that arms are controlled by the state. "Security agencies must operate under laws and be subject to them and be held accountable," he said.

Villagers clean up after deadly China floods

BEIJING (AFP): Villagers in China waded through a stream of muddy water under a blazing July sun, cleaning and collecting belongings washed away by heavy rains and floods that have claimed dozens of lives across the northern region this week.

Swaths of the country have been hit by torrential downpours and flooding, killing over 30 people and forcing tens of thousands to be evacuated. On the outskirts of China's vast capital, where 80,000 have left their homes and over 100 villages have lost power, the mountainous district of Miyun was among the hardest hit.

In flooded streets in the town of Taishitun, just over 100 kilometres (61 miles) northeast of Beijing's bustling city centre, weary locals worked desperately to retrieve what belongings they could find. "It's the

kind of flood seen once in a hundred years," Pang, a 52-year-old who gave only his surname, told AFP.

He motioned towards a refrigerator lying on its side, carried by a rush of water from his house 500 metres upstream when the flooding hit. "Previous years have never been like this," he said. A truck-mounted crane struggled to hoist an SUV out of the wreckage, placing it on the back of another large vehicle waiting to haul it away as its owner looked on, shaking his head.

Elsewhere in the village, residents walked past ruined cars in metres-high piles. An office nearby lay in disarray, brown mud covering every surface. A local woman surnamed Zhao recounted to AFP that her house was flooded. "It was a mess, the mud was this thick," 52-year-old Zhao said, gesturing with

her hand.

"My mother and I shovelled it, but we couldn't get it out. We didn't know what to do so we just picked up some clothes and took shelter in a high place," she added. When they got home, she said "the refrigerator, washing machine and other things in the kitchen were all soaked." "There was also this thick mud all over the kitchen."

Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered officials to plan for worst-case scenarios and rush the relocation of residents of flood-threatened areas. And authorities warn the rains could continue into Wednesday. At a village called Xinanzhuang visited by AFP journalists around midday, murky water submerged homes, cars and a road leading onto a highway. A local man in his sixties said that he had never seen water levels so high.

Cambodia's border refugees waiting to head home but still wary after ceasefire

SAMRAONG, Cambodia (Reuters): On Cambodia's northwestern border, residents staying in makeshift refugee shelters were waiting to head home on Tuesday after a fierce five-day conflict with neighbouring Thailand ended in a ceasefire.

"If they (the government) say that my village is safe to return then I would go back home and reunite with my family because here is not as easy to live as my home," said Meun Saray, a 45-year-old woman holding a child under a tarpaulin shelter in a muddy field near the border town of Samraong. Samraong, capital of Oddar

Meanchey province, was almost completely deserted, with most of its shops shuttered and its roads eerily quiet after many of its 70,000 residents fled the conflict.

About 320 km (200 miles) from the capital Phnom Penh, the town was caught in the middle of the most intense fighting between the two countries in more than a decade, when a simmering border dispute boiled over into a violent military confrontation starting on July 24. "People left because they were scared of fighting," said Inn Theary, a local resident and street vendor who couldn't afford to leave town.

"Some people went to live with their relatives and some others went to stay in the refugee camp," she said. "However, people who are very poor like me, we stay here to make money to feed my children." The town is directly south of the O Smach border crossing, and shelling and gunfire were heard, said Meach Sovannara, head of the opposition New Generation Party, adding some local villagers were injured after their homes were hit by stray bullets.

"Bullets from gunfire don't know whether people are Cambodian or Thai," he said. "We all know that the war is a disaster. Separated

families - they can't farm, do business. Students can't study. People wounded, dead." A decades-long border dispute between the two Southeast Asian neighbours has escalated since late May, when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a skirmish and both countries began reinforcing troops along their 800-km (500-mile) border. Both sides accused the other of starting last week's fighting.

The two neighbours agreed an "immediate and unconditional" ceasefire, effective from midnight, at a meeting in Malaysia after nearly a week of hostilities that saw at least 38 mostly civilian deaths.

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Republicans missed a shot at serious Medicaid reform

EVERY decade since the 1970s, Congress has tried and failed to reform Medicaid, the health entitlement for the poor. Republican lawmakers' latest effort — as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act — appears to be no different. Instead of addressing the program's core deficiencies, the party instead fixated on shrinking it. The likely result? Needless disruption and little in the way of serious savings or reform.

All told, the bill seeks to cut about \$1 trillion from federal Medicaid spending over a decade. This savings largely would be achieved through a series of technical changes that nonetheless would be costly and difficult to implement, and thus may not fully materialise, according to the Tribune News Service.

The most substantial amount in theory would come from adding "work requirements" for beneficiaries. Starting next December, Medicaid recipients under age 65 will need to work, seek employment, go to school or volunteer 80 hours a month, with exemptions for pregnant women, parents with children under 14, the "medically frail" and others. The goal is to save money by shrinking the pool of enrollees — without cutting benefits for those still eligible or dramatically increasing the uninsured rate.

Accomplishing such a delicate task is, you might say, aspirational. States will need to update creaky IT systems and retrain staff. They'll have to coordinate with the managed-care companies that administer Medicaid plans and communicate changes to a population that's known to move and change jobs frequently. To show they're working in good faith and not simply snatching benefits from the poor, officials ought to establish pathways to vocational and other programs that put recipients in compliance with the new rules. They likewise should work with local employers to help those who've lost coverage find alternatives.

Preparation of this sort is improbable, and not just because it's laborious.

Thanks to Medicaid's funding model, most states have little incentive to strictly comply with work requirements. Since its inception in 1965, Medicaid has offered a federal "match" for state spending on public aid, without a cap. For each dollar a state spends, it gets \$1 to \$9 from the federal government. By enforcing work rules — and thus lowering their Medicaid spending — states stand to cut off their biggest source of funding, at the risk of yanking away their residents' health care. Far better to create workarounds.

For these reasons, work requirements are unlikely to generate hoped-for savings. They'll also hassle the poor while failing to address the perverse incentives of the open-ended federal match that has made Medicaid one of the fastest-growing federal programs, with expenditures soaring to more than \$800 billion from about \$40 billion in 1985.

Proposals that seek to eliminate the open-ended match have long been debated but remain unpopular.

So-called block grants, for example, would allocate a fixed amount of money to states each year. Although that would curb runaway spending, it would be perilously inflexible in times of need — say, when enrollment rises during recessions, disease outbreaks or natural disasters.

One idea that deserves more attention is something of a hybrid. It involves maintaining the uncapped federal match for mandatory benefits and eligibility categories — that is, the core services and populations required by federal law — while setting limits on matching for states' optional expansions. A split along these lines would make states, rather than federal taxpayers, responsible for spending they choose to incur.

The good news is that the One Big Beautiful Bill has started a long-overdue conversation on Medicaid reform. The bad news is that, as things stand, the cuts the law has imposed are likely to result in disruptive yet ineffective change. Congress still has a chance to do the right thing.

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The Disappearing Line Between Halal and Haram

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

I am proud to be a resident of Lahore, a city whose name evokes warmth, resilience, and hospitality. The people of Lahore, affectionately known as "Zinda Dilan-e-Lahore", are respected not only across Pakistan but around the globe for their generosity, spirited nature as well as foodies. I still recall with vivid clarity the days of my childhood when we, without a second thought, would eat from any stall or cart in the bazaar. There was an unspoken trust that the food we were consuming was not only delicious but halal, clean, and safe.

But with the passing of time, a slow erosion began. Faith weakened, and moral lines blurred. The distinction between halal and haram, once so firmly embedded in the collective conscience, started to fade. Driven by material gain and heedless of divine and moral boundaries, some among us began to feed the masses without informing them of what was being served. Most disturbing is the recurring news of donkey meat being sold as beef or mutton in many parts of Pakistan, particularly in urban areas. This issue is not only a matter of health and hygiene—it strikes at the very soul of Islamic ethical teachings and the trust that binds a society.

Islam, in its divine wisdom, does not restrict halal and haram merely to spiritual abstractions. Rather, it establishes a holistic system that ensures the physical, spiritual, and social well-being of its followers. The Qur'an commands:

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that

is] lawful and pure..." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:168).

The emphasis on consuming what is tayyib (pure) and avoiding what is khabeeth (impure) appears throughout the sacred texts. Thus, matters like the consumption of donkey meat must be addressed not only culturally but jurisprudentially.

In Islamic jurisprudence, donkeys are classified into two categories; domesticated (al-'im'r al-a'l?) and wild (al-'im'r al-w'?). The rulings on both are distinct and grounded in authentic hadith and scholarly consensus. The consumption of domesticated donkey meat is unequivocally haram. This ruling is based on several sound narrations. Hazrat Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

"The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) ordered the cooking pots to be overturned on the day of Khaybar, saying: 'It is the meat of domesticated donkeys.'"

(Sahih al-Bukhari, 5520)

Similarly, Hazrat Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) forbade the eating of domesticated donkeys on the day of Khaybar but permitted horse meat. Scholars have interpreted this prohibition in several ways: some cite impurity, others the humiliation of the animal, and some emphasize its utilitarian value in transport and labor—arguing that its scarcity during the Prophet's time justified the restriction.

On the other hand, the

meat of wild donkeys (onager or ghor) is halal. This is affirmed by the hadith of Hazrat Abu Qatadah (May Allah be pleased with him), who once hunted a wild donkey and brought a portion to the Prophet (peace be upon him), who then partook of it. (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1821)

This distinction is not merely theoretical. The four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali—all agree on the prohibition of domesticated donkey meat and the permissibility of wild donkey meat. The jurists have documented these rulings in their classical texts. For instance, Allama Kasani of the Hanafi school wrote: "As for the domesticated donkey, its meat is forbidden to us." (Bada'i al-Sana'i, Vol. 5, p. 35)

Some may argue that the Qur'an does not explicitly list donkey meat as forbidden. This is true, but Islamic legal methodology teaches us that the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) elaborates and specifies the general commands of the Qur'an. As Allah states:

"Say, I do not find within that which was revealed to me anything forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal, or blood spilled out, or the flesh of swine..." (Surah Al-An'am: 145)

This verse outlines the general prohibitions, but the Sunnah further restricts specific items—like the flesh of domesticated donkeys—through clear hadith.

But beyond legality lies the deeper ethical question: Is it ever permissible

to deceive someone about what they are consuming? In Islam, deceit and betrayal are grave sins. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said:

"He who deceives us is not one of us." (Sahih Muslim 102)

Feeding people donkey meat under the guise of beef or mutton is not only haram—it is a betrayal of trust, a violation of the consumer's rights, and a mockery of Islamic ethics. This matter also calls into question our collective conscience. When we begin to tolerate or overlook such deceit, we are complicit in the breakdown of our moral fabric. Islam does not merely command ritual purity—it demands integrity in every sphere of life. Breaking a covenant, lying, cheating in trade, and betraying trust are among the most hated actions in the sight of Allah.

Tradition and regional cuisine vary across the world. What is normal in one land may be strange in another. But Islamic law, based on revelation and reason, offers a universal framework.

The meat of a wild donkey may be lawful, but feeding people the meat of a domestic donkey without their knowledge—this is both unlawful and unethical.

Let us restore the trust we once cherished in our streets, our bazars, and our hearts.

Let us teach our children not only what is halal but also what is honest. Let us be a people who value purity of soul as much as purity of food. For in doing so, we fulfill not only a command of faith but a covenant of humanity.

What Netanyahu fears most in Gaza

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed

THE war in Gaza, with all its horrors, is approaching the end of its second year, making it the longest and deadliest confrontation in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Why has the Gaza war lasted this long?

Some believe that Israel fears for the remaining hostages. Others think it wants to avoid further losses among its troops. And some see it as incapable of eliminating what remains of Hamas.

In my opinion, Israel does not want to end the war except on its own terms — by preventing the return of the Palestinian Authority to rule the Gaza Strip. To prolong the crisis, it will use whatever weapons it has left, from starvation to displacement. In short, what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fears most is the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Washington has a practical solution to stop the war: Hamas leaves Gaza and Israel halts its military campaign. But neither Hamas nor Israel is willing to accept this.

Israel, in particular, as the stronger party, refuses to eliminate Hamas if the price is the return of the PA. Netanyahu and his team are convinced that the PA poses a greater threat to Israel than Hamas. Hamas has no international legitimacy and represents everything

that terrifies most of the world — even the Arab world. It is a militant, ideological extremist group.

Meanwhile, the PA is recognized by the UN as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. If it regains control of Gaza, it would mark the path toward a Palestinian state.

Despite all that Hamas has done — including the attacks on Oct. 7, 2023, — it remains, in Israel's eyes, merely a "terrorist group" that can be dealt with just as other countries deal with similar groups.

Netanyahu believes it would be foolish to destroy Hamas only to reward the PA with control of Gaza, allowing it to emerge as the victor of these wars and create a de facto Palestinian state. Netanyahu has personally worked to prevent this scenario, fostering a symbiotic relationship with Hamas since the early days of his rule by empowering the group to govern Gaza.

Netanyahu is corrupt and opportunistic, but not a fool. He understands that handing over the keys to Gaza to Ramallah would automatically mean the countdown to the creation of a Palestinian state had begun.

