

**Edhi remembered**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Abdul Sattar Edhi, Pakistan's most revered humanitarian was remembered on Tuesday on his ninth death anniversary, as media platforms reflected on his profound impact and enduring legacy. A report said that Abdul Sattar Edhi's legacy continues to inspire generations, with his foundation still actively serving the poor and vulnerable across Pakistan.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

**Bomb defused in Lakki**  
**F.P. Report**

LAKKI MARWAT: A potential tragedy was narrowly prevented in the district of Lakki Marwat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where an 18-kg improvised explosive device was successfully neutralized by the Bomb Disposal Squad personnel on Tuesday. The powerful IED was skillfully planted by unknown individuals on a dirt path in Mohalla Machan Khel which is located in the middle of Lakki city.

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 158

Regd. No. 241

MUHARRAM 13 1447 -- WEDNESDAY, JULY 09 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

# ICC issues warrants for Taliban leaders

— seeks arrest of Taliban supremo, Afghan chief justice over persecution of women

THE HAGUE (AFP): The International Criminal Court (ICC) on Tuesday issued arrest warrants for senior Taliban leaders in Afghanistan over the persecution of women, a crime against humanity.

ICC judges said in a statement there were "reasonable grounds" to suspect Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and chief justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani "have committed ... the crime against humanity of persecution ... on gender grounds". "While the Taliban have imposed certain rules and prohibitions on the population as a whole, they have specifically targeted girls and women by reason of their gender, depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms," the court said.

The court said the alleged crimes had been committed between August 15, 2021, when the Taliban seized power and continued until at least January 20, 2025. The Taliban had "severely deprived" girls and women of the rights to education, privacy and family life and the freedoms of movement, expression, thought, conscience and religion, ICC judges said.

"In addition, other persons were targeted because certain expressions of sexuality and/or gender identity were regarded as inconsistent with the Taliban's policy on gender." The ICC, based in The Hague, was set up to rule on the world's worst crimes such as war



crimes and crimes against humanity.

It has no police force of its own and relies on its member states to carry out its arrest warrants - with mixed results. In theory, this means that anyone subject to an ICC arrest warrant cannot travel to a member state for fear of being detained. After sweeping back to power in August 2021, the Taliban authorities pledged a softer rule than their first stint in power from 1996 to 2001.

But they quickly imposed restrictions on women and girls that the United Nations has labelled "gender apartheid". Edicts in line with their strict interpretation of Islamic law handed down by Akhundzada, who rules by decree from the movement's birthplace in southern Kandahar, have squeezed women and girls from public life.

The Taliban government barred girls from secondary school and women from university in the first 18 months after they ousted the US-backed government, making Afghanistan the only country in the

world to impose such bans. Authorities imposed restrictions on women working for non-governmental groups and other employment, with thousands of women losing government jobs — or being paid to stay home.

Beauty salons have been closed and women blocked from visiting public parks, gyms and baths as well as travelling long distances without a male chaperone. A "vice and virtue" law announced last summer ordered women not to sing or recite poetry in public and for their voices and bodies to be "concealed" outside the home. When requesting the arrest warrants in January, chief prosecutor Karim Khan said Afghan women and girls, as well as the LGBTQ community, were facing "an unprecedented, unconscionable and ongoing persecution by the Taliban".

"Our action signals that the status quo for women and girls in Afghanistan is not acceptable," he added. Khan warned at the time he would soon be seeking additional warrants for other Taliban officials.

## Imran urges workers to focus on movement for freedom

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: Aleema Khan, sister of PTI founder Imran Khan, has revealed that Imran has urged all party members to focus entirely on the movement for freedom and the rule of law.

She added that his sons, Suleman and Qasim, also wish to take part in the campaign. In an interaction with the media outside Adiala Jail, Aleema Khan said: "The [PTI] founder has made it clear — the time has come for all Pakistanis to stand up for their freedom and for justice. He said everyone must rise against oppression, and we will also step out and join the movement."

She added that Imran Khan believes those who cannot shoulder the responsibility of the movement should step down from their positions. "There was no talk of negotiations. Right now, it's all about standing firm and sticking together," Aleema clarified. According to her, plans are being made for the return of Imran Khan's sons, Suleman and Qasim, to Pakistan. "They will also raise their voices for human rights violations in Pakistan while in the US," she added.

Aleema Khan expressed frustration over distractions that emerge whenever a movement gains momentum. "Every time a movement kicks off, people start talking nonsense. But the founder has given the green signal — the movement must move forward," she said. She further stated that Imran Khan has said all other doors are now closed, and the only way forward is the movement. "The leadership of PTI will lead the campaign, and it is up to them to announce the date," she concluded.

**Imran, Bushra Bibi seek urgent appeal hearing:** Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and his spouse, Bushra Bibi, have requested an expedited hearing of their appeals to suspend their sentences in the Al-Qadir Trust case, involving 190 million pounds. The couple submitted applications to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday, seeking an urgent review. The last proceeding in this prominent case occurred on June 26, and no subsequent hearing has been planned. The latest filings, submitted through Barrister Salman Safdar, urge the court to promptly schedule the appeals.

## Court orders blocking of YouTube channels

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad district court ordered the blocking of YouTube channels of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and 26 others over alleged anti-state propaganda, raising concerns about online censorship. Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah issued the order Tuesday, following a petition by the FIA's Cyber Crime Wing.

The court's directive follows an inquiry initiated by the FIA on June 2, 2025, into the dissemination of content considered detrimental to the nation. After reviewing the evidence, the court determined the material could violate PECA and the Pakistan Penal Code.

The court instructed YouTube to block the 27 channels, including those of prominent figures like journalists Matuallah Jan, Sabir Shakir, Abdul Qadir, Haider Mehdi, Imran Riaz, Orya Maqbool Jan, Makhdoom Shahabuddin, Asad Toor, and Siddique Jan. The FIA's petition asserted these channels spread disinformation and false reports against Pakistan, causing public disorder, animosity, and even instigating assaults on security agencies.



ISLAMABAD: MNA Saad Wasim Akhtar Sheikh called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

# PM vows inclusive eco growth through private sector dialogue

**Saqib Mushtaq**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday held a high-level meeting with top industrialists and business leaders from key sectors of the economy, reaffirming his government's commitment to economic stability, export-led growth, and private sector facilitation.

During the interactive session, business leaders lauded the prime minister's leadership and his economic team's persistent efforts in stabilizing the country's financial outlook, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. They particularly commended the government for successfully concluding a critical IMF agreement and introducing a pro-business budget aimed at ease of doing business.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the participants and underscored the importance of collaborative policy-making. "The credit for economic stabilization goes to the tireless efforts of our team," he said, adding, "Our next objective is to steer Pakistan toward sustained growth, enhance exports, create jobs, and attract foreign investment." He emphasized that future development would be driven by domestic resource mobilization, reducing dependency, and making Pakistan economically self-reliant. "The suggestions of the business community are vital for shaping policies that serve the national interest," he noted.