After his swift and dazzling victories over Hezbollah, Bashar Assad and Iran, Netanyahu now

faces a reckoning similar to the post-Gulf War moment in 1991. Back then, the US-Gulf coalition defeated Saddam Hussein, liberated Kuwait and eliminated a major threat to Israel. It then demanded a price: a solution to the Palestinian issue.

In that same year, the Madrid Conference was held despite Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's reluctance. He ultimately accepted, paving the way for the later Oslo Accords, which for the first time allowed the Palestinians to return from exile.

Netanyahu knows this history and fears his own victory could similarly "deviate" toward the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In practice, Israel — having destroyed Hezbollah and tracked its leader Hassan Nasrallah underground — could do the same to Hamas. As we have seen, Israel is not deterred by casualties among its soldiers, its hostages are not a top priority and, certainly, the scale of Palestinian deaths is of no concern. Of the 251 original hostages, only about 23 remain alive in captivity.

Today, the American envoy's negotiations have reached an advanced stage to end the tragedy in Gaza, secure the release of the

remaining hostages — around 50, dead or alive — and disarm Hamas. Yet Netanyahu's main concern remains the return of the PA to govern Gaza.

Even without a deal from the envoy, Netanyahu could end the war by eliminating the remaining Hamas forces. He has proven willing to accept further casualties, as he has in parallel wars. He risked his people's safety by opening fronts with Hezbollah, Iran and the Houthis, and he is prepared to take risks and accept losses in a final showdown with Hamas.

So why does Netanyahu not end the war?

As the conflict nears a possible resolution in the coming two months, I believe his dilemma lies in finding an arrangement that prevents the emergence of a Palestinian state. What is stopping him from ending the Gaza war is not concern over additional Israeli casualties or even losing his role as prime minister, especially since Donald Trump is openly working to shield him from accountability and helping him stay in power.

From a strategic perspective, the issue goes beyond current events: Israel does not want the PA to return to Gaza and unite it with Ramallah — even if that means reinstating Hamas or handing Gaza to Ibrahim Al-Arjani to run it.

Now that countries have capitulated on tariffs, Trump will be back for more

Nick Dearden and Melanie Foley

GOVERNMENTS have been falling over one another to offer concessions to United States President Donald Trump as his August 1 tariff deadline looms. On Sunday, the US president scored his biggest victory to date, as European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen, like the leader of a vassal state paying homage to an emperor, travelled to Trump's private golf course in Scotland to offer him tribute.

It came in the form of an entirely one-sided tariff pact in which Brussels accepted a huge tariff hike and pledged to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on US fossil fuels and military products.

The pact has changed the balance between two of the largest economic powers in the world. The EU has simply rolled over without a fight. French Prime Minister Francois Bayrou described it as a "dark day" for the union, while a European diplomat bemoaned by saying "those who don't hang together get hanged separately."

The economic impact on the rest of the world is likely to be worse still. Trump has declared economic war on friends and foes alike. Many countries are facing higher tariffs than the EU and are less capable of defending themselves. By giving in, Brussels has made it harder for other countries to stand firm.

A 40 percent tariff on Laos or 36 percent on Cambodia, for example, will be devastating to the export industries which US corporations encouraged them to build in recent decades. And without a united front, other countries are reluctantly coming to the table.

Last week, Trump announced a deal with the Philippines for 19 percent tariffs on all goods exported to the US and no tariffs on imported US goods.

While the provisions of different trade deals vary, they all follow the same strategy: Bullying governments to change their rules and regulations in favour of US corporate interests, especially those of oligarchs who surround the president. Trump's trade negotiations style might be highly erratic, but his is a clear-cut end goal: To upend the world economic system, replacing rules which were already unfair with the absolute dominance of the biggest bully. The immediate impact of this restructuring will be bad for the countries that submit to it, but this won't be the end of the story. By giving Trump what he wants, they have strengthened his hand, and he will be back for more. Already, the EU has little clarity around a range of additional tariffs the US president might bring in and how they will affect the "deal" that's been made. Canada ditched its digital services tax on Big Tech to get a deal, only to be hit by higher tariffs. The Philippines now faces a higher tariff than it did in April, despite making concessions. And the UK thought it had a deal on steel, only to discover it didn't, really. There's no fairness in any of this. The only way out is to stand up to Trump; he does not respect weakness. As a minimum, for countries that have signed a deal, that means implementing as little as they can. Governments that can retaliate should do so. That does not necessarily mean matching tariff for tariff, a policy which could inflict serious self-harm, but rather using the tools that show their strength best. The EU has ample power to challenge the US services trade, and should have retaliated by limiting US corporate access to, for example, government contracts, financial markets and intellectual property protection. In failing to take such action, the EU showed a profound misunderstanding of the moment we're in. Von der Leyen seems to think Trump is a temporary anomaly who can be contained while we wait for a resumption of business as usual in four years. But in Europe and the US, the public has had enough of a corporate-dominated global economy.

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Gaza and Ukraine will show whether Trump is a true leader or just a bully

DONALD Trump looked like the last king of Scotland.

To the skirl of bagpipes, the president welcomed Keir Starmer to one of his Scottish golfing palaces in his mother's ancestral homeland. The prime minister flew in Monday as a guest and a supplicant in a corner of his own United Kingdom.

Starmer was a mere extra as Trump held court in a mind-bending news conference that rollicked through topics like his hatred of wind power, the window frames in his ballroom and Windsor Castle.

Trump capped his protocol-reversing day by flying the PM across Scotland on Air Force One to another of his exclusive clubs, in another ostentatious show of US power optics.

A day earlier, the top EU official, Ursula von der Leyen, matched Starmer's effusiveness after arriving at Trump's windswept Turnberry links for an audience bearing a trade deal that some Europeans blasted as a surrender.

Events in America's new temporary capital in southwest Scotland were an object lesson in how Trump flexes his indomitable personality and relentless sense of others' weaknesses to impose personal power and rack up big wins for himself.

Six months into his second presidency, Trump is getting exactly what he wants on many fronts. He's destroying the global free trading system by lining up framework trade deals that enshrine one of his long-time obsessions — tariffs. He sent US stealth bombers around the world to bombard Iran's nuclear program. And he's wrung promises of a vast increase in military spending from NATO members.

It's the same at home. Trump has bullied Congress into submission. He's imposing his ideology on great universities. He's forced private law firms to do pro bono work for him and he's weaponizing the justice system against his foes. And he's effectively shut down the southern border and halted undocumented migration.

This is the kind of "winning" that eluded him in his first term and that he promised his MAGA supporters would reach such a volume they'd grow tired of winning.

Yet Trump is such a polarizing president — one whose "wins" are sometimes more theater than substance — that his current streak bears close examination.

Internationally, it is fair

to ask: Is Trump racking up victories for the American people or for himself? Is his coercive power over allies and smaller states a sign of strength or the behavior of a schoolyard tough guy? And what will be the consequence of his wins in the long term — years after his zest for a headline proclaiming a great "deal" has passed? The alliances that made the US a superpower seem especially vulnerable in this regard.

If Trump is really a dominant global force, the proof will come in his handling of three critical issues highlighted on his trip to

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Scotland: a wrenching famine in Gaza, the war in Ukraine and trade.

Trump made surprising tonal shifts Monday on Gaza and Ukraine.

Responding to hideous video of malnourished children in Gaza, Trump contradicted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claim that there's no starvation in the enclave after months of Israeli bombardments.

"We have to get the kids fed," Trump said, promising to set up food distribution centers to alleviate the growing famine. But he offered few details about how this would work in a war zone where civilians have been killed lining up for food. He also ignored US complicity in the aid crisis following difficulties faced by a Washington-backed Israeli program that bypassed UN experts.

Perhaps Trump's commitment is a genuine shift and could lead to him undercutting Netanyahu, a leader who has repeatedly rebuffed US pressure and damaged the president's wish to be seen as a peacemaker.

It could be, that as happened after chemical weapons attacks in Syria in 2017, Trump was truly moved by heartbreaking footage of suffering children.

But a president with a sharp political sense may have also calculated that growing outrage toward Israel meant he might end up sharing the blame for the horror. The cynic's case is

Stephen Collinson

supported by his previous suggestion that Gazans should leave to allow the creation of a "Middle East Riviera" beach resort. And Trump's evisceration of USAID means the dying Gazan kids will be far from alone.

The second test of Trump's global power will come over Ukraine.

The president on Monday vented growing frustration with Russian President Vladimir Putin's refusal to accept his generous suggestions for a peace deal in Ukraine, capping

by his erstwhile hero.

On the surface, Trump pulled off a genuine win against the European Union in the trade deal and for his "America First" trade policies, which he views as reversing decades of partners taking advantage of the United States in the interest of reviving American manufacturing.

The EU chose not to use its own economic might to inflict pain on the US economy. Instead, it accepted a deal that will see the imposition of a 15% tariff on European exports.

The backlash was swift. "An alliance of free peo-

his previous 50-day deadline for action to 10 or 12 days.

"We have such nice conversations, such respectful and nice conversations.

And then people die the following night," Trump said. If Trump really switches from buttering up Putin to punishing him, he could hurt Russia, especially with secondary sanctions that bankroll the war by being Moscow's oil exports. But there's a huge problem: That would require the US to directly take on powers such as India and China, risking global economic blowback.

With Trump in Scotland, his trade negotiators were in Sweden holding high-level talks with China that could yield another "win" for his tariff strategy and potentially the spectacle of a presidential visit to Beijing this year.

Is he really ready to risk all this for Ukraine — a nation that he thinks has already had too much US aid?

A robust move against Putin in the coming days that could also rebound against Xi — even against Trump's own political interests — would show the president is willing not just to lord it over Europeans but to stand up to the most ruthless leaders.

Failing to take such action would validate critics who see Trump's irritation at Putin as less about Ukraine's plight than about the embarrassment about the president's Nobel Prize campaign being thwarted

ples, gathered to assert their values and defend their interests, resolves to submission," French Prime Minister François Bayrou wrote on X.

But others saw pragmatism rather than capitulation, because it's becoming clear that tariffs are existential for Trump — as shown by similar levies included in recent trade deals announced with Japan and the Philippines. Europe's already-sluggish economic growth will take a hit. But a trade war would be worse.

"Those who expect a hurricane are grateful for a storm," said Wolfgang Große Entrup, the head of the German Chemical Industry Association.

Trump's estimation that the EU agreement was "the biggest deal ever" is hyperbole. The short framework is far from a detailed agreement, which may take years to negotiate and thousands of pages to spell out.

This all looks like Trump's classic habit of spinning a small breakthrough as a gargantuan win.

The framework announcement by the White House is thin and full of conditional language. On closer inspection, it's not clear exactly what the EU has given away. There is no clear indication that the Europeans have ceded to US demands to accept its hormone-treated beef or to ease regulation of Silicon Valley firms.

European leaders are playing a long game.

Why Macron's recognition move is significant

SACRE bleu. France will recognize a state of Palestine. Is this a shock or not something to get worked up about? This was posted on social media by President Emmanuel Macron last Thursday. He said he would formalize recognition at the UN General Assembly in September.

This was much touted, not least by the French leader himself, even when addressing the UK Parliament. Finally, he has confirmed his commitment, no doubt trying to carve out some legacy in his last two years of office and to show that France is still relevant on the world stage.

Will this matter? France joins 147 other states in making this move. It will be the first G7 member to do so. Sweden, Spain, Ireland and Slovenia are so far the only EU member states to have made the move while being part of the bloc, so Macron's announcement is significant. Several other European states did so in the 1980s, including Poland and Hungary during the communist era.

Who else might follow suit? France's move will look wiser if others follow. Belgium is a candidate. It has been one of Europe's most ardent critics of Israel. Reports indicate it might make a decision in early September. Canada is also a possibility. However, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni veered away from this. And Germany is unlikely to shift.

Then there is the UK. Many hoped that Prime Minister Keir Starmer would consent to a joint position with France. A British-French recognition would have carried more weight. The two colonial powers, the co-authors of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, the two European members of the UN Security Council working together symbolically would have had strength. This option has been much debated in Britain over recent months. The government never ruled it out, arguing it was waiting for clarity from the French side.

In the end, Starmer has not bitten despite 221 British members of Parliament writing to him to push for this. Starmer had a choice: either side with US President Donald Trump or join Macron. He chose the former.

Palestinians have tended not to be nearly as

Chris Doyle

excited as some politicians in Europe, or even the Western media. Why, many ask, was this not done more than a decade ago or even earlier? Then, there would have been a genuine dynamic toward some form of solution. Why only now as Gaza burns and the Israeli colonization of the West Bank is on steroids? It is now only recognizing a failed dream, not a likely reality.

In a choice between recognition and a ceasefire with proper aid access, those in Gaza would definitely take the latter. Talking to Palestinians in Gaza, many dismiss such symbolic gestures. To survive, they need food and water, even above a ceasefire. Death by bombing or shelling is far more preferable for them and their families than the horror of death by starvation or thirst. Recognition will not save a single starving baby. It will not provide lifesaving medicine for those struck down with disease. It will not stop the Israeli attacks on tents in the so-called safe zone. Critics, largely American and Israeli, say Macron is just trying to appease his Muslim voters or attract investment from rich Gulf states. This ignores the massive public support in France for Palestinian rights.

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Another absurd argument is that this is a reward for Hamas and the atrocities it perpetrated on Oct. 7, 2023. This was trotted out by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, among many others. Why is it absurd? Hamas has not been calling for a two-state solution or pushing for the recognition of a Palestinian state. Every

single propagandist for Israel has routinely reminded the world that Hamas wants, in their view, to destroy Israel. If this is a reward for Hamas, it is not one it wished for.

It is a reward for the Palestinian national movement, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization and dominated by Fatah, the rival of Hamas. This is the movement that Western states, certainly European ones, have been supporting. They back the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah in spite of all its flaws. One of Hamas' criticisms of the national movement — one that often hits home among frustrated Palestinians — is that the PLO recognized Israel but the recognition was not mutual. Israel did not recognize a Palestinian state. The PLO abandoned violence but Israel did not. The PLO sought to achieve Palestinian liberation through negotiation but could not liberate one inch of Palestine.

This is why recognition matters to the PLO, the party that abandoned the armed struggle and is prepared to talk to Israel, unlike Hamas. So, failing to recognize a state of Palestine undermines the nationalists and boosts the Islamists, which in theory runs against the agenda of European states. Macron deserves some praise. He could have done nothing. But his moral responsibility toward Palestinians is not anchored in recognition. Real leadership demands action to stop the genocide in Gaza. On that front, he is failing just like the rest of the world's leaders. If you cannot stop the genocide, recognition means nothing.

The unstoppable tide of Palestinian solidarity

Rarely visit Rome without stopping at the Campo de' Fiori to pay homage to Giordano Bruno, an Italian philosopher who, in 1600, was brutally burned at the stake during the Roman Inquisition. His crime was daring to challenge entrenched dogmas and to think freely about the infinite nature of the universe.

As I stood beneath his imposing statue at the weekend, a strange ruckus suddenly erupted, growing louder as a sizable group of protesters drew closer. Dozens of people of all ages banged on pots and pans with fervent urgency.

Following the initial shock and subsequent confusion, it became clear that the protest was an urgent attempt to awaken people to the horrific famine unfolding in Gaza. In no time, more people spontaneously joined in, some clapping in the absence of any other tools to make themselves heard. Waiters from the square's osterie instinctively began to bang their hands on anything that could generate sound, adding to the clamor.

The square stood still momentarily, pulsating with the collective noise, before the protesters marched on to another square, their numbers visibly swelling with each step.

In the bustling streets

of Rome, Palestinian flags are conspicuously the only non-Italian flags to occupy public spaces. They hang from light poles, are glued onto street signs or fly proudly atop balconies.

The square stood still momentarily, pulsating with the collective noise, before the protesters marched on to another square, their numbers visibly swelling with each step. In the bustling streets of Rome, Palestinian flags are conspicuously the only non-Italian flags to occupy public spaces. They hang from light poles, are glued onto street signs or fly proudly atop balconies. No other country, no other conflict, no other cause has permeated public spaces as profoundly as that of Palestine. Though this phenomenon is not entirely new, the ongoing Israeli war and genocide in Gaza has undeniably amplified this solidarity, pushing it beyond the traditional confines of class, ideology and political lines. Yet, no other space in Italy can truly be compared to Naples. Palestinian symbols are everywhere, permeating the city's fabric as if Palestine is the paramount political concern for the entire region's populace. What is particularly fascinating about the solidarity with Palestinians in this vibrant city is not merely the sheer volume of graffiti, posters and flags, but the very specific references made to Palestinian martyrs, prisoners and movements. Pictures of Walid Daqqa, Shireen Abu Akleh and Khader Adnan are prominently displayed alongside precise demands tailored to what would have been considered, outside of Palestine, largely unfamiliar specifics to a global audience. How did Naples become so intricately attuned to the Palestinian discourse? This vital question resonates far beyond Italy, applying to numerous cities across the world. Notably, this major shift in the deeper understanding of the Palestinian struggle and the widespread embrace of the Palestinian people is unfolding despite the pervasive and unrelenting media bias in favor of Israel and the persistent intimidation by Western governments of pro-Palestinian activists. In politics, critical mass is achieved when an idea, initially championed by a minority group, decisively transforms into a mainstream issue. This crucial shift allows it to overcome tokenism and begin to exert real and tangible influence in the public sphere. In many societies around the world, the Palestinian cause has already attained that critical mass. In others, where government crackdowns still stifle the debate at its roots, organic growth nevertheless continues, thus also promising an inevitable and fundamental change. And this is precisely the haunting fear of numerous Israelis, especially within the political and intellectual classes. Writing in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz on Friday, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak sounded the alarm once more. "The Zionist vision is collapsing," he wrote, adding that Israel is "stuck in a 'war of deception' in Gaza." Though Israel's pervasive hasbara machine is relentlessly striving to stave off the surging flood of sympathy with Palestine and the rising tide of rage against alleged Israeli war crimes, for now its focus remains intently fixed on justifying the extermination of Gaza, even at the high price of global condemnation and outrage. When the war is finally over, however, Israel will undoubtedly exert its utmost efforts, employing numerous creative new ways to once more demonize the Palestinians and elevate itself, its so-called democracy and the "right to defend itself."

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Due to the growing international credibility of the Palestinian voice, Israel is already resorting



PESHAWAR: Patron in Chief United Business Group S.M Tanveer alongwith president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan addressing a joing press conference.

Tanveer advocates agricultural reform

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain Thursday chaired a meeting with a high-powered Chinese delegation to explore enhanced cooperation in the field of agriculture.

The meeting focused on developing joint strategies to modernize Pakistan's agricultural sector and to initiate collaborative efforts in research, innovation, and investment.

The Chinese delegation, comprising senior officials, agricultural scientists, and private sector representatives, expressed keen interest in investing across various segments of Pakistan's agriculture, including seed development, precision farming, smart irrigation systems, and agro-processing.

The delegation highlighted China's technological advancements in agriculture and its willingness to transfer expertise to Pakistan through institutional partnerships.

Rana Tanveer warmly welcomed the delegation and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties, especially in the agriculture sector, which remains a backbone

of the national economy. He emphasized that transforming the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) into a center of excellence is one of his top priorities.

He said that through collaboration with China, Pakistan can introduce scientific research, climate-resilient practices, and modern technology that will uplift the productivity of local farmers and ensure long-term food security.

The Minister stressed the urgent need for formal agreements between Pakistani and Chinese agricultural institutions.

He proposed signing multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) that would focus on joint research in areas such as biotechnology, crop improvement, pest control, and sustainable agricultural practices.

He also underscored the importance of establishing long-term frameworks for the exchange of scientists, technical training, and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen Pakistan's agricultural institutions.

Hussain noted that this partnership must go beyond

investment and move towards structured collaboration in research and development.

He directed the leadership of PARC and other concerned departments to initiate immediate drafting of MoUs and prepare detailed concept papers to outline the proposed areas of cooperation.

He also encouraged visits by Pakistani experts to China to observe successful agricultural models and adapt them to Pakistan's needs.

The Chinese delegation appreciated the Minister's strategic vision and assured full support from their government and private sector to contribute to Pakistan's agricultural transformation.

They welcomed the proposal for formal MoUs and expressed readiness to facilitate institutional linkages and technology transfer in a time-bound manner.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to elevate the Pakistan-China partnership in agriculture to a new level, ensuring tangible outcomes in the coming months through structured planning and implementation.

Rupee gains 16 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 16 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 283.05 against the previous day's closing Rs 283.21.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.25 and Rs 286 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 3.54 to close at Rs 327.19 against the last day's closing of Rs 330.73, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.90, whereas a decline of Rs 2.35 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 377.50 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 379.85.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 04 paisa each to close at Rs 77.06 and Rs 75.45, respectively.

European stocks rally with eyes on earnings

LONDON (AFP/APP): European stocks rallied Tuesday, lifted by a slew of corporate earnings and as investors further assessed the impact of the EU-US trade agreement.

Investors' attention turned also to the release of key US economic indicators and the Federal Reserve's next policy decision due Wednesday.

US President Donald Trump's agreement with the European Union on Sunday saw tariffs set at 15 percent, down from a threatened 30 percent, which helped ease trade war fears. The Paris and Frankfurt stock markets jumped around 1.5 percent in early afternoon deals.

London also advanced, boosted by a three-percent rise to the share price of heavyweight AstraZeneca after the drugmaker posted strong earnings.

Market sentiment had been cautious Monday "as the narrative took hold that the EU had failed to secure meaningful concessions from the US", noted Deutsche Bank analyst Jim Reid.

But Tuesday saw "optimism that businesses can now start to operate with greater certainty in Europe", said Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at Rostro trading group.

The euro, however, remained under pressure against the dollar on concerns about the impact of the trade deal on the eurozone economy.

After a tepid day on Wall Street -- which still saw the S&P and Nasdaq hit records -- Asia markets were mixed. Tokyo and Hong Kong closed in the red, while Shanghai rose.

Traders kept an eye on US talks with other major economies, including India and South Korea, and negotiations between top US and Chinese officials in Stockholm.

Talks continued on Tuesday, with hopes that Beijing and Washington would extend a 90-day truce on higher tariffs that ends on August 12.

Investors also awaited a busy few days of earnings from tech titans Apple, Microsoft, Meta and Amazon, as well as data on US economic growth and jobs.

SCCI, UBG and FPCCI demand to reduce policy rate to single digit

— businesses, industries won't sustain under high interest rate

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Business community urged the State Bank of Pakistan to slash the policy rate to single digit in the Monitoring Policy Meeting to flourish business, industries and economy.

Speaking at a joint press conference here at the chamber house Tuesday, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan, the United Business Group Patron in Chief S.M Tanveer along with FPCCI regional office bearers, traders leader and others stated business community is in a great trouble since the last two year whereas business and industrial growth have been slowed down in the prevailing situation.

During the press conference, SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, members of the chamber's executive committee Adnan Nasir, Nadeem Rauf, Ashfaq Ahmad, Sultan Muhammad, Gul Zaman, Aftab, Iqbal, FPCCI KP regional chairman Haji Muhammad Afzal, Kasur Chamber president Kashif Kokar, President Bajaur Chamber Haji Lali Shah, Umar Saleem from Peoples Trade Wing, former presidents Fuad Ishaq, Malik Niaz Ahmad, former senior vice

presidents Sanaullah Khan, Imran Khan Mohmand, former vice president Javed Akhtar and Monawar Khurshid, Ihsanullah, Affaf Ali Khan, Ismail Safi, Saddar Gul, Hamoodur Rehman, Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ishtiaq M Paracha and Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan, traders leaders, importers and others.

The business leaders asserted it is impossible to run business and industries under the present policy rate.

They noted the economic indicators are highly positive and there must be a reduced policy rate at single digit.

Fazal Moqem said it is dire need of hour to take bold decisions during MPC which is scheduled on today (Wednesday), which is imperative for revival of the economy.

The SCCI chief said the business community, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were faced with great hardships owing to increase in cost of doing business, availability of limited loans and reduction in consumer demand.

Moqem went on to say that the high policy rate would discourage investment in the private sector, create delay in extension projects and decrease employment avenues.

The chamber president said a record inflation rate

has come down as per government claims whereas the country's reserves also improved.

Similarly, he said economic indicators and Pakistan rating in the global market were improved as per international rating agencies.

He said it is highly unacceptable to maintain the policy rate at 11 percent and it is in dire need of hour to make a significant decrease in it.

Fazal Moqem said if the policy rate would reduce to single digit that can lower pressure on investment and restore speed of business and industries at small and large scale level.

He opined the reduction in rate of loan would definitely provide relief to the business community and pave the way for sustainable economic growth and provision of employment opportunities in the country.

S.M Tanver warned if the policy rate would maintain at the high rate that will further devalue the local currency.

"How can business and industries flourish in the absence of ease of doing business and competitiveness," the UBG leader said.

Replying to a question, Mr Tanveer said according to the official data, the inflation rate stands at 4 to

5 percent.

He added it is highly appreciable that the policy rate was gradually brought down to 12 percent from 23 percent in a few years.

"Our demand is to bring down the policy rate to single digit".

"We want to improve the country export to 100billion dollar and create employment opportunities".

To another question regarding fulfillment of the demand, the UBG leader said the business community had remained successful in fighting against IPPs agreement and forced the government to renegotiate with IPPs.

From Karachi to Khyber, the business community had raised a voice against anti-business policies and reversed them by the government due to their agitation movement, S.M Tanveer said.

Similarly, he said electricity tariff has been reduced to Rs31 per unit from Rs48 per unit owing to unified efforts of the business community across the country.

Responding to another question, S.M Tanveer said the government is borrowing from commercial banks Rs3.5trillion.

He hoped the SBP in today's MPC's meeting will reduce the policy rate to single digit.

ICCI delegation in Dhaka: Pushes for bilateral trade growth with BD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Acting High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mohammad Wasif, has emphasized the importance of fostering stronger economic linkages between Pakistan and Bangladesh, stating that both countries must work together to explore new avenues of collaboration for mutual economic benefit.

He made these remarks during a meeting with a visiting delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), currently in Dhaka to identify and explore emerging business opportunities, said a press release.