The Prime Minister announced that he would hold monthly meetings with the business community to ensure regular consultation and collective ownership of economic reforms. "We will consult private sec-

tor experts across every domain. This long journey of progress demands mutual effort and determination," he stated. The industrialists acknowledged the government's budget as business-friendly and aligned with industry needs. They appreciated ongoing reforms in taxation and customs clearance systems, particularly improvements in FBR's digitalization and transparency at ports.

They also stressed the need for enhanced facilitation for exporters and investors, as well as policy alignment with the needs of businesses and industries to boost foreign direct investment. During the meeting, the officials briefed participants on several government initiatives underway including digitization of FBR to simplify taxation and ease investment processes, strategic privatization drive to reduce government footprint, introduction of a modern IT ecosystem for the first time in Pakistan's history, use of AI in agriculture and other key sectors and expansion of ports and activation of Gwadar through private sector consultation and, rapid deployment of modern technologies, quality seed, and smart machinery in agriculture.

The meeting was attended by prominent figures from the textile, agriculture, cement, and IT sectors. Federal Ministers Rana Tanveer Hussain, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Sardar Awais Leghari, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Hanif Abbasi, Jind Anwar Chaudhry, PM's Coordinator on Agriculture Ahmad Umair, FBR Chairman, and other senior officials also participated.

**Shehbaz calls for comprehensive action plan to boost agri production:** Prime Minister Muhammad

Shehbaz Sharif asked the relevant authorities to present a comprehensive action plan to boost agricultural production and introduce agriculture reforms in the country.

He was chairing a review meeting on the performance of the agriculture sector and ongoing reforms. "Improving agricultural productivity, value addition, and increasing exports of agricultural products are top priorities of the government," the prime minister said.

He directed that a comprehensive short- and long-term action plan be presented for modern agricultural machinery, quality seeds, geographical planning of crops, and provision of easy loans to farmers. To enhance per-acre crop yield, the prime minister directed that agricultural research centers be made more effective. He further directed that modern research be ensured through public-private partnerships in agricultural research centers.

The prime minister emphasized that the government should benefit from internationally renowned experts for the effective use of artificial intelligence and modern technology in agriculture. He also instructed that an action plan be presented for the development of small and medium-sized agro-industries to enable the value addition of agricultural commodities and enhance export-ready products. To promote cultivation of profitable crops and make Pakistan self-sufficient in food security, the prime minister directed that all necessary guidance and support be provided to farmers. He stressed the importance of consultation with farmers and other stakeholders for policy recommendations.

# Trump hosts Netanyahu in push for Gaza deal

WASHINGTON (AFP): US President Donald Trump hosted Benjamin Netanyahu for dinner at the White House as he pressed the Israeli prime minister to end the devastating Gaza war. Netanyahu's third visit since Trump's return to power comes at a crucial time, with the US president hoping to capitalize on the momentum from a recent truce between Israel and Iran.

"I don't think there is a hold up. I think things are going along very well," Trump told reporters at the start of the dinner when asked what was preventing a peace deal. Sitting on the opposite side of a long table from the Israeli leader, Trump also voiced confidence that Hamas was willing to end the conflict in Gaza, which is entering its 22nd month. "They want to meet and they want to have that ceasefire," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked if clashes involving Israeli soldiers would derail talks.

The meeting in Washington came as Israel and Hamas held a second day of indirect talks in Qatar on an elusive ceasefire. Netanyahu meanwhile said he had nominated Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize — the US president's long-held goal — presenting him with a letter he sent to the prize committee. "He's forging peace as we speak, in one country, in one region after the other," Netanyahu said.

But Netanyahu was more cagey on peace with the Palestinians and ruled out a full Palestinian state, saying that Israel will 'always' keep security control over the Gaza Strip. "Now, people will say it's not a complete state, it's not a state. We don't care," Netanyahu said. Several dozen protesters gathered near the White House as Trump and Netanyahu met, chanting slogans accusing the Israeli prime minister of "genocide."

Trump has strongly backed key US ally and fellow conservative Netanyahu, lending US support in Israel's recent war by bombing Iran's key nuclear facilities. But at the same time he has increasingly pushed for an end to what he called the "hell" in Gaza. Trump said on Sunday he believes there is a "good chance" of an agreement this coming week.

"The utmost priority for the president right now in the Middle East is to end the war in Gaza and to return all of the hostages," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said. Leavitt said Trump wanted Hamas to agree to a US-brokered proposal "right now" after Israel backed the plan for a ceasefire and the release of hostages held in Gaza in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

The latest round of negotiations on the war in Gaza began on Sunday in Doha, with representatives seated in different rooms in the same building. Monday's talks ended with "no breakthrough," a Palestinian official familiar with the negotiations told AFP. The Hamas and Israeli delegations were

due to resume talks later. Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff was due to join the talks in Doha later this week in an effort to get a ceasefire over the line.

The US proposal included a 60-day truce, during which Hamas would release 10 living hostages and several bodies in exchange for Palestinians detained by Israel, two Palestinian sources close to the discussions had earlier told AFP. The group was also demanding certain conditions for Israel's withdrawal, guarantees against a resumption of fighting during negotiations, and the return of the UN-led aid distribution system, they said.

In Gaza, the civil defense agency said Israeli forces killed at least 12 people on Monday, including six in a clinic housing people displaced by the war. Of the 251 hostages taken by Palestinian militants during the October 2023 Hamas attack that triggered the war, 49 are still being held in Gaza, including 27 the Israeli military says are dead.

The war has created dire humanitarian conditions for the more than two million people in the Gaza Strip. Hamas's October 2023 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed at least 57,523 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The UN considers the figures reliable.

## PHC suspends ECP's reserved seats order

**Hamayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court on Tuesday declared the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) notifications regarding reserved seats allocation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa null and void. Hearing a plea filed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the PHC bench directed the ECP to reassess the allocation of the specially designated seats for minorities and women.

The court also directed the election watchdog to hold consultations with all candidates and political parties within 10 days to determine the new allocation. The court issued a two-page reserved decision, nullifying the ECP's notifications dated March 4 and March 26, 2024.

The PML-N had challenged the allocation of the seats for women and minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, maintaining an "inequitable" allocation of the seats by the ECP. Submitted through Barrister Saqib Raza, the PML-N's petition asserted that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (F) was allocated 10 reserved seats based on its seven general seats.

The petition read that the PML-N also secured seven general seats in the KP Assembly yet it was allocated only seven reserved seats for an identical number of general seats as JUI-F. The party maintained that it originally won six general seats in the province, with one independent joining within three days of the election—totaling seven.

# Saif says terrorism can't be defeated by force alone

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, paid a detailed visit to the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Peshawar. He was received by Additional Inspector General of CTD, Mr. Shaukat Abbas, who briefed him on the department's upgraded capabilities, new technologies, and evolving counter-terrorism strategies.

During the visit, Barrister Dr. Saif visited multiple critical units, some of them newly established, including the Forensic Lab, Data Mining Section, Ballistics Unit, Digital Examination Unit, Data Collection Centre, Crime Scene Unit, Investigation Wing, and Interrogation Section. He commended the CTD for its modernization efforts and emphasized the importance of institutional capacity building in maintaining long term internal security.