The ICCI delegation is

being led by its President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi and includes Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Executive Member Rohail Anwar Butt, and Council Member Chaudhry Mohammad Masood.

Welcoming the delegation, Mohammad Wasif appreciated ICCI's initiative to visit Bangladesh and underscored the value of such engagements in strengthening bilateral economic relations. He assured the delegation of the High Commission's full support in facilitating their business initiatives and connecting them with key stakeholders in Bangladesh.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi expressed sincere gratitude for the warm reception and reaffirmed the private sector's interest in developing robust partnerships with Bangladeshi businesses. He said Pakistan is particularly keen to collaborate in areas such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, information technology, and agro-based industries.

ICCI Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry noted that Pakistan and Bangladesh, with their shared history and economic complementarities, possess immense untapped potential. He stressed the importance of structured

dialogue between private sectors of both nations and advocated for increased business-to-business engagements to develop sustainable commercial linkages.

Both sides agreed that regular exchange of trade delegations, participation in international trade fairs, and the organization of joint business forums would significantly contribute to enhancing bilateral trade and investment flows.

The ICCI delegation will continue its engagements in Dhaka, including B2B meetings at the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry and interactions with key business groups in Bangladesh.

Interest rate must be brought down to single digit for economic survival

SUKKUR (APP): Sukkur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Muhammad Khalid Kakezai on Tuesday emphasized that bringing down the interest rate to a single digit is imperative for the survival of the national economy. The current policy rate of 11 percent set by the State Bank of Pakistan is exceptionally high and needs to be reduced urgently.

In a joint statement with Senior Vice President Amit Kumar and Vice President Malik Muhammad Owais Rais, Kakezai said that considering the global economic conditions, national inflation, and industrial requirements, the interest

rate should be around 6 percent. However, at the very least, it should be brought down to below 9 percent immediately to give a boost to the country's industrial, commercial, and export activities.

Abdul Majeed Qureshi, Convener of the Banking and Finance Committee, highlighted that the government itself borrows trillions of rupees from banks, incurring an annual interest burden of Rs 8.5 trillion. A reduction of 2-3 percent in the interest rate could result in savings of Rs 1.5 to 2 trillion annually, which could be utilized for education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and supporting small traders.

The business leaders pointed out that other regional countries, such as India, Bangladesh, and Vietnam, have much lower interest rates compared to Pakistan, enabling their industries to access cheap financing and increase exports in the global market.

They stressed that while the State Bank has made some minor reductions in recent months, the current rate of 11 percent remains a significant obstacle to investor confidence. Until the interest rate is brought down to a single digit, affordable financing and economic recovery will remain elusive.

Kakezai reminded that

Sukkur Chamber has repeatedly drawn the attention of the State Bank and Ministry of Finance to this critical issue in the past. He emphasized that countries that have maintained single-digit interest rates have seen increased investment, expanded exports, and created more job opportunities.

The Sukkur Chamber of Commerce and Industry has demanded that the State Bank adopt a clear policy to gradually bring down the interest rate to 6 percent and immediately reduce it to below 9 percent to support the economy, provide relief to the public, and promote business.

CDNS sets annual target of Rs55b in Islamic investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set an annual target of Rs 55 billion investment in Islamic finance in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

The CDNS has attained the annual collection target investment in Islamic finance during the FY 2024-25 from July 1st to June 30th, 2024-25.

The CDNS has revived the annual collection target and set Rs 40 billion in investment in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year 2024-25, which will lead to growth in the country's Islamic economy.

"The National Savings had issued the Islamic bonds to promote the Islamic finance system, which will help the devel-

opment of the Islamic economy in the country."

The Senior official said that "We had achieved the target of Rs 75 billion during the last fiscal year (2023-24) from the Islamic bonds, and that was why it aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector."

"Islamic finance now has a significant role in the global financial sector. A large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in the CDNS.

Given the current market trend in the country, an ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added.

Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has set a savings inflows target of Rs 1.3 trillion for the current Fiscal Year, 2025-26.

Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 50 billion in investments in Islamic Investment for the Current Fiscal Year 2025-26, which will lead to the growth of the Islamic economy in the country.

Already the CDNS has accomplished a net target of Rs 255 at the end of the fiscal year, from July 1 to June 30, 2024-25, he said.

The CDNS has achieved the net annual target of Rs 106 billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the country's saving culture, he said.

Gold prices decreased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.1,600 on Tuesday and was sold at Rs.354,700 against its sale at Rs.356,300 on the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.1,372 to Rs.304,098 from Rs.305,470 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat decreased to Rs.278,757.

The rates of per tola silver and ten gram remained unchanged and closed at Rs.3,963 and Rs.3,397.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$16 to \$3,320 from \$3,336 whereas that of silver remained stagnant at \$38.15, the Association reported.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 1,415 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 1,415.24 points, a negative change of 1.02 percent, closing at 137,964.82 points against 139,380.06 points last trading day.

A total of 606,334,880 shares were traded during the day as compared to 589,306,106 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 32.685 billion against Rs 34.562 billion on the

last trading day.

As many as 484 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 108 of them recorded gains and 350 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 26 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Telecard Limited with 38,709,378 shares at Rs 7.84 per share, B.O. Punjab with 31,941,017 shares at Rs13.47 per share and WorldCall Telecom 28,524,007 shares at Rs 1.44 per share.

The Thal Industries Corporation Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 55.71 per share price, closing at Rs 614.16, whereas the runner-up was Archroma Pakistan Limited with Rs 47.05 rise in its per share price to Rs 517.52.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs891.72 per share closing at Rs 32,620.41 followed by PIA Holding Company Limited with Rs390.57 decline in its share price to close at Rs31,157.43.

Mobile phone imports decreases 21.31 %

ISLAMABAD (APP): The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed a decrease of 21.31 percent during the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to the last year 2023-24.

Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$ 1.494 billion during July-June (2024-25) as compared to the imports of US \$ 1.898 billion during July-June (2023-24), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Meanwhile, on a year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones also dipped

by 49.95 percent during the month of June 2025 when compared to the same month of last year.

The import of mobiles into the country during June 2025 was recorded at \$ 139.425 million against the exports of \$278.574 million in June 2024.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports of mobile phones went up by 39.60 percent during June 2025, as compared to the imports of US \$99.875 million during May 2025, according to the data.

It is pertinent to mention

here that the overall exports from the country increased by 4.67 percent during the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to previous year, the data revealed.

Exports during July-June (2024-25) were recorded at \$32.106 billion against \$30.675 billion during July-June (2023-24).

On the other hand, imports into the country also went up by 6.57 percent by growing from \$54.779 billion last year to \$58.380 billion during the fiscal year 2024-25.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships, MSC Rochelle, MSC Mediterranean, Xin Lian Chang, Eleni-T, Torm Malaysia and Desert Dignity carrying Container, Mogas and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile five more ships, GFS Prime, Maritime Kelly Anne, Banglar Agrajatra, Voula and Albi-on Bay carrying Container,

Palm oil, Gas oil and Coal are also arrive at outer anchorage during last 24 hours.

Twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, MSC Rochelle, Xin Lian Chang, Dalma and Al-Jassasiya left the port on Tuesday early morning, while five more ships, Eleni-T, MSC Mediterranean, Lynux Synergy, Torm Malaysia and Iliana were expected to sail.

Cargo volume of 237,657 tonnes, comprising

170,720 tonnes imports cargo and 66,937 export cargo carried in 7,772 Containers (4,253 TEUs Imports & 3,519 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Thirteen ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, GFS Prime, Polyagios and Maritime Kelly Anne scheduled to load/offload Container, Palm oil and Fuel oil are expected to take berths at QICT, FOTCO and LCT respectively on Tuesday.



In brief

China drawn with North Korea

SYDNEY (AFP): Defending champions China were drawn in the same group in Sydney Tuesday as three-time winners North Korea for the 2026 Women's Asian Cup, while powerhouse Japan will take on Vietnam, India and Taiwan. China are gunning for a 10th title and will also face tournament debutants Bangladesh and Uzbekistan in Group B at the showpiece event in Perth, Gold Coast and Sydney from March 1-21 next year. Japan, the highest FIFA-ranked team in the competition at seven, are top seeds in Group C, aiming to add to their 2014 and 2018 triumphs. They will be making their 18th Asian Cup appearance and 16th in a row -- both records. Hosts Australia, the 2010 winners, have their work cut out in Group A with 2022 runners-up South Korea, Iran and the Philippines. They will be looking to channel the home support that drove them to the semi-finals at the 2023 World Cup on home soil. The top two sides from each group, along with the two best third-placed teams, progress to the quarter-finals, with the top six finishers booking their tickets to the 2027 World Cup in Brazil. Group A - Australia, South Korea, Iran, Philippines Group B - North Korea, China, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan Group C - Japan, Vietnam, India, Taiwan

Joao Felix joins Ronaldo at Al Nassr

RIYADH (AFP): Portuguese forward Joao Felix has signed a two-year deal with Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr, where he will join Cristiano Ronaldo, the club announced Tuesday. Felix, now 25, made a blockbuster move from Benfica to Atletico Madrid in 2019, but has since seen his fortunes decline. "I'm here to spread joy. Let's win together," said Felix in a video posted on the Riyadh club's X account. A separate post said he had signed until 2027. Felix remains one of the most expensive transfers in history, following his move to Atletico for 127.7 million euros (\$147.3 million) six years ago. He has since failed to score more than 10 goals a season, despite stints at Barcelona, AC Milan and Chelsea. According to Arryadia, a Riyadh sports newspaper, Felix will earn \$10 million a year. Saudi Arabia has shaken up football by spending heavily on stars from Europe, starting with Ronaldo's arrival in 2023, and the conservative desert nation will host the World Cup in 2034. Many of the signings have been ageing stars, but Felix bucks the trend along with Mateo Retegui, 26, the Serie A top-scorer who joined Al Qadsiah last week. French international Theo Hernandez, 27, left AC Milan for Al Hilal in a reported \$29 million deal earlier this month. Top coaches have also been lured to Saudi Arabia, including Italy's Simone Inzaghi who led Al Hilal to an upset win over Manchester City at the Club World Cup. At Al Nassr, Felix will be working under Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus, who was sacked by Al Hilal in May following their defeat in the Asian Champions League semi-finals.



ISLAMABAD: Khair Muhammad, Father of MMA Fighter Shahzaib Rind receives a cheque of Rs. 5 Million from Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. —APP Photo

Pakistan faces narrow defeat against Argentina in U19 C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan volleyball team played their fifth and final group-stage match of the FIVB Boys' U19 World Championship 2025 against a strong Argentina side. In a tightly contested encounter, Pakistan narrowly lost the match 2-3, with set scores of 26-24, 18-25, 21-25, 25-16, 11-15, said a press release. Despite the loss, Pakistan secured the top position in Pool A with 13

points, owing to their four consecutive victories in earlier matches. The match featured high-intensity rallies, powerful spikes, and remarkable defense from both sides. Pakistan pushed the match to a decisive fifth set, showcasing strong teamwork and resilience. Although they couldn't clinch the win, their performance reinforced their position as a top contender in the championship.

Pakistan ends the Preliminary Round with 13 points and retains 1st place in Pool A. Pakistan will advance to the Top 16 Round and will face the fourth-place team (4) from Pool C. The final placement of Pool C is still to be decided. The Federation remains proud of the team's consistent performance in one of the world's most competitive volleyball tournaments.

Pakistan qualify to quarter-finals of Squash C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan marched into the quarter-finals of the World Junior Squash Team Championships 2025 with a commanding 2-0 victory over Poland in the pre-quarterfinal clash in Egypt on Tuesday. According to information made available here by Pakistan Squash Federation, in a high-stakes encounter, Pakistan's Abdullah Nawaz overcame a tough challenge from Jan Samborski, sealing the first match 3-1 with game scores of 12-10, 4-11, 11-8, 11-2. Teammate Anas Ali Shah followed up with a thrilling five-game battle against Franciszek Michniewicz. Despite trailing after the third game, Anas fought back strongly to win 11-7, 9-11, 10-12, 11-5, 11-3, clinching the tie for Pakistan. With this win, Pakistan secured a spot in the last eight and will face a formidable English side in the quarter-finals on Wednesday.

DG Sports welcomes gold medalists

PESHAWAR (APP): Director General (DG) Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tashfeen Haider warmly welcomed athletes of the province at Peshawar Sports Complex on their return from Uzbekistan, where they won gold medals at the WASKF All-Style Karate Open Asian Championship held in Tashkent. A special reception ceremony was organized in honour of the medal-winning athletes on Tuesday. During the ceremony the DG Sports adorned them with garlands and commended their outstanding performance. Speaking on the occasion, he praised the athletes' dedication and affirmed the department's continued support for their growth and success. He also announced that the athletes would soon be rewarded with special incentives in recognition of their achievements. The gold medalists included Muhammad Salman (50kg), Saad Shah (55kg), and Murad Khan (60kg), all representing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in their respective weight categories. The event was attended by Director Development Munir Abbas, Pride of Performance recipient Khalid Noor, Assistant Director Accounts Shah Faisal, Director Sports Operations Jamshed Baloch, Director Establishment Nematullah Marwat, Chief Coach Shafiqatullah Khan, Administrator Yousaf Afridi and other dignitaries. DG Sports Tashfeen Haider expressed confidence in the athletes' potential, stating that with consistent hard work and institutional support, these young champions will continue to elevate Pakistan's image on the global stage.