While addressing CTD officials, Barrister Dr. Saif

elaborated on the evolving nature of terrorism, stressing that the kinetic approach i.e., use of force and armed operations, though necessary, is not sufficient to eliminate the roots of extremism and insurgency. "Kinetic action may give us short term tactical gains, but it is not a sustainable solution. Terrorism is not just an act of violence, it is an ideologically motivated activity that often stems from deeply rooted social, psychological, and political grievances," he said.

Citing global examples, he pointed out that purely force-based responses have rarely succeeded in permanently eradicating terrorism. "Sri Lanka is perhaps the only example where terrorism was militarily neutralized, but even there it was accompanied by targeted development reforms and political containment of ethnic grievances," he noted.

Barrister Dr. Saif argued that radicalization, the ideological process by which individuals are drawn into extremism, is the real challenge. "We must understand that de-radicalization is pos-

sible, but there is no such thing as 'de-terrorism' as a standalone action. Unless we address the factors that lead people to radicalize, extremist narratives will continue to regenerate," he said.

He emphasized the need to move from a reactionary to a proactive and holistic approach by integrating counter radicalization programs, community engagement, education reforms, and negotiation where possible. "We must engage, not appease, but meaningfully engage those elements that are still redeemable. The idea is not to compromise on principles, but to isolate the hardcore elements by winning over the rank and file who may have been misled or coerced," he stated.

Additional IG Shaukat Abbas informed the Advisor that the CTD is actively shifting its strategic posture from traditional 'warfare' to 'lawfare', focusing on the application of legal frameworks, evidence based investigations, and judicial prosecutions as a means to dismantle terrorist infrastructure.





# Sindh Cabinet approves projects for water, agriculture, industry infrastructure uplift

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, presiding over a meeting of the provincial cabinet at the CM House, approved a series of transformative development initiatives aimed at tackling Karachi's water crisis, strengthening the agriculture sector, boosting industrial growth, and enhancing regional connectivity.

The cabinet deliberated on 52 agenda items, endorsing most of them with strategic directives for immediate implementation. The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, advisors, special assistants, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, and senior officers from concerned departments. To address Karachi's worsening water shortages particularly in DHA, where residents receive only 4-5 MGD against growing demand the cabinet approved a Rs 10.56 billion interest-free loan for the Water and Sewerage Corporation (W&SC).

The project entails laying a 36-km dedicated pipeline from Dumlottee to DHA, along with the construction of a pumping station, forebay, and filtration plant. Approved by KW&SC's board in February 2025, the CM directed the authority to complete the project within

11 months, stressing the urgency of long-term water solutions for the city's rapidly expanding population. The cabinet endorsed the Sindh Agricultural Income Tax Rules, 2025, introducing clear procedures for registration, e-filing, and record-keeping by agricultural income earners. Under the new rules: Agricultural owners must register with the Sindh Revenue Board using Form AIT-01. Tax returns (Form AIT-03) must be submitted with evidence of payment. Detailed records must be maintained in Urdu, Sindhi, or English. Losses in calamity-affected areas can be carried forward to subsequent years.

A subcommittee comprising the ministers of agriculture, law, and works & services was formed to finalise the draft for enforcement, aiming to modernise compliance and boost provincial revenue. E-Stamp Rules Amended for Paperless Property Registration: In a move towards digital governance, the cabinet approved an amendment to the Sindh E-Stamp Rules, 2020, eliminating the requirement for physical e-stamp paper in areas with an operational e-registration system.

The amendment enables digital veri-

fication of stamp duty payments and ensures integration between the e-stamping and e-registration systems. Already active in 51 sub-registrar offices, this paperless initiative will streamline property transactions and reduce processing times.

The cabinet increased the Flood Emergency Response Component (FERC) allocation from Rs 21.56 billion to Rs 27.67 billion, benefiting 151,147 verified farmers impacted by the 2022 floods. So far, three disbursement phases have taken place, with Rs 6.1 billion now allocated for the remaining verified farmers. An additional Rs 2.37 billion in savings will be channelled through the Benazir Hari Card to further support the agriculture sector.

The cabinet authorised the Agriculture Department to sign an MoU with Sindh Bank for launching the Benazir Hari Card. This targeted initiative will provide subsidies on agricultural inputs, Soft agricultural loans, Disaster-related cash support. Priority access to solar tube wells and crop insurance. Registration has begun, with 237,125 farmers already enrolled. Of these, 88,871 applications have been

verified for onward processing and card issuance. Rs 45 Billion Railway Link to Boost Thar Coal Transport: To accelerate coal transport from Thar to the port, the cabinet approved Rs 45.02 billion for a railway project linking Islamkot (Thar Coalfield) to Chorr, as part of a joint venture with the federal government.

The project includes a 105-km rail line, a 9-km dual track from Bin Qasim to Port Qasim, and a coal unloading terminal. The federal government has already allocated Rs 7 billion in PSDP 2025-26, which the CM approved for immediate release. This two-year project will strengthen Pakistan's energy infrastructure and stimulate industrial growth in the region. To generate employment and attract private investment, the cabinet approved the establishment of New Industrial Enclaves on 951 acres in District Hyderabad under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. Over 55,000 jobs (direct and indirect) are expected. Advisory consultants have been hired for feasibility and transaction structuring.

The cabinet directed the transfer of land to the Sindh Economic Zones

Management Company (SEZMC), with the Finance Department to pay Rs 3.54 billion for the land.

The cabinet approved the allocation of 248 acres for the Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway (M-6), valued at Rs 667.23 million. Additional reservations were authorised across Jamshoro, Matiari, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, and Naushahro Feroze, subject to departmental NOCs.

The Chief Minister also authorised bridge financing if necessary to ensure the smooth implementation of this vital national connectivity project.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah reaffirmed his government's dedication to inclusive and sustainable development, describing the approved initiatives as cornerstones of progress that address both immediate needs and long-term resilience. He instructed all departments to guarantee transparent execution, interdepartmental coordination, and the timely completion of approved projects. These sweeping decisions highlight the Sindh government's strategy to combine infrastructure development with social equity and economic opportunity.

## Sindh, Punjab labor codes draw ire from rights groups

KARACHI (PPI): Human rights, journalist, and labor organizations today sharply criticized proposed labor codes in Sindh and Punjab provinces, calling them regressive and anti-worker.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCPC), the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), and the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) issued a joint statement condemning the codes. The groups allege the codes, drafted with the International Labour Organization (ILO), violate ILO Convention 144 by bypassing required tripartite consultations. They claim the codes aim to dismantle established worker protections, including eliminating permanent positions for permanent work, legitimizing contract labor, and complicating worker classifications.

HRCPC Chairperson Asad Butt, PFUJ President Afzal Butt and Secretary General Arshad Ansari, and NTUF General Secretary Nasir Mansoor expressed specific fears about increased exploitation of workers, journalists, and other professionals in the two provinces. They believe the codes will erode employee rights and dignity.