Australia seal 5-0 win in West Indies T20 series



ST KITTS (Agencies): Australia completed a comprehensive 5-0 clean sweep against West Indies in their T20 series by winning the final match of their tour by three wickets. The hosts were put into bat at Warner Park in St Kitts and Nevis and managed 170, with Shimron Hetmyer hitting 52 from 31 balls as Australian bowler Ben Dwarshuis took 3-41. The Windies were given hope of a win when they reduced Australia to 25-3 but Cameron Green, Tim David and Mitch Owen got their side back on track.

Green scored 32 runs from 18 balls, David smashed four sixes in a 12-ball 30 and Owen raced to 37 - including three fours and three sixes - in 17 balls. Aaron Hardie added 28 from 25 balls as Australia reached their target with three overs to spare. "I didn't expect 5-0 at the start of the series," said Australia captain Mitchell Marsh. "But we played some great cricket. It was something we spoke about after the fourth game. "We knew no Australian team had completed a clean

sweep. We've had guys come in and played different roles for us." The T20 series defeat compounds a difficult time for West Indies, coming off the back of their 3-0 loss in the Test series against Australia. Australia bowled out the Windies for just 27 - the second lowest score in Test history, and the worst since 1955 - in the third Test and that led to Cricket West Indies president Dr Kishore Shallow calling for an emergency meeting to review the series and final match in particular.

Vos retains yellow jersey as Wiebes wins stage four



POITIERS (Agencies): Marianne Vos lost out in a second successive sprint battle to Lorena Wiebes but retained the yellow jersey after stage four of the Tour de France Femmes. In a repeat of Monday's third stage, Dutch rider Wiebes pipped compatriot Vos to the line in Poitiers. Wiebes climbs to second in the general classification and trails Vos by 12 seconds with five stages remaining. Ireland's Lara Gillespie achieved her best performance on a Tour de France Femmes stage by finishing third. Demi Vollering, who won the 2023 edition, suffered a heavy crash on Monday but was cleared to ride after the team doctor "ruled out the risk of concussion", external - and finished in the same time as Wiebes. After back-to-back flat stages, riders will compete over a hilly 165.8km route

between Chasseneuil-du-Poitou Futuroscope and Gueret on Wednesday. Stage four results 1. Lorena Wiebes (Ned/SD Worx-Protime) 2hrs 54mins 11secs 2. Marianne Vos (Ned/Visma-Lease a Bike) same time 3. Lara Gillespie (Ire/UAE Team ADQ) same time 4. Eline Jansen (Ned/VolkerWessels) same time 5. Chloe Dygert (USA/Canyon-SRAM-ZondaCrypto) same time 6. Shari Bossuyt (Bel/AG Insurance-Soudal) same time 7. Rachele Barbieri (Ita/Picnic-PostNL) same time 8. Linda Zanetti (Sui/Uno-X Mobility) same time 9. Alicia Gonzalez (Spa/St Michel-Prefrence Home-Auber93) same time 10. Sarah van Dam

(Can/Cerazitiz) same time General classification after stage four 1. Marianne Vos (Ned/Visma-Lease a Bike) 11hrs 13mins 11secs 2. Lorena Wiebes (Ned/SD Worx-Protime) +12secs 3. Kim le Court (Mau/AG Insurance-Soudal) same time 4. Pauline Ferrand-Prevot (Fra/Visma-Lease a Bike) +18secs 5. Kasia Niewiadoma-Phinney (Pol/Canyon-SRAM-ZondaCrypto) +22secs 6. Demi Vollering (Ned/FDJ-Suez) +25secs 7. Anna van der Breggen (Ned/SD Worx-Protime) +27secs 8. Puck Pieterse (Ned/Fenix-Deceuninck) same time 9. Niamh Fisher-Black (NZ/Lidl-Trek +31secs 10. Chloe Dygert (USA/Canyon-SRAM-ZondaCrypto) same time.

Gambhir in confrontation with Surrey ground staff

LONDON (Agencies): India head coach Gautam Gambhir has been involved in a confrontation with Surrey ground staff during a training session before Thursday's fifth and final Test against England at The Oval. Video footage from the net session shows Gambhir pointing his finger at Lee Fortis, Surrey's head of ground staff, and the India coach can be heard shouting "you can't tell us what to do" and "you're just the groundsman, nothing beyond". Speaking in a news conference afterwards, India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak - who was present during the incident - said the coaches were inspecting the wicket for the Test, and were asked to move away. "When we were standing on the wicket looking at it, one of the ground staff came and said to stand two and half metres away from here. In my cricketering career I have never seen anybody saying that," said Kotak. "Literally he was saying that 'you can go outside the rope' to the head coach and see the wicket. I don't know how you can see. "If someone was brushing their shoes, or some-

body is trying to put something on the wicket or somebody wearing spikes - if the curator feels that then fine - but it was a very strange way of saying it." Kotak continued: "Curators are a little over-protective or possessive about the square and the ground. [They] need to understand that the people they are talking to are highly skilled and intelligent people. "When you are working with very intelligent and highly skilled people, if you sound a bit arrogant, you can be protective - but at the end of the day it's a cricket pitch. It's not an antique that you can't touch because it's 200 years old and it can be broken. That's what I feel." With no specific outdoor practice area, India used three practice wickets surrounded by nets close to the Test match pitch, which is standard procedure. BBC Sport asked Surrey for a comment but the club declined, though in a video Fortis later downplayed the incident, telling Indian media "there's nothing to speak about. There's nothing to hide here". The incident is the latest in a heated and competitive series between the two

sides, with the fourth Test at Old Trafford ending with India refusing to shake hands for the draw early as Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar reached centuries. India skipper Shubman Gill also said England were acting "against the spirit of cricket" with time-wasting tactics during the third Test at Lord's. England lead the five-match series 2-1 and Ben Stokes' side are expected to make changes to the team from Manchester's draw, particularly to the bowling line-up after just three days in between Tests. Jamie Overton, Gus Atkinson and Josh Tongue are the spare wickets in the squad after Stokes struggled with various niggles. Chris Woakes and Brydon Carse have played all four matches so far and Jofra Archer has played back-to-back after making his comeback from a four-year injury absence. Meanwhile India will be without wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant because of a fractured foot and they also have a decision to make on pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who has played the maximum three Tests they stated he would before the series.

Trueshan death overshadows Scandinavia Goodwood win

LONDON (Agencies): A fatal injury to former winner Trueshan overshadowed the opening day of Glorious Goodwood as Scandinavia got the better of stablemate Illinois to win the Goodwood Cup. Alan King-trained Trueshan was pulled up sharply by Hollie Doyle halfway through the Group One feature race with an injury that later proved to be fatal. "What happened unfortunately was just an accident, mid-race, in a straight line going up the hill," said James Given, the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) director of equine welfare. "His left hind pastern broke and left him in a situation that wasn't recoverable from. "Alan [King] was able to get down there and assess him with the vet and they felt there was no option really but to put him down." The nine-year-old, who



had 16 wins in 34 career races, won the Long Distance Cup at Ascot three times, the Prix du Cadran in Paris twice and the Goodwood Cup in 2021, when Doyle became the first female jockey to win the race. Meanwhile, Scandinavia battled with Illinois in a thrilling finish to the two-mile race to give Irish trainer Aidan O'Brien a one-two finish. "He has improved all year," jockey Wayne Lordan told ITV after the victory.

"He stepped up to two miles today against the older horses. It's a tough task but I think he stepped forward quite well, and I think there is plenty of improvement to come. "Today was about finding out how smart he is and he's obviously a very smart stayer. He would be an Ascot Gold Cup horse for next year." Trainer O'Brien added: "Scandinavia is a typical Justify - he just won't lie down. He puts his head down and won't be beaten."

Ageless Ledecy wins 1,500m freestyle for 22nd world gold

SINGAPORE (AFP): Katie Ledecy cruised to a dominant 1,500m freestyle gold in Singapore on Tuesday to claim the 22nd world title of her storied career. The American great touched the wall in 15min 26.44sec, ahead of Simona Quadarella of Italy in 15:31.79 and Australia's Lani Pallister in 15:41.18. The masterful win moved all-time great Ledecy four short of Michael Phelps's career tally of 26 world gold medals. It also gave her the sixth world 1,500m freestyle title of her career and she paraded around the arena afterwards with the American flag. "I love this race. This race was the race that I broke my first world record in 2013," said Ledecy, 28, who has won nine Olympic golds. "Lots of great races and memories over the years at worlds. I'm happy I could do it in Singapore." Ledecy was the red-hot favourite going into the race, having qualified for



the final over 10 seconds behind. Ledecy was in a class of her own from there on, with the world record still within sight. That prospect drained away in the closing stages but by that time the gold was in the bag. "Lani took it out there. I knew she would be out fast and I just wanted to get out fast, but comfortable enough that I could go from there," said Ledecy. "I'm happy with the time and happy with the swim." The victory gave Ledecy her first gold

medal of the championships, after picking up a bronze behind Summer McIntosh in the 400m freestyle on Sunday's opening night. Ledecy is set to go head-to-head with Canadian phenomenon McIntosh again in Singapore in the 800m freestyle. Ledecy's win came against the backdrop of a gastroenteritis outbreak in the American team, which managing director Greg Meehan said had affected the "overwhelming majority" of the squad.



In brief

Committee reviews arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): The District Peace Committee Rawalpindi on Tuesday met here at the Deputy Commissioner Office to review arrangements for Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS). Chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner General Dr Hassan Tariq, the meeting was attended by officers of all relevant departments as well as members of the District Peace Committee. The meeting was informed that more effective arrangements were being made as Chehlum, Independence Day (August 14) and Jumma Mubarak (Friday) were falling on the same day. Dr Hassan Tariq said that a peaceful atmosphere was maintained during Muharram-ul-Haram through exemplary arrangements, and same spirit should be shown for the Chehlum procession and Independence Day celebrations. The Peace Committee members presented various suggestions and emphasized the importance of inter-Muslim unity, saying, "We have to demonstrate unity, solidarity and tolerance while following the orders of Allah Almighty". Dr Hassan Tariq stressed that that on the occasions like Chehlum, it was necessary to keep a close eye on the conspiracies of internal and external enemies so that they fail in their nefarious intentions.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 11:00 PM. Islamabad Circle, Shahpur, Athal, Treat, T&T, Bhara Kahu.I&II, Golf City Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, EME Complex, Jhangli, Zircon Heights, P&T Winnie Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Shahpur, Adiala, Dhok Noor, Japan Road, Jinnah.I&II, Defense Road, Humayun.I, Rose Line, Adiala, Kaliyal, Humayun Road, Major Riaz Manzoor Feeders, Attok Circle, Malhwali, Kharapa, Shakardara Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Darya Jalap Feeders, from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Jail Park-I, Car Chowk, Mehboob Shaheed, Park View, Pindi Board Feeders and surrounding areas.

Two killed in Capital firing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two persons were killed and two others sustained injuries in a firing incident that took place near Shehzad Town area of Islamabad, tv channels quoting police sources reported on Tuesday. According to initial reports, two persons lost their lives and two sustained injuries in a firing incident that held between the two groups near Shehzad Town area to settle milk issue. The police team after receiving reports rushed to the site and shifted the dead and injured to hospital. Investigations are underway.

Two drug suppliers jailed

RAWALPINDI (APP): A local court has sentenced two drug suppliers to a combined total of 18 years in prison and imposed fines of Rs. 160,000.0. The convicted individuals, Parvez and Gul Khan, were found guilty of drug trafficking. According to the details, Parvez was sentenced to 9 years in prison and fined Rs.80,000.0 after Gujar Khan Police arrested him in September 2024 for possessing 2.5 Kg of hashish.

PM's Youth Programme deepens global education ties: Rana Mashhood

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, on Tuesday emphasized the government's continued efforts to improve education in Pakistan through close partnerships with international organizations like the British Council and the Scottish Government.

Speaking at the launch event of a 10-year impact report of the Scotland-Pakistan Scholarship for Young Women and Girls, he said the British Council has played a vital role in supporting education, particularly for girls. "Thousands of young women from across Pakistan have benefited from this scholarship. We are thankful to the Scottish Government for their continued support," he added.

He praised the Zewar-e-Taleem Program, which was introduced when Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was the Chief Minister of Punjab. The program provided educational stipends to girls in 16 underprivileged districts of Punjab where female education was previously neglected. "In those districts, the girls' enrollment rate increased from 16-21% to over 51%," Rana Mashhood noted. "These girls are now topping board exams. We

are proud of them. They are the future of Pakistan."

He also recalled the creation of the Punjab Educational Endowment Fund (PEEF) in 2008, an initiative that has now expanded nationwide as the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund. So far, over 500,000 deserving students across Pakistan have received scholarships based on merit.

He shared that the provincial government had earlier launched the 'Women on Wheels' programme to empower young women through mobility. "We carried out research in various universities and colleges, and based on that, introduced a program to provide motorbikes and scooters to female students," he said. "Today, more than 26,000 girls in Punjab are benefiting from this initiative. Women on Wheels is now a powerful tool for the empowerment and independence of young women across the province," he added.

Rana Mashhood also highlighted the development of Pakistan's first-ever National Adolescent and Youth Policy. He shared that over 300,000 young people have taken part in the policy consultation process, making it the largest youth-focused survey in the country's history.

"This policy will address the needs of young people between ages 10 and 29 and will be announced very soon," he said.

The Chairman further spoke about the launch of the Digital Youth Hub, a one-stop online platform offering scholarships, training, and employment information under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme's 4Es – Education, Engagement, Environment, and Employment.

Since its launch on March 26, over 500,000 youth have registered and 1.6 million have downloaded the app, with thousands joining daily. "Youth can now access global and local opportunities directly through this platform, without needing to visit any office," he said, encouraging all young people to register.

Earlier in the ceremony, the British Council presented the 10-year performance report of the Scotland-Pakistan Scholarship Program. According to the report, 20,000 girls benefited, including 18,000 school-level students, among whom were 3,527 minority students and 93 students with disabilities. At the university level, 2,000 female students received scholarships, including 283 from minority groups and 43 with disabilities.

Chairperson BISP unveils launch of new payment system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, has announced a landmark initiative to open personal bank accounts for beneficiary women across Pakistan, aimed at ensuring the transparent, efficient, and dignified delivery of financial assistance.

Addressing senior journalists at the BISP Headquarters, Senator Rubina said that under the pilot phase of the new payment system, being launched on August 13, the bank accounts of beneficiaries are being opened in major cities including Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, Gilgit, Muzaffarabad, and Peshawar. These accounts will allow women to access funds independently, and efforts are underway to introduce digital wallet options in the near future.

In response to a question about fraudulent SMS messages targeting BISP beneficiaries, the Chairperson said the organization is actively raising awareness through social media and other platforms. "We are encouraging beneficiaries to report such incidents so that action can be taken against the culprits. We are also in discussions with PTCL, FIA and other stakeholders to take legal and technical measures against these fraudulent platforms," she added.

Highlighting BISP's commitment to long-term empowerment, Senator Rubina recalled that on June 21 — the birth anniversary of

Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto — President Asif Ali Zardari launched the Benazir Hunarmand Program.

This initiative will provide technical and vocational training to BISP beneficiaries and their family members, aligned with international standards, to equip them with market-relevant skills and help them achieve self-reliance.

She stressed that Pakistan is rich in human resources, and there is an urgent need to transform this potential into an asset. "We are working with NAVTTC and other partners under the Hunarmand Program. Globally, there is high demand for skilled labor — for instance, Germany alone currently needs 400,000 skilled workers — and many other countries are also seeking qualified human capital.

These training courses will be certified to international standards, enabling our people not just to support their families but also to contribute to the national economy through remittances," she said.

To a question, she said "We have launched a system where every family is required to undergo re-certification every three years. If a beneficiary's circumstances improve, they will graduate from the program and exit after attaining self-sufficiency," she explained. This system has been in place since June 2025. The Hunarmand Program, she added, also forms a key component of the exit strategy for BISP beneficiaries.

Rubina acknowledged the support of NAVTTC, provincial TEVTAs, the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, and the Friends of BISP platform in implementing this transformative vision. "This program represents the future of Pakistan and offers a pathway to prosperity for countless deserving families," she said.

Termining BISP a globally recognized social protection model, she shared that international delegations visited Pakistan last year to study the program, intending to replicate similar systems in their own countries — a source of pride for Pakistan. She reiterated that the program's hallmark-recognizing the housewife as the head of the household and requiring a valid CNIC for enrollment — reflects President Zardari's progressive vision that has empowered millions of women and formally included them in national records.

Currently, around 10 million families are benefiting from BISP. The Benazir Nishonuma Program addresses the health and nutrition needs of pregnant women and young children, and has contributed to a 6.5 percent reduction in stunting across the country. Under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif initiative, stipends are being provided from primary to higher secondary school levels, based on 70% attendance. Recently, several brilliant students from Multan — beneficiaries of the program — secured top positions in matriculation exams.



ISLAMABAD: High level Meeting to advance the development of Pakistan's first National Esports Policy and to support the establishment of the Pakistan Esports Federation chaired by Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and Rana Mashhood Khan.

Turkish Envoy emphasizes the need to deepen Pak-Turkiye ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Neziroglu visited the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) and held a meeting with its Chairperson, Dr. Najeeba Arif on Tuesday. Turkish writer, translator, intellectual, and Director of the Yunus Emre Institute in Pakistan Dr. Halil Toker as well as PAL's Director General, Sultan Muhammad Nawaz Nasir were also present in the meeting.

The meeting focused on fostering literary and cultural ties between Pakistan and Türkiye. Dr. Najeeba Arif briefed the ambassador on the Academy's initiatives, including the promotion of literature in Pakistani languages, welfare programs for writers, its publication efforts, and literary translation projects with international partners.

She also referenced the earlier Memorandum of Understanding

between Istanbul University and the Academy, and highlighted key publications that reflect longstanding literary collaboration. Notably, in 1991, PAL published a book on the eminent Turkish poet Yunus Emre. In 2022, the academy published book titled "Dr. Halil Toker: Shakhshiyat aur Funn" for its acclaimed series "Pakistani Adab ke Me'maar".

Dr. Najeeba Arif further shared that the Academy regularly features translations of Turkish literary works in its quarterly journal "Adabiyat". Over the years, several Turkish writers have visited Pakistan and participated in international conferences organized by the Academy.

Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu expressed his appreciation for the strong literary, cultural, social, and political relations between Türkiye and Pakistan, emphasizing the need to deepen these ties. He underscored the

importance of renewed institutional partnerships, collaborative translation initiatives, and the organization of joint literary and cultural events. Such efforts, he noted, will not only advance mutual literary interests and celebrate shared cultural heroes, but also strengthen people-to-people connections and mutual understanding between the two nations.

Dr. Najeeba Arif also commended the contributions of Turkish scholars to Urdu literature, particularly acknowledging the efforts of Dr. Halil Toker, Dr. Asuman Belen Özcan, and Dr. Dawood Shahbaz. The meeting also included discussions on launching joint literary projects between PAL and the Yunus Emre Institute in the coming months. At the end of the meeting, Dr. Najeeba Arif presented a selection of the Academy's publications to Dr. Irfan Neziroglu and Dr. Halil Toker.

ISSI holds Bilateral Dialogue with Iranian think-tank IRAS



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) held bilateral dialogue with Iran's Institute for Iran and Eurasia Studies (IRAS) on "Iran-Pakistan Relations in the Context of New Regional Developments." Moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA, the dialogue speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; Dr. Seyyed Rasoul Moosavi, former Director General of Southern Asia, Iran's Foreign Ministry; Ambassador Riffat Masood, Pakistan's former Ambassador to Iran; and Dr. Somaye Morovati, Senior Researcher and Head of South Asian Group, Scientific

Research and Middle East Strategic Studies Center (CMES), Tehran.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood shared an in-depth assessment of shifting global and regional dynamics and their implications for Pakistan-Iran relations. He highlighted rising global instability, erosion of international legal and humanitarian norms, the urgent need to safeguard multilateralism, and the imperative of peaceful resolution of disputes in a world rife with armed conflicts and increasing resort to the use of force. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood described the shift toward multipolarity as an opportunity for Pakistan and Iran to play a role in building a fair, just, and equitable global order.

He noted the impact of Iran-Israel military standoff, the Gaza genocide,

and the Russia-Ukraine conflict -- highlighting their impact on global stability and an international order based on international law and the UN Charter. Underscoring the importance of strengthening Pakistan-Iran relations, he welcomed the forthcoming visit of the President of Iran to Pakistan as part of the process of solidifying mutual collaboration.

He called for enhanced cooperation on bilateral economic cooperation, trade, and energy; stressed closer coordination on Afghanistan, particularly on issues relating to security and connectivity; and emphasized that closer bilateral cooperation remains vital for peace, stability, and regional prosperity. During the discussion, participants highlighted the salience of Pakistan-Iran relations, rooted in shared history, geography, and convergence on a range of regional and international issues. They emphasized the need for joint endeavours for regional stability, counterterrorism, and intelligence-sharing.

The revival of trilateral mechanisms and stronger political will were seen as essential for addressing cross-border threats and evolving regional challenges. Speakers called for continued support for legitimate causes such as Palestine. With the Iranian President's upcoming visit to Pakistan, the discussion highlighted the importance of strategic dialogue, regional coordination, and renewed commitment to strengthening bilateral ties in a shifting geopolitical landscape.

Ambassador Jakob for international support to overcome Pakistan's climate challenges



ISLAMABAD (APP): The outgoing Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Jakob Linulf on Tuesday underscored the

urgency of climate action, and suggested that countries like Pakistan, which are deeply vulnerable to climate disruptions,

need not only international cooperation but also localized strategies for resilience.

He was speaking at the sign-

ing ceremony of landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Danish Embassy and SDPI here. The agreement marks the formal launch of a high-impact project aimed at integrating climate change into Pakistan's economic and fiscal planning, said a press release.

Lauding the role of SDPI in leading the climate action of Pakistan and forwarding Denmark's clean, green vision through Pakistan's energy transition, the ambassador said that strategic frameworks such as Climate Prosperity Plans (CPPs) can help transform climate challenges into pathways of sustainable growth.

"By learning from Denmark's State of Green model, we aim to support Pakistan in creating a robust knowledge platform tailored to its unique needs," he added.

Paying tribute to the outgoing envoy, SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri credited Mr Linulf for being a "dedicated friend of

Pakistan" who helped transform Denmark's climate diplomacy into real, tangible outcomes. "Ambassador Linulf brought Pakistan into Denmark's climate imagination, not only as a vulnerable country but also as a potential regional partner in clean energy transformation," Dr Suleri said, and added that the new project will prioritize inclusive and strategic action by integrating voices of youth, women, civil society, academia, and private sector in shaping Pakistan's climate prosperity narrative.

Minister of State for National Food Security and Research, Malik Rasheed Ahmed Khan, also praised the outgoing ambassador for his exceptional services. "Denmark's partnership in energy and climate change has flourished over the past three years. Ambassador Jakob has been a powerful advocate of Pakistan's clean energy transition, and his leadership was crucial in shaping our early

work on carbon markets, climate finance, and renewable energy," the minister remarked.

Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, credited Denmark's technical support for Pakistan's emerging role as a regional leader in climate action. She reiterated that capacity-building initiatives and technology transfers under this partnership would continue to serve Pakistan well beyond the ambassador's tenure.

The MoU, on "Integrating climate change into economic planning", seeks to establish long-term cooperation in areas of green growth, climate finance, clean energy, and carbon market development. As part of this collaboration, Denmark and SDPI will support the design of policy roadmaps, training programmes, inclusive dialogues, and a digital platform showcasing successful low-carbon models adaptable to Pakistan.

Islamjar for safety measures

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Following multiple drowning incidents in the Pashtan Dam, the governor of Herat has instructed relevant officials to ensure that all necessary safety measures are implemented with immediate effect to protect the lives of citizens. Maulana Noor Ahmad Islamjar, governor of Herat stressed that despite the ban on swimming at Pashtan Dam, the site must be permanently equipped with appropriate boats and a sufficient number of skilled lifeguards trained in first aid.

Minister calls on officials

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi has called on officials at the Chamber of Commerce and Investment to prevent the uncontrolled import of goods into the country. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the new head of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) in Kabul on Tuesday, Azizi said with the cooperation of the private sector, efforts are underway to grow the national economy.

Emirati companies attract 20b afs investment

KABUL (Pajhwok): The General Directorate of Emirati Companies has announced successfully attracting and mobilizing more than 20 billion afghanis in both domestic and foreign investment by creating favorable conditions last year.

As part of a program highlighting the annual achievements of government institutions, the Directorate presented its annual report on Tuesday during a press conference at the Government Information and Media Center.

Speaking at the event, Maulvi Ahmad Jan Bilal, Acting Head of the General Directorate of Emirati Companies, stated that in addition to strengthening coordination among Emirati companies and ensuring effective implementation of projects and initiatives, the Directorate actively worked to attract investment. These efforts, he said, significantly contributed to economic growth and job creation.

According to Bilal, approximately 8.4 billion afghanis were deposited into the government's revenue account over the past year.

Additionally, around 2.77 billion afghanis in outstanding receivables owed to Emirati companies were recovered, and about 611 million afghanis in debts were settled.

He further noted that, based on a decree from the Leader of the Islamic Emirate, over one million jeribs (a traditional land measurement unit) of land were allocated to Emirati companies during the year.

These lands are slated for revitalization and use in agricultural and commercial projects.

Among other key achievements, Bilal cited securing World Bank approval for financing the CASA-1000 project, signing a contract to generate 619 megawatts of electricity with a total investment of approximately \$591.6 million, and completing the 220 kilovolt Torghundi-Herat power transmission line spanning 85 kilometers. Additionally,

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Work kicks off on projects

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Construction work has been initiated on two development projects at a cost of 18 million afghanis in the Nanghar province, an official said on Tuesday.