The organizations are demanding the government withdraw the proposed codes and convene a tripartite labor conference for collaborative development of labor laws and policies. They insist the government uphold worker and citizen rights and guarantee a consultative, democratic policymaking process. The Joint Action Committee will meet to plan further actions, including public awareness campaigns and other measures to safeguard worker, journalist, and citizen rights.

## Justice Muhammad Junaid takes oath as new CJ SHC

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Governor Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori administered the oath office to Mr. Justice Muhammad Junaid Ghaffar as the Chief Justice (CJ) of the Sindh High Court (SHC) at the venue for the first time, where father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had taken oath of the office of Governor General, in Governor House.

Sindh Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Senior Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar, Mayor of Karachi Murtaza Wahab, and some MPAs of the Sindh Assembly attended the ceremony.

The simple and impressive oath-taking ceremony was managed by the Sindh Chief Secretary Syed Asif Haider Shah. On the occasion, Consul Generals of Turkey, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq, Japan,

Bangladesh and other countries to Karachi also attended the ceremony. Sindh High Court Bar, lawyers and judges, IGP Sindh and renowned businessmen and dignitaries of the city participated in the oath-taking ceremony in large numbers.

**Governor Pledges Aid For Lyari Building Collapse Victims:** Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori visited the site of a collapsed building in Lyari today and pledged support for the affected residents.

Upon his arrival, Tessori was greeted by victims chanting slogans of support, expressing their faith in him. They told him he was the first official to visit and listen to their concerns. Tessori assured them of his commitment to their well-being, establishing a helpline at the Governor's House for direct communication.

Tessori announced that each affected family would

receive an 80-square-yard plot of land as a gesture of support. He further committed to addressing food shortages by providing rations to those in need. Acknowledging the human and financial toll of the disaster, he stressed the need for systemic reform and accountability. Tessori welcomed the Sindh Chief Minister's committee investigating the incident.

The Governor urged the provincial government to offer immediate relief by covering six months' rent for displaced families and pledged to formally request this action in writing. He also promised to engage with residents evacuated from other buildings in the area. Responding to a question, Tessori emphasized the need for systemic change, reiterating his commitment as Governor to advocate for such reforms. He expressed sincere condolences for the tragedy and vowed to pursue justice for the victims.



KARACHI: Handing over of large quantity of liquor seized during anti-narcotics operation by Pakistan Navy to Directorate of Excise, Taxation & Anti-Narcotics.

## Pakistan Navy seizes Rs 350 million worth of liquor

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy, in collaboration with Directorate of Excise, Taxation & Anti-Narcotics (South Zone Balochistan) and Joint Maritime Information Centre (JMICC), seized a large quantity of liquor during a counter-narcotics operation off the coast of Gadani. The value of the seized consignment is estimated at Rs 350 million.

The consignment was being smuggled into Pakistan via sea routes from international origins. The confiscated liquor has been handed over to Directorate of Excise, Taxation & Anti-Narcotics (South Zone Balochistan) for further legal proceedings.

## PA Speaker emphasizes constitutional role, urges end to parliamentary disorder

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has said that the Speaker's role is rooted in constitutional responsibility, impartiality, and the maintenance of parliamentary discipline. He was addressing a gathering of university students at the historic Old Punjab Assembly Hall, here on Tuesday. "The Speaker's duty is to conduct the proceedings of the House strictly in accordance with the Constitution, the law, and the Assembly's rules of procedure," he said. "As Speaker, I am the custodian of the House's decorum and discipline."

Responding to criti-

cism of his recent decisions, the Speaker said, "There is often debate about whether the Speaker should take sides. My role has repeatedly been misrepresented. I take every decision within the constitutional and legal framework."

Clarifying the legal scope of his authority, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan referred to Article 63(2) of the Constitution, which empowers the Speaker to initiate action if a member violates the Constitution. "When members resort to abusive language, make obscene gestures, or harass female members, it becomes my constitutional obligation to act," he added.

Commenting on the recent uproar during the budget session, the Speaker described it as a serious violation of the public's right to transparency. "Disrupting the Finance Minister's speech, tearing budget books, and attempting to attack the Speaker's chair, this kind of behavior has continued for 22 years. It must stop," he asserted.

The Speaker clarified that he is not aligned with any political party but is focused on safeguarding parliamentary values and norms. He noted that under his leadership, the opposition was given representation in standing committees, a courtesy

not extended during Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi's tenure.

During the recent budget session, he revealed, the opposition submitted 37 applications, 12 of which were solely aimed at causing disruption. Despite this, the Speaker expressed his willingness to mediate and facilitate dialogue between the government and opposition for the country's greater good.

"It is justice and adherence to the Constitution that will ensure Pakistan's stability," he said. "My role is clearly defined in the Constitution, and as long as I serve as Speaker, I will continue to uphold it," he added.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori administers the oath of office to Justice Muhammad Junaid Ghaffar as Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court.

## IGP reviews development projects in police training centers

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon, chaired a high-level meeting at the Central Police Office Karachi to assess the ongoing development and infrastructure projects at various police training centers across Sindh.

The meeting also included a videolink conference with principals of police training facilities in different districts, said a news release on Tuesday.

The session was attended in person by Additional IGP Training, DIGPs from Headquarters, Establishment, Training, and Finance branches, as well as AIGPs of Estate Management and Administration. Principals of Razzaqabad and Saeedabad training schools participated directly, while those from Sakrand, Shahdampur, Hyderabad, Larkana, and Khairpur joined via video link.

During the briefing, the principals provided detailed updates on development progress at their respective centers. DIGP - Training informed the participants that top priority is being given to ensuring essential facilities for trainees, including clean drinking water, quality meals, adequate lodging, and healthcare services. These facilities are also being extended to personnel from other government departments undergoing training at these centers.

It was further noted that gyms, medical dispensaries, kitchens, and RO water plants have been restored and made operational in multiple training centers. Acknowledging the

efforts of staff, IGP Sindh announced a reward equivalent to one month's basic salary for the principals and teams at Razzaqabad and Hyderabad Training Centers for completing developmental work ahead of schedule. He also announced cash prizes and certificates for Razzaqabad trainees who secured first position at the national level.

IGP Sindh instructed the Additional IGP Training to personally visit all training centers in Sindh, assess the progress of current development work, review suggestions provided by the principals, and compile a detailed report. He also emphasized the need to incorporate new proposals into the next financial year's development plan.

"Our top priority is to establish new hostels and renovate the existing ones to improve accommodation standards. The ultimate goal is to raise the infrastructure and training quality of our police centers to meet national and eventually international standards," said Ghulam Nabi Memon. He also praised the inclusion of extracurricular and sports activities during training, calling them "healthy initiatives" that contribute to physical and mental well-being.

## Edhi remembered on his 9th death anniversary

KARACHI (APP): The 9th death anniversary of renowned humanitarian and philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi was observed on Monday at the Edhi Foundation headquarters in the Mithadar area of Karachi.

A Quran Khwani and Fateha were held to honor the legacy of Edhi, attended by Faisal Edhi — son of the late humanitarian and current head of the Edhi Foundation — along with his wife, sister, hundreds of foundation workers, employees, and admirers.