Eng. Wahidullah Mukhles, director of sectoral affairs at the Jalalabad Municipality, said concrete work was started on an 870-metre long and 4 to 6-metre wide road and a drainage canal in 8th municipal district of Jalalabad.

He said the project would cost 11 million afghanis.

Separately, concrete work was also kicked off on another 732-metre long road at a cost of nearly seven million afghanis in the same municipal district. The project also included concreting 1,460 metres of drainage canals.

He added these two projects will provide employment to 800 people and were expected to be completed and put into service within the next three and a half months.

Omar: 40% of Afghanistan's population enjoy electricity

KABUL (Pajhwok): Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdul Bari Omar says eighty percent of Afghanistan's electricity is imported from neighboring countries and currently 40 percent of the country's population has access to electricity—a figure expected to increase significantly within the next two years.

He said this during the ongoing programme outlining the annual achievements of government institutions at the Government Media and Information Centre today (Tuesday).

He said DABS was handed over to the Islamic Emirate in a 'damaged and loss-making state' but, fortunately, the company stabilised over the past year and was now operating at a profit, amounting to billions of afghanis.

He added: "Based on population statistics, 40 percent of Afghanistan's

UN seeks global help for climate crisis

KABUL (Pajhwok): As the climate crisis threatens the lives of millions of Afghans, the United Nations is calling on the international community to support Afghanistan in transitioning to renewable energy to help it cope with climate change.

Indrika Ratwatte, Deputy Special Representative of UNAMA, warns that ignoring this crisis will not only be disastrous for Afghans but will also jeopardize regional stability and ongoing humanitarian efforts.

In a video message published by UNAMA, Ratwatte stated that UN Secretary General António Guterres has issued a critical global call for the beginning of a new era in energy.

He said Guterres has made compelling and clear arguments why the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy is inevitable, and how it will bring broad benefits to people and the global economy.

According to Ratwatte, global action on behalf of the people of Afghanistan is vital, and the world must seize this opportunity to support an energy transition, as proposed by the Secretary-General.

Ratwatte noted that the climate crisis in Afghanistan is not a distant threat—it is happening now, and it is affecting lives, livelihoods and the natural systems on which people depend.

He emphasized that the consequences of inaction and neglect will not only be catastrophic for Afghans but will also endanger regional stability and global humanitarian efforts.

He said: "Through the United Nations in Afghanistan, we have stepped up our efforts to help the Afghan people mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. We support the people of Afghanistan in areas such as securing water resources and smart infrastructure, transitioning

to clean energy, restoring land and ecosystems, reducing risks from natural disasters, and strengthening community resilience."

He added the UN also supports initiatives aimed at bolstering long-term energy security in Afghanistan and increasing investments in renewable energy.

According to him, the United Nations will continue to raise its voice on behalf of Afghanistan on the global stage.

It is worth noting that the 30th annual UN Climate Conference (COP30) is scheduled to be held in November 2025 in the city of Belém, in the state of Pará, Brazil. This global conference brings countries together to continue negotiations on climate action, with a focus on implementing commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening adaptation to climate change, and securing financial resources for vulnerable countries such as Afghanistan.



and effort to implement.

The CEO expressed hope that in one to two years, the current electricity situation will improve by 80 percent, and Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS)'s network will be capable of fully supplying the country's energy needs.

He explained that some areas are still without electricity, and the national grid is being expanded daily. One of the main reasons for the shortage is that imported power is inconsistent and limited, while domestic

production is also insufficient.

At the same time, Abdul Bari Omar said that in the past ten months, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS)'s initiated work on eight power generation projects with a combined capacity of 1,000 megawatts, and work on another eight projects will soon begin.

He noted that the contracts for these projects—worth nearly 70 billion afghanis—have been signed with both domestic and international companies.

Road being asphalted at a cost of 38m afs in Nimroz



ZARANJ (Pajhwok): Asphalting work has been initiated on a road at a cost of 38 million of afghanis in the capital of northwestern Nimroz province, an official said on Tuesday.

Maulvi Salahuddin Muntaz, the mayor of Zaranj, told the inaugural ceremony that the road—1,630 metres long and 9

metres wide—would be asphalted over the next five months at a cost of 38,869,300 afghanis, funded through the development budget of the Zaranj Municipality.

He said the project also included construction of a central median with flowerbeds, metal railings and installation of 62 elec-

tric poles for lighting.

Muntaz stated: "We plan to properly asphalt all roads in the city that have not yet been paved."

Meanwhile, residents of Zaranj voiced satisfaction with the start of the asphalt-ing work and expressed the hope that the project would be completed within the stipulated timeframe.

Harmful colors found in celebration cakes: Health Ministry

KABUL (Pajhwok): Findings of Food and Drug Authority (FDA) indicate that many celebration cakes in the country are decorated with metallic paints and their excessive consumption can lead to allergies, chronic diseases and even cancer.

Various types of cakes and cookies are produced and sold in Kabul, among which eye-catching celebration cakes with vibrant designs and colors are very popular. Families often serve these cakes at events like weddings, birthdays, and other celebratory gatherings.

However, the Ministry of Public Health warns that the unauthorized use of metallic colors in cakes can cause chronic illnesses, allergies, and even cancer.

Why MoPH issued this warning?

Last year, FDA of the MoPH inspected a large number of cake and cookie

factories in Kabul. They discovered that metallic colors were being used to decorate celebration cakes.

Eng. Shafiqullah Shafaq, Head of Food Surveillance Analysis at the FDA, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Last year, we visited many cookie factories unannounced. During in-person inspections, we noticed they were using metallic colors to decorate celebration cakes. We collected samples and brought them here for further investigation."

He added that the main reason given by bakers for using these artificial colors was a lack of awareness about their harmful effects.

He also noted that such materials were used in almost all bakeries across Kabul.

Shafaq shared a copy of their investigation findings with Pajhwok.

In the report titled "Risk Analysis (22): Use of

Metallic Colors in the Food Industry", it states: "In recent years, the use of metallic colors in food products has become a concerning public health issue. These colors are often used to make foods more visually appealing but frequently lack official health approval and can have harmful effects on human health."

The report adds that these colors often contain heavy metals such as cadmium, chromium, zinc, and nickel.

Health consequences of these colors

Shafaq said: "Metallic colors mean that they contain heavy metals—chromium, lead. If heavy metals enter the digestive system, they can cause chronic and dangerous diseases. Even if it's just for decoration, these should not be consumed."

The report by the FDA explains that one of the major concerns regarding

these colors is their potential to cause allergies and damage to the digestive, respiratory, nervous, and immune systems. Various studies have also shown a possible link between long-term consumption of these colors and increased risk of cancer.

This highlights the urgent need for public awareness and avoidance of such harmful additives.

According to the report, these colors can trigger skin allergic reactions such as itching, redness, and swelling, as well as respiratory issues like shortness of breath and coughing.

In terms of the digestive system, they can irritate the intestinal lining and cause nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, constipation, heartburn, and possibly gastric ulcers.

The report also notes: "Metallic colors in some food products may contain heavy metals such as zinc,

chromium, nickel, and cadmium, which play a significant role in the development of cancer. While findings are sometimes contradictory, some studies have shown that these metals can increase the risk of cancers such as colon, stomach, and kidney cancer."

The ministry's response, actions

The report states that, first and foremost, consumers need to be informed about the risks of unauthorized color use so they can avoid buying and consuming such products.

It further emphasizes the need to strengthen health and legal monitoring to prevent the use of harmful colors in the food industry. Additionally, more research is required to assess the long-term effects of these additives and to implement effective public health strategies.

Given the rising use of metallic colors in food

products, the need for consumer education and stricter monitoring is felt more strongly than ever. Although these colors may enhance the visual appeal of food, they pose serious health risks.

Shafaq explained the ministry's measures: "First, we issue recommendations. Then our public awareness teams visit the factories and explain the issue. After that, we conduct follow-up inspections. If the problem persists and they do not comply, legal action will be taken."

He added: "We shared the issue with higher authorities, and their directive was that we can repeatedly conduct thorough inspections. If violations continue and they remain non-compliant, legal measures must follow."

Public awareness needed

Shafaq added that in terms of imports, alternative materials can be used

instead of these harmful colors. These metallic decorative colors are industrial and are typically used in painting buildings or furniture.

He suggested that instead, food-grade colors should be used—those that are safe for consumption and do not cause digestive or health issues.

Factory Workers: We use these colors based on customer demand

Shafiqullah, a senior baker at a cake and cookie factory in Kabul, told Pajhwok that he uses metallic colors in cakes due to customer orders.

He said: "I use cake ingredients and cream, and these colors are only for decoration. Most designs come from the internet. Some customers even say: 'Color it—we won't eat it—but the design must be there.'"

According to him, they also consume these cakes

themselves and give them to their families.

He added: "Since the Ministry of Health announced that these colors are harmful, we've reduced our usage. Now, we only use them for specific orders when customers insist."

Similarly, Mohsen, another baker at a cake and cookie factory in Kabul, said that various ingredients are used in cake production, but metallic colors are used upon customer request.

He said: "Before using these colors based on a customer's order, we inform them about the nature of the color and ask whether to use it or not. These metallic colors are only mixed with 70% medical alcohol. We know it's harmful, so we use them only for customer's orders."

He added that they have decided to stop using these colors in baking going forward.



KYIV: A wounded prisoner sitting at the site of penal colony hit by a Russian air strike, amid Russia's attacks on Ukraine.

Indian MP admits Rafale jet downed during Pak-India conflict

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha member Amrinder Singh Raja has confirmed that a Rafale fighter jet was downed during the Pakistan-India conflict, contradicting India's official stance.

According to Raja, the tail of the aircraft fell near the Bassiana Air Force Station in Punjab, and it bore the marking BS-001, confirming it was from a Rafale jet. The incident resulted in one death and nine injuries. He added that the Indian Air Marshal also acknowledged the crash but labeled the aircraft as "unidentified." Raja accused the Air Marshal of hiding the truth from the Indian public, calling it a deliberate attempt to downplay the loss.

It is pertinent to mention that during the conflict, Pakistan had successfully shot down Indian fighter jets, including the French-made Rafale aircraft. Despite international and French confirmation, India has continued to deny the downing of its jets.

Rahul dares Modi to deny Trump's claim of Indian jets being downed: Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi launched a fierce attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government over US President Donald Trump's claim that five Indian fighter jets were shot down during clashes with Pakistan.

Speaking during a session of the Lok Sabha, Gandhi issued a bold challenge to Indian prime minister: "If Modi has the courage, let him say in this House that Trump lied. Say that there was no ceasefire and no Indian jets were downed." He added: "If Modi has the courage of Indira Gandhi, he should stand up and speak the truth."

Gandhi's remarks came after President Trump confirmed that five Indian aircraft were downed and credited himself 28 times for brokering ceasefires between India and Pakistan. The controversy comes amid intense debate in India's Lok Sabha over "Operation Sandor", where the opposition continues to slam the government for misleading the nation and its military.

Omar Ayub seeks SC review of May 9 trials

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan urged Chief Justice Yahya Afridi on Tuesday to intervene in the ongoing May 9 trials, alleging constitutional and procedural violations against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders.

In a letter dated July 27, 2025, Ayub called the trials 'politically motivated' and accused 'anti-terrorism courts of rushing proceedings at odd hours, denying fair trial rights and legal counsel of choice. He further claimed that the hearings often continued from early morning until 3:00 am., undermining judicial transparency and exhausting defendants and lawyers alike.

The opposition leader also alleged that FIRs were fabricated, interrogation was coercive, and PTI leaders were selectively targeted. He also criticised the denial of media access and the exclusion of family members from the courtroom.

Quoting constitutional provisions and Supreme Court precedents, he urged the court to review trial conduct, restore open access, and halt sessions beyond reasonable hours. In his letter he daid the integrity of Pakistan's judicial process is under grave threat. These trials, which are supposed to exemplify justice, have instead become a means of political persecution.

He said the Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) in Lahore, Faisalabad, Sargodha, and other cities are hearing cases related to May 9 with a speed and manner that shock the conscience of any impartial observer.

BEIJING: At least 30 people have been killed by severe rainfall and flooding in Beijing as heavy rains drench the Chinese capital, state media report. The deaths occurred in Beijing's mountainous northern districts, with 28 killed in Miyun and two in Yanqing, the official Xinhua state news agency reported on Tuesday.

"The latest round of heavy rainstorms has left 30 people dead in Beijing as of midnight Monday," Xinhua said, citing the city's municipal flood control headquarters. Torrential rain started over the weekend and intensified around the Chinese capital and surrounding provinces on Monday, with Beijing recording rainfall of up to 543mm (21.3 inches) in its northern districts, Xinhua said.

Authorities in Beijing have relocated more than

80,000 residents from areas worst hit by flooding, which has damaged dozens of roads and cut power to at least 136 villages, the country's national broadcaster CCTV reported. The heaviest rain in Beijing is expected early on Tuesday, with rainfall of up to 300mm (11.8 inches) forecast for some areas.