Participants paid rich tribute to Edhi's lifelong commitment to serving humanity, recalling his pioneering

efforts in establishing Pakistan's largest welfare network.

Born on February 28, 1928, in Gujarat, British India, Edhi began his welfare services in Pakistan in 1951. Over the decades, he established the world's largest volunteer ambulance service, along with numerous shelters for the homeless, orphanages, and animal care centers across the country.

His humanitarian work earned him several prestigious national and international awards, including the Asian Nobel, Lenin Peace Prize, and Pakistan's highest civilian honor, Nishan-e-Imtiaz.

## Punjab police arrest 22

LAHORE (APP): Punjab police conducted 335 combing operations targeting criminal elements, during which 10,406 individuals were screened and 22 suspicious persons were taken into custody over the past 24 hours across the province.

According to a Punjab police spokesperson, 21 search-and-sweep operations were carried out, during which over 2,360 individuals were interrogated and two suspects were detained. In targeted actions, police also apprehended 86 proclaimed offenders involved in heinous crimes, 43 court absconders, and 20 habitual criminals.

A significant quantity of illegal weapons and ammunition was recovered from the possession of suspects and criminals during the operations. Moreover, eight criminals were neutralized, while another eight were arrested in injured condition during encounters, the spokesperson added.

Inspector General of Police, Punjab, Dr Usman Anwar has directed that search, sweep, and combing operations will continue across the province during Muharram to apprehend anti-state and criminal elements and to ensure law and order.

## Five officers of Prisons dept transferred

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Home department has announced transfer and posting of five officers in the Prisons department. According to an official spokesperson, Muhammad Zubair Cheema has been appointed Superintendent of the High-Security Prison in Sahiwal, while Asghar Ali has been posted as Superintendent of Central Jail Gujranwala. Jam Asif Iqbal has been designated as AIG (Industry) at the Inspectorate of Prisons Punjab. Yasir Khan will serve as Superintendent of District Jail Jhelum, replacing Hasan Mujtaba Rizvi, who has been directed to report to the Inspectorate of Prisons. Formal notifications for these transfers and postings have been issued by the Home department.

FAZAIA DEGREE COLLEGE RISALPUR	
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES	
Following vacancies are available at a highly-reputed Fazaia Degree College PAF Base, Risalpur, for competent, experienced and well-qualified candidates, who are seeking for a bright career under an inspiring work environment may apply.	
Description of the Vacancies	Qualification and Experience
<b>Teachers Junior Section, (Female) (FPS-10)</b>	
<b>English, Urdu, Mathematics &amp; Computer, Science</b>	MA / M Sc / MS / BS in the relevant subject, along with B Ed / M Ed degree. Those having additional qualification and experience will be preferred.
<b>Teachers Secondary Section, (Male / Female) (FPS-11)</b>	
<b>Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English, Urdu, Islamiat, Pakistan Studies</b>	MA / M Sc / MS / BS in the relevant subject, along with B Ed / M Ed degree. Those having additional qualification and experience will be preferred.
<b>In-charge Progress Section (FPS-11)</b>	MA / M Sc / MS (Preferably, Computer Literate, Education Instructor (Retd)).
<b>Admin Officer (FPS-11)</b>	Graduate (Preferably, a JCO (Retd) of PAF)
<b>Nurse (Female) (FPS-08)</b>	Diploma / Certificate in Nursing
<b>Ineligibility:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidates, terminated / dismissed prematurely from any post at any Government or Non-governmental institution.</li> <li>Those terminated from any Fazaia institution, due to any allegation / discipline issue.</li> <li>The candidates, with history of any moral turpitude, financial embezzlement or criminal offences. The applicants are to produce NOC of the previous institution in this regard.</li> </ul>	
<b>Pay/ Perks:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The selected candidates will be offered attractive pay package.</li> </ul>	
<b>Note:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a contract-based employment; annually renewable, on the basis of performance and may continue for unlimited time period, on the basis of good performance.</li> <li>Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview.</li> <li>TA / DA will not be admissible for the interview.</li> <li>Concealment of any fact or information may lead to strict disciplinary action, even after the selection.</li> <li>Reputation of finally-selected candidates will be confirmed from his / her previous workplace.</li> <li>Send your applications, addressed to Fazaia Degree College Risalpur, along with resume and attested copies of testimonials, to the given below address, latest by <b>15 July, 2025</b>. Applications received after the due date will not be considered.</li> </ul>	
<b>Postal Address: Fazaia Degree College PAF Base, Riaslpur, KPK</b> <b>Email: fdcris2014@gmail.com, Contact: 0923-631559,</b> <b>Ext: 5511, 5515 and WhatsApp No: 0316-9798689</b>	



# Ten KMU projects worth Rs.10,216m included in ADP

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Vice Chancellor of Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar, Professor Dr. Zia Ul Haq, has expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Chief Minister/Chancellor of KMU, Ali Amin Gandapur, for including several of the university's development projects in the new fiscal year's Annual Development Program (ADP) 2025-26.

Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq stated that the provincial government-particularly the Chief Minister-has always provided guidance and unwavering support to KMU. He added that in a significant step forward, several crucial projects aimed at improving health-care, advancing medical education, and promoting research have been included in the ADP through the KP Health Department.

Key among these projects is the establishment of the KMU General Hospital and Research Center in Peshawar, with an allocation of Rs. 1,050 million. The ongoing KMU Sub-Campus project in Matta, Swat has been granted Rs. 4,000 million. A feasibility study for a Bone Marrow Transplant Center has received Rs. 300 million.

Additionally, Rs. 2,747 million has been allocated for the Kohat Medical College project, including Rs. 150 million earmarked for the current fiscal year. For a new boys' hostel in Kohat, Rs. 600 million has been allocated, of which Rs. 20 million are included in this year's budget.

A Rehabilitation Center for Stroke and Head Injury Patients in Barikot, Swat, will receive Rs. 1,384 million, with Rs. 100 million set aside for this year. The establishment of a KMU campus in DI Khan has been allocated Rs. 30 million in the new development budget.

Moreover, Rs. 35 million has been earmarked for Training Medical Officers (TMOs) in Basic Sciences, and Rs. 70 million for the KMU Public Health Reference Laboratory. Financial support for internships for Physiotherapy and Nursing students is also included in the ADP.

These projects reflect KMU's strong commitment, in collaboration with the provincial government and the Chief Minister, to raising the standards of health, education, and research across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Abbasi chairs monthly Khuli Khachari

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR Advisor Musaddiq Abbasi stated that the purpose of monthly Khuli Khachari sessions is to bridge the gap between applicants and Anti-Corruption Establishment. On Khuli Khachari day, complainants may approach Anti-Corruption offices for updates regarding their complaints.

Regarding complaints about encroachments on graveyards, the Advisor ordered investigations. It was decided that all graveyards in the province will be surveyed jointly with relevant departments, and a detailed report will be prepared. Illegal occupations on graveyard lands will be cleared with support from district administrations.

Detailed inquiries will be conducted into illegally issued No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for unauthorized constructions along river banks in Kamrat, Kaghan, Swat, and other areas. Strict action will be taken against violators. Constructions or encroachments established in violation of the River Protection Act within demarcated zones will also face stringent measures. These directives were issued in response to complaints received during the monthly Khuli Khachari.

Complainants raised issues concerning multiple departments including Local Government, Revenue, and Health. During the Khuli Khachari, Ex Provincial Minister Tamiur Salim Jhagra formally registered a complaint about irregularities and mismanagement in general elections, which he also discussed extensively with media. The complaint demanded action against provincial employees for electoral misconduct, diary number were issued to complainant. As it was addressed to the Advisor to Chief Minister, the matter was referred to the Director of Anti-Corruption Establishment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for prompt submission of a preliminary report.

Concurrent with the provincial Khuli Khachari, regional offices of the Anti-Corruption Establishment also held sessions where citizens presented department-related complaints. All grievances were heard thoroughly, and necessary directives were issued.

## Meeting on youth development held

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Ghulam Saeed, Additional Secretary for Colleges Khaliq Dad, Director of Colleges Faridullah Shah, Director of Youth Affairs Dr. Numan Mujahid and other relevant officials.

On this occasion, potential areas of mutual cooperation between the two departments were reviewed, particularly concerning the professional skills development of graduates and youth under higher education initiatives.

Minister Meena Khan Afridi proposed allocating land in colleges for the establishment of "Jawan Markaz" Youth Centers by the Directorate of Youth Affairs. This initiative aims to facilitate the youth in the creation of dedicated spaces where young individuals can engage in skill-building activities.

Provincial Minister for Sports Syed Fakhar Jihan assured full support, stating that in areas where the Sports Department lacks available land, college premises under the Higher Education Department would be utilized for these centers. He emphasized that these facilities would not only promote creative activities but also provide training aligned with modern trends.

The meeting was attended by Special Secretary Higher Education Ghulam Saeed, Additional Secretary for Colleges Khaliq Dad, Director of Colleges Faridullah Shah, Director of Youth Affairs Dr. Numan Mujahid and other relevant officials.

On this occasion, potential areas of mutual cooperation between the two departments were reviewed, particularly concerning the professional skills development of graduates and youth under higher education initiatives.

Minister Meena Khan Afridi proposed allocating land in colleges for the establishment of "Jawan

## AIPS Asia's 26th Congress concludes memorably

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The 26th Annual Congress of AIPS Asia was held in Hong Kong, China. The Asian Sports Journalists Federation represents 30 member countries across Asia and organizes its annual Congress in a different host country each year. The primary purpose of this gathering is to host delegates from member countries, offering them insights into the development and promotion of sports and the welfare of sports journalists in the host nation. It also serves as a platform to discuss the challenges faced by sports journalists and explore practical solutions.

The opening ceremony was a grand affair, graced by Hong Kong's Secretary for Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Rosanna Law, who was the chief guest. Prominent figures such as Hon. Kenneth Fok, Member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong and Vice President of SF&OC, AIPS President Gianni Merlo, and AIPS Asia President Hee Don Jung were also present. The event began with a vibrant cultural performance and a traditional lion dance that warmly welcomed the guests.

In her address, Rosanna Law welcomed all distinguished guests and highlighted Hong Kong's growing stature as a global sporting hub. She applauded the city's achievements and shared exciting updates, including details about the Kai Tak Sports Park - a world-class sports facility that has already hosted major events like the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens and international concerts.

AIPS President Gianni Merlo, in his remarks, stressed the importance of unity among journalists to advance sports. AIPS Asia President Hee Don Jung expressed his delight at the outstanding organization of the Congress by the Hong Kong Sports Press Association, adding that this 26th Congress would be remembered as a landmark event in AIPS Asia's history.

One of the key highlights of the opening day was the presentation of the 'Legends of Asia Awards'. This award, initiated in 2023, honours veteran journalists who have dedicated their lives to sports journalism. This year, six distinguished journalists received this honour: Mr. Abu Bakar Atan (Malaysia), Mr. Otgonbater Chultem (Mongolia), Mr. NimSeong Fong (Macao), Ms. Ming Chu Chien (Chinese Taipei), and from the host Hong Kong, Mr. Kenneth Fok and Mr. Paul Kwan Kai.

The awardees expressed their gratitude and reaffirmed their commitment to promoting sports through journalism.

Delegates, including various sports reporters from various countries, were given a guided tour of the iconic Kai Tak Stadium - a state-of-the-art venue for international competitions.

The Congress participants and young sports reporters were also taken to the Hong Kong Jockey Club, where they observed horse races. This visit was highly impressive for the participants, who were also briefed in detail about the club. The participants thoroughly enjoyed their time at the Jockey Club.

During the Congress, young reporters participating in the Young Sports Reporters Training Program visited the Hong Kong Sports Training Centre. A colourful ceremony celebrating World Sports Journalists Day was also held aboard a cruise ship. The event was graced by Captain Husain Al-Musallam, Director General of the Olympic Council of Asia and President of World Aquatics, who highlighted Asia's major strides in hosting large-scale sporting events, referencing the legacy of the Asian Games. He appreciated the vital role of sports journalists and commended AIPS Asia's continued efforts.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Education Faisal Khan Tarakai addressing a press conference regarding ongoing projects.

## Justice SM Atique Shah takes oath as Chief Justice PHC

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Justice S.M. Atique Shah has been sworn in as the new Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court in a ceremony held at the Governor House in Peshawar. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, administered the oath, on Tuesday.

Justice S.M. Atique Shah hails from a respected family in Charsadda and was born in 1968. He completed his law degree from the University of Peshawar's Law College and obtained his law license in 1993.

He was appointed as an ad-hoc judge of the Peshawar High Court on March 27, 2017, and later became a permanent judge. He is set to retire on October 11, 2030.

Justice Shah has held prominent positions, including: Elected three times as president and once as general secretary. He Played a significant role in the bar council. Demonstrated leadership skills and expertise in the legal community.

Chief Justice SM Attique Shah recognized as an expert in criminal, civil, and constitutional cases. He introduced various reforms to improve the judicial system, particularly during his tenure as Acting Chief Justice.

The ceremony was attended by dignitaries, including Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Federal Minister for SAFRON Amir Muqam, and other senior officials.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi congratulated Justice Shah and wished him success in his new role.

## PKHA directed to speed up work on uplift schemes

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour Fazal Shakoor Khan on Tuesday issued directives to concerned officers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Highway Authority (PKHA) to expedite work on all developmental schemes of district Charsadda.

The Provincial Minister issued these directives while chairing an important meeting regarding the ongoing development projects in district Charsadda held at his office.

The meeting was attended by Managing Director (PKHA) Sohail Idrees, Director Legal Abid Shafi, Deputy Director Vigilance Farhan Shakeel, Assistant Director Vigilance Khan Wali, and Engineer Rashid Fida.