Authorities ordered the release of water from a reservoir in Beijing's rural Miyun district, which was at its highest level since it was built in 1959, according to reports, with locals being warned to stay away from rivers downstream as their levels rose and as more heavy rain is forecast. Chinese President Xi Jinping late on Monday night ordered "all-out" search and rescue efforts to minimise casualties, as authorities ordered people to stay indoors, closed schools, suspended con-

struction work and stopped outdoor tourism and other activities until the emergency warning is lifted.

In the town of Taishitun, about 100km (60 miles) northeast of central Beijing, streets were covered in mud and water on Monday, and uprooted trees lay in piles with their bare roots exposed, the Associated Press news agency reports. "The flood came rushing in, just like that, so fast and suddenly. In no time at all, the place was filling up," said local resident Zhuang Zhelin, who was clearing mud with his family from their building materials shop.

Earlier reports on Monday said the torrential rains and flooding had killed four people, with eight others missing, following a landslide in the country's Hebei province, located south of Beijing. — Xinhua

PAC summons complete records of all sugar mill owners

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has urgently summoned complete records of all sugar mill owners and exporters as sugar prices soar nationwide. Chaired by Junaid Akbar, the PAC meeting included members Omar Ayub, Riaz Fatyana, and Senator Fauzia Arshad.

During the session, the committee expressed serious concern over the sharp increase in sugar prices, with revelations that sugar is being sold at Rs210 per kg in Karachi and Rs215 in Haripur, while the national average stands at Rs173 per

kg. The Secretary for Food Security faced strong criticism for presenting inaccurate data.

According to the Ministry of Industries, 5.09 million tons of sugar were approved for export over the last decade, but only 3.927 million tons were actually exported, earning over \$400 million in foreign exchange. The lawmakers criticised the ongoing cycle of sugar export and import, calling it a decade-long deception. Fatyana and Arshad claimed that the nation was defrauded of Rs287 billion due to the manipulated price hike and artificial shortages.

The PAC chairman questioned why sugar mill owners were given export subsidies and criticised the sudden issuance of SROs granting tax exemptions. MNA Moeen Pirzada accused top government officials of looting the nation and blamed the Sugar Advisory Board for corruption, calling the sugar mafia an integral part of the government.

When pressed, the Ministry of Industries hesitated to reveal the names of sugar mill owners, prompting the PAC to demand immediate submission of names and directorship details.

IHC reserves verdict on bail plea of PARC chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday reserved its verdict on a post-arrest bail petition of Chairman Pakistan Agriculture and Research Council (PARC) Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali and Director Establishment Muhammad Akhlaq Malik in illegal recruitment case.

Lawyers Jan Muhammad and Noman Paracha appeared on behalf of the petitioner, Assistant Attorney General Shaista Tabassum on behalf of the federation, while the lawyer and legal advisor of the complainant, the Federal Ministry of National Food Security also in attendance.

The petitioner's lawyer said that a regular advertisement for recruitments in PARC was given, the chairman of the council had the authority to increase or decrease the posts of the recruitments. According to the law, it is an authority and cannot be called corruption or corrupt practice. The 19 accused are named in the case and 17 are on interim bail, only two are arrested.

The FIA investigator told the court that the chairman has the authority to increase the posts but he had to give an advertisement. They said that the Ministry of Food Security has filed a complaint. They alleged that nepotism was used in recruitments, someone's daughter and someone's niece were recruited. The recruits themselves are giving statements that the entire process was based on malice.

Justice Muhammad Asif said that the Chairman of the Council was given the Star of Distinction, now a case has been registered against him. The investigation officer said that if he has received the star of distinction, it does not mean that he can do whatever he wants. A gentleman also interviewed his daughter himself and got recruited, a person's son and daughter-in-law were also recruited, these are the people who are recognized.

The petitioner's lawyer said that the problem they have with the recruitments is that their people were not recruited.

Justice Muhammad Asif inquired how many relatives have been recruited?, the lawyer of the Ministry of Food Security said that 72 servants and relatives from Sahiwal and Sargodha were recruited, there is a statement of one person Shahbaz that he gave Rs 25 lakh to the chairman to get the job. The Chairman PARC has considered the institution as his fiefdom. After the arguments were completed, the court reserved its decision on the post-arrest bail applications.

Police detain 70 students at QAU

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Dozens of students from Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) in Islamabad were detained early Tuesday during a police operation to vacate university hostels, drawing intense criticism on social media. Videos shared online showed uniformed personnel escorting students from hostel buildings, with claims surfacing that over 70 were arrested and taken to the Secretariat Police Station.

According to the Islamabad Police, legal assistance was provided following a written request by the university administration, as some students allegedly continued to occupy four hostels illegally despite repeated notices. A police spokesperson stated: "Those students who resisted this peaceful process have been shifted from the hostel, and now legal action will be taken."

The university administration clarified that the hostels had been officially scheduled for temporary closure from 13 July 2025 due to annual maintenance, renovation, and repair work. While most students complied and vacated the premises, some remained past the deadline, prompting intervention by the district administration. Hostels numbered 6, 8, 9, and 11 were fully cleared during Tuesday's operation. A statement from the university highlighted that the Islamabad High Court had already dismissed a petition by the students against the hostel closures, affirming the university's autonomy under the Quaid-i-Azam University Act 1973.

27 killed in Russia's attacks on Ukraine

KYIV (AP): At least 27 people, including 16 inmates and a pregnant woman, have been killed in Russian air attacks on mostly southeastern Ukraine, according to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and regional officials.

The attacks came overnight on Tuesday, a day after United States President Donald Trump set Russia a new deadline of "10 or 12 days" to reach a peace deal in its war on Ukraine or face tough new sanctions, shortening a 50-day deadline he had set earlier this month. Ivan Fedorov, head of the military administration in Zaporizhia, on Tuesday said Russia carried out eight overnight air attacks on his region alone, hitting a prison near the city of Zaporizhzhia.

"Russia bombed a penal colony near Zaporizhzhia overnight – 16 killed, 35 injured. Civilians continue to suffer. Another blatant war crime," Fedorov said in English on X. Zelenskyy said a pregnant woman was among three people killed in a Russian missile attack on the city of Kamianske in the central region of Dnipropetrovsk, targeting a hospital.

Also in Dnipropetrovsk, a person was killed and several were wounded in the Synelnykove district, according to Serhiy Lysak, head of the Dnipropetrovsk military administration. In a separate attack on the village of Velyka Mykhailivka in the Odesa region on Monday night, a "75-year-old woman was killed. A 68-year-old man was wounded. A private house was damaged," Lysak said on Telegram. Russian forces also struck a grocery store in a village in the northeastern Kharkiv region, killing five and wounding three civilians, police were cited as saying by the AP news agency.

Authorities in the southern Kherson region reported one civilian killed and three wounded over the past 24 hours, the AP report said. Reacting to the developments, Andriy Yermak, a senior aide to President Zelenskyy, wrote on social media: "Russian President [Vladimir] Putin's regime, which also issues threats against the United States through some of its mouthpieces, must face economic and military blows that strip it of the capacity to wage war." Ukraine's Air Force said Russia had launched 37 drones and two missiles overnight, adding that its air defence systems had downed 32 of the drones.

In Russia's southern Rostov region, multiple Ukrainian drone attacks killed one person, according to Russian authorities. Russia's Ministry of Defence, which reports only how many drones were destroyed, not how many Ukraine launched, said its defence units downed a total of 74 drones overnight, including 22 over the Rostov region.

"A car was damaged on Ostrovsky Street. Unfortunately, the driver who was in it died," Yuri Slyusar, acting governor of the Rostov region, said in a post on Telegram. He said the attack had targeted several places, including Salsk, Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, Volgogradsk, Bokovsky, Tarasovsky and Slyusar.

Drone debris also fell on Salsk train station, damaging a freight train and passenger train, with passengers being evacuated, Slyusar added. Power was disrupted at the station, forcing the suspension of train traffic, Russian Railways said on Telegram. No casualties were reported. There was no immediate comment from Ukraine, which has often said its attacks inside Russia are in response to Moscow's relentless strikes on Ukraine.

On Tuesday, Zelenskyy signed a law allowing Ukrainian people over age 60 to join the armed forces, which are struggling to find recruits as the Russian invasion drags through its fourth year. The law will allow them to sign a one-year contract for non-combat roles if they pass medical tests, according to an explanatory note on the parliament's website. Both sides deny targeting civilians in their attacks, but thousands of civilians have been killed in the conflict, the majority of them Ukrainian.

Kyiv has been trying to repel Russia's summer offensive, which has made new advances into areas on the eastern front line largely spared since the start of the 2022 offensive. Over the weekend, the Russian army said its forces had captured the settlement of Maliivka in Dnipropetrovsk, weeks after it seized the first village in the region – claims Kyiv has contested. Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday signed a law allowing Ukrainian people over 60 to join the armed forces, which are struggling to find recruits as the Russian invasion drags through a fourth year.

The law will allow them to sign a one-year contract for non-combat roles if they pass medical tests, according to an explanatory note on the parliament's website. "A significant number of citizens aged 60 and over have expressed a strong desire to voluntarily join the defense of the state," the note said. "It is necessary to involve a larger number of people who wish to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine," it said. Ukraine has launched several initiatives to attract more people into the armed forces — including with a one-year contract and financial incentives for people aged 18 to 24. It also lowered the mobilization age from 27 to 25 in April 2024 — resisting calls from the US administration to lower it to 18.

PHC approached against misuse of public resources

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A petition has been filed in the Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking a ban on the use of public resources for protests by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government against the federal government. The petition, filed by citizen Tariq through his lawyer Muhammad Hamdan Advocate, requests the court to direct the provincial government to refrain from using public resources and machinery for protests.

The petition argues that protests, including long

marches, disrupt the normal life of citizens, cause traffic congestion, and affect businesses. It also claims that the use of public resources for protests is not only unlawful but also harms the national economy. The petition highlights that the Constitution and law provide a clear procedure for protests, but members of the assemblies are participating in protests and using public resources.

The petition emphasizes that public resources are not the personal property of the government but are funded by taxpayers' money. It argues that the

government cannot use taxpayers' money for party purposes. The petition requests the court to restrain provincial and national members of the assemblies from participating in unlawful protests.

The petition seeks the court's intervention to stop the misuse of public resources for protests and to ensure that members of the assemblies follow the law and Constitution. The petitioner argues that the use of government resources for protests is not only unconstitutional but also unfair to taxpayers.

60,000 Palestinians killed in Israel-Hamas war

GAZA STRIP (AP): Over 60,000 Palestinians have been killed in the 21-month Israel-Hamas war, Gaza's Health Ministry said Tuesday. Israeli strikes overnight killed more than two dozen people, mostly women and children, according to health officials.

Israel's offensive, launched in response to Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack, has destroyed vast areas of Gaza, displaced around 90 percent of the population and fueled a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Experts warned Tuesday that the territory of some 2 million Palestinians is on the brink of famine after Israeli restrictions and a breakdown of security have made it nearly impossible to safely deliver aid.

The Health Ministry, part of the Hamas-run government, said the death toll has climbed to 60,034, with 145,870 others wounded since the war started. The victims include 18,592 children and 9,782 women. Together, they make up nearly half the dead. The ministry is staffed by medical professionals. The United Nations and other independent experts view its figures as the most reliable count of casualties. Israel has disputed its figures but has not provided its own account of casualties.

Airstrikes on tents housing displaced people in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp late Monday killed 30 people, including 12 children and 14 women, according to Al-Awda Hospital. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli

military. Israel says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, saying the militants operate in populated areas. The military said it targeted Hamas military infrastructure over the past day, including rocket launchers, weapons storage facilities and tunnels.

Hospital officials meanwhile said they received the bodies of an additional 33 people who were killed by gunfire around an aid convoy in southern Gaza on Monday, bringing the toll to 58. Witnesses said Israeli forces fired toward the crowd. Another 14 Palestinians were killed on Tuesday near a site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, an Israeli-backed American contractor, in central Gaza, according to local hospitals. GHF said there were no violent incidents near its sites on Tuesday.

The Israeli military did not respond to requests for comment on either shooting. Over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire while seeking aid since May, according to witnesses, health officials and the UN human rights office. Israel, which controls large areas of Gaza where aid is distributed, says it has only fired warning shots at those who approach its forces. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, the foremost international authority on food crises, said Gaza has teetered on the brink of famine for two years. But it said recent developments, including strict Israeli restrictions,

have "dramatically worsened" the situation.

"The facts are in — and they are undeniable," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. "Palestinians in Gaza are enduring a humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions... The trickle of aid must become an ocean." Under mounting international pressure, Israel announced a series of measures over the weekend to increase the flow of aid, including expanded humanitarian corridors and international aid drops. UN officials say there has so far been little change on the ground and far more is needed.

Air force cargo planes from Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have dropped aid over Gaza in recent days, and France and Germany have announced plans to join that effort. But Associated Press reporters in Gaza said much of the aid has so far fallen in so-called red zones that Israel has ordered people to evacuate from, and that some landed in the Mediterranean Sea.

UN agencies and aid groups have long expressed skepticism about airdrops over Gaza, saying they are far costlier and deliver much less aid than land shipments. Parcels can land on desperate crowds, causing injuries or deaths, and can also spark deadly stampedes as thousands try to reach them. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar denied Israel was deliberately starving Gaza and said the focus on hunger was part of a "distorted campaign of international pressure."