During the meeting, the provincial minister was given a detailed briefing on the various ongoing development schemes in Charsadda district. It is said in the briefing that repair work from Sardaryab to Farooq Azam Chowk is in progress. Similarly, development work is ongoing on Chooti bridge and Kuladher Chowk flyover.

However, work on Khayali bridge will commence after approval from the PDWP (Provincial Development Working Party).

The minister was also briefed on drainage systems of Mardan Road and Tangi Road, including updates on the work carried out so far.

Similarly, a detailed discussion was held regarding the reasons for the recent increase in rents of PKHA shops located on Peshawar, Tangi, and Mardan Roads.

The labour minister was informed about certain issues of fund shortages and delays in releases for these schemes.

Fazal Shakoor Khan assured that there would be no delay in the release of allocated funds for these projects and emphasized ensuring timely disbursement so that the public can benefit from the development schemes without unnecessary delays. He also directed concerned officers to speed up the pace of work and ensure timely completion of all projects.

## PHC orders release of three salaries to Legal Assistant after termination

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has ruled that it does not have the authority to issue orders on reports submitted to the Supreme Court regarding compliance with court decisions. However, the court has directed the Workers Welfare Board to pay three months' salary to a legal assistant who was terminated from service. The petitioner, Syed Umar, claimed that he was appointed as a legal assistant in 2012 and was wrongfully terminated in May 2023 without receiving his salary since March 2023.

PHC divisional bench comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Sadiq Ali Mohmand ruled that the petitioner is entitled to receive three months' salary from the date of termination, as per the law. However, the court rejected the petitioner's other demands, including the payment of salaries from March 2023 to the date of termination.

The petitioner's services were terminated on July 3, 2023, due to allegations of misusing resources and other irregularities.

An inquiry committee was formed, which recommended the petitioner's removal from service and recovery of Rs 2.2 million.

PHC observed that the petitioner did not raise any objections during his service regarding the allegations made against him, but approached the court after his termination.

## KP to lose Rs100 billion due to FBR Shortfall: Muzzammil

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance Muzzammil Aslam while addressing the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Post-Budget Conference stated that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has collected one thousand two hundred billion rupees less in revenue, which will result in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa receiving Rs. 100 billion less in federal transfers.

He added that last year, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa transferred Rs. 150 billion into the Debt Management Fund, which will yield Rs. 17 billion in annual revenue. This revenue will be the highest of any department in the province after the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA).

Post-Budget 2025-26 Conference was organized here on Wednesday by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with KP-SPEED. The objective of the conference was to provide a shared platform for understanding and discussion on the recently presented provincial budget - an important milestone to promote transparency, accountability, and public understanding of the budget's priorities and implications.

The conference was attended by Secretary Finance Amer Sultan Tareen, Special Secretary Budget Muhammad Asif, Special Secretary Regulation Abidullah Kakakhel, as well as secretaries of various departments, additional secretaries, deputy secretaries, budget officers, and economists.

Advisor Muzzammil Aslam emphasized that all departments should work on increasing revenue and strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the betterment of the province. He stated that It is the duty of the province's approximately seven hundred thousand employees to immediately provide relief to the population of forty-five million and to do justice to their positions.

He further stressed the importance of aligning budgetary resources with grassroots needs and reiterated the government's commitment to converting financial planning into real and tangible improvements in people's lives.

The event began with a welcome address by the Secretary Finance Amer Sultan Tareen, in which he highlighted the province's commitment to responsible financial management, fiscal reforms, and citizen-centric service delivery.

The Special Secretary Finance Muhammad Asif presented the key features of the budget, outlining revenue estimates, expenditure priorities, sectoral allocations, fiscal discipline, and reform initiatives included in the 2025-26 budget.

The event concluded with the Advisor on Finance certificate distribution among the participants in recognition of their engagement and valuable contributions in the budget 2025-26.







## In brief

Tree plantation drive launched  
F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Commissioner Hazara Division, Fayaz Ali Shah Tuesday inaugurated the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2025 by planting a sapling at the Commissioner's Office lawn in Abbottabad. The campaign aims to promote environmental sustainability and enhance green cover across the region. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Commissioner Fayaz Ali Shah highlighted the vital role of trees in preserving the environment, calling them the "ornaments of the earth and protectors of the ecosystem." He emphasized that creating a healthy and pleasant environment is a valuable legacy for future generations and requires collective efforts from every citizen. He pointed out that Hazara Division is naturally gifted with scenic beauty and a favorable climate, and it is the responsibility of every individual to safeguard this blessing. Large-scale plantation, he said, is essential to maintaining ecological balance. The Commissioner stressed that merely planting saplings is not sufficient; their care and protection must be ensured so they can grow into strong, healthy trees that help improve air quality and overall environmental conditions.

Eight water thieves held  
F.P. Report

SARGODHA: The irrigation department is working on a war footing to stop water theft in the district. The subdivisional officer canal on Tuesday raided canals and arrested Nadeem, Sohail, Muhammad Azam, Nawaz, Habib-Ullah, Muhammad Afzal, Saleem and Shoaib for in water theft.

Drive against encroachments  
F.P. Report

HARIPUR: The district administration of Haripur, under the directives of the provincial government, continues a comprehensive anti-encroachment operation across the district, targeting irrigation canals, civil water channels, and natural waterways to reclaim public land and protect water infrastructure. As part of the ongoing campaign, a major operation was carried out in Bhamala under the supervision of the district administration, with support from the Revenue Department, Irrigation Department, and local police. During the operation, illegal permanent structures were demolished, and WAPDA-owned land encroached along the banks of Bhamala was successfully recovered. Assistant Commissioner Khanpur, Dr. Tazeen Zafar, led a separate operation against illegal encroachments along the Haro River. The action resulted in the lawful removal of unauthorized occupations. The operation was conducted in the presence of officials from revenue, irrigation, WAPDA, and police departments. Later, upon receiving reports of illegal soil dumping in the downstream spillway channel of Khanpur Dam, Dr. Zafar, accompanied by irrigation and revenue staff, conducted an on-site inspection. The responsible parties were summoned to the office, and further legal action was ordered through the Irrigation Department. In addition, several individuals were arrested and handed over to the police for violating the ban imposed by the DC on bathing in Khanpur Dam and other water bodies.

## 12 arrested for violating Section 144

## F.P. Report

KOHAT: At least 12 youths were arrested on the spot for going into the water on the banks of the Tanda Dam Kohat in violation of Section 144 during the Surprise visit of the Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah to Tanda Dam Kohat and formal FIRs were registered against them in the relevant police station.

The Commissioner Kohat strictly directed the district administration of the entire division to arrest those who bath in dams and other water bodies or go to the banks in violation of Section 144 without discrimination and immediately register FIRs against them and no leniency should be shown in this regard.

He gave these instructions on Monday evening in light of the directions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and Chief Secretary Syed Shahab Ali Shah, in view of the possible flood situation after the recent rains, while inspecting the encroachments and other obstacles on the rainwater drains and natural water passages during a surprise visit to various areas of Kohat, including Kohat Toi and Tanda Dam Kohat, along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali, Regional Officer Information Irshad Afridi, TMO Syed Waqas Ali Shah, SDO Irrigation Arsalan Wazir and Municipal Services Incharge Muhammad Waqas.

During his visit, he also reviewed the arrangements and preparations made in view of the possible heavy rains, floods, and overflowing of rivers and streams and directed all the concerned departments and institutions to be on alert for any emergency situation.

Commissioner Kohat also directed to completely open the causeways of Hafizabad and Kalu Banda on Kohat-Toi and clear its both sides and their surroundings from all kinds of encroachments and bushes. He further directed to set up daily duties of Police, Rescue 1122, Civil Defense, Irrigation and other

relevant departments and institutions in all the dams of the division to protect human lives.

Later, the Commissioner Kohat also went to the outlet of Tanda Dam and taking notice of the breaking of the protective fence, directed to immediately repair it and install barbed wires. He also ordered the Irrigation Department to install the boards prohibiting bathing and entering the water at prominent places in dams, water bodies and Toi.

Commissioner Kohat, while checking the NOCs and life jackets of boats at Tanda Dam, asked Deputy Commissioner Kohat to review them again and issue NOCs after fulfilling all the codal formalities so that precious lives are not lost.

**WSS of sheikh Buland Banda Kohat is in final stage:** Under the "Ongoing Journey from Promises to Fulfillment" of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Advocate and MNA Shehryar Afridi, the long-standing demand of the people of village Sheikh Buland Banda is about to be fulfilled and the drinking water project here is in the final stages of completion and InshaAllah, the supply of drinking water to the people of this area will start very soon.

Village Sheikh Buland Banda is located in the Law Minister's constituency PK-90 Kohat, Union Council Dhoda Sharif. The total estimated cost of this drinking water project is Rs. 16.274 crore. The said amount includes construction of boundary wall, pumping house, repair of 20-thousand-gallon reservoir, pipe lawn from tube well to water tank and distribution system. This important project will make it possible to deliver water to the mothers, sisters and daughters of Sheikh Buland Banda village from house to house.

The people of the area have thanked the Law Minister Aftab Alam for taking personal interest in the early completion of this important drinking water project and have pledged to support him fully in the future.

Four minor girls drown in pond  
F.P. Report

LARKANA: In village Sahib Khan Malano near Badah city of Larkana district, 4 girls of the same house, 5-year-old Bushra Zamir Malano, 6-year-old Fatima Al-Hadino Malano, 7-year-old Humira Ishaq Malano and 8-year-old Amna Bashir Malano, drowned while bathing in a pond near their house.

According to the villagers, the news spread in the village when the bodies of the girls who had drowned in the pond were found in the evening. When the bodies of the deceased girls reached their homes, an atmosphere of mourning arose and they were buried in the local cemetery with their faces covered.

Meanwhile, the body of 32-year-old Naib Qasid Azamuddin alias Safir Khunharo was found in the house of Elementary College Colony in the Sachal police station area of Larkana city.

The maternal uncle of the alleged deceased, Shafiullah Khunharo, protested in front of the media and said that Azamuddin is my nephew and has 3 children. His wife Shamaila had tortured him for a trivial matter. Therefore, we are afraid that his wife and her relatives have tortured him and killed him and fled from the house. On this occasion, he also appealed to the administration for justice. On the other hand, according to the police, any action can be taken only after the postmortem report comes.

MoU signed for academic collaboration  
F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The University of Kamalia and Hizb-ur-Rehman Science College have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at promoting mutual cooperation in the fields of education, research, and student development.

During the signing ceremony, Chief Executive Officer of Hizb-ur-Rehman Science College, Syed Muhammad Faraz Shah Qadri, visited the University of Kamalia and held a detailed meeting with Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Yasir Nawab. The two sides discussed various avenues of academic, research, and training collaboration and reached a consensus on future educational initiatives.

To mark the occasion, Vice Chancellor Dr. Yasir Nawab and the visiting principal planted a commemorative sapling on the university campus — symbolizing the beginning of this new academic partnership.

Robber killed  
F.P. Report

MULTAN: A robber was killed during an alleged police encounter in the MR-17 Tile Wala area of Shujabad late Monday night. According to a spokesperson, a team of CCD circle Shujabad were on routine patrol when noticed three unidentified motorcyclist.

Police stopped them but instead of complying, the suspects opened discriminate firing on them. Police caught one of the suspects dead at the scene, possibly killed by the firing of his own accomplices. He was identified as Muhammad Nadeem r/o Qasba Maral while two suspects managed to escape.

## Market, set up on state land takes over in Landi Kotal



## F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Rangar market, constructed on State land in the main bazaar of Landi Kotal, has been allegedly occupied by a private person, TOR said. Tehsil Officer Regulation (TOR), Landi Kotal Haris Azhar while sharing details said that Rangar market, comprising 92 shops was erected on government land with expenses of more than Rs 52.7 million.

After completion of the building and granting possession to the Tehsil Municipal Authority (TMA) some locals claimed possession of 32 shops and acquired a stay order from the Court. TMA, Landi Kotal through procedure announced an auction of 60 shops and out of it 25 shops were properly auctioned with a collective sum of Rs 18 millions, he added.

The TOR maintained that in the meantime a private person, Shan Ali

forcibly got hold of the market and for the last several months he collected rent Rs 300 per day per shop from it. Three First Information Reports (FIR) had been filed and two times under 3 MPOs the allegedly criminal had been apprehended but the next day he was released, he opined.

He went on that the TMA officials were threatened repeatedly therefore they were reluctant to regain possession of the market. Lack of coordination among the government departments deprived TMA of its main source of income, he blamed. Due to a shortage of income sources, TMA, Landi Kotal were faced with financial crises and affected its efficiency, he said.

Hayat Khan, a grocery seller in Landi Kotal Bazaar said that he got a shop from TMA through auction for Rs.1.655 million rupees and the payment had been paid through

bank account but so far possession of the shop had been given to him. He repeatedly asked the TMA officials to provide him a shop in Rangar but to in avail, he added.

The alleged usurper, Shan Ali and his relatives said that land was their legal property and the government unlawfully constructed a market on it that was unfair. We will never let TMA, Landi Kotal to collect rent from the shops, erected on their land, he added. He vowed that they would utilize all available options to get their right back.

When the matter was brought into the notice of the newly posted Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Afraseyab Zubair Hundal he said that after examining its file and discussing with subordinates, the issue would be resolved peacefully. No one would be permitted to seize state property, he remarked.

## Wani honoured with calls for continued struggle

## F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Shuhada Foundation of Jammu and Kashmir and Kashmir Liberation Cell solemnly observed the 9th martyrdom anniversary of popular youth leader Burhan Muzaffar Wani and his associates Masoom Ahmad Shah and Sartaj Ahmad Sheikh with a dignified ceremony in Muzaffarabad, the capital city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The public gathering at Shaheed Burhan Chowk and a rally at old Secretariat were separately held by Jammu and Kashmir Shuhada Foundation and Kashmir Liberation Cell in which hundreds of people including Hurriyat leaders, politicians and Kashmir migrants participated.

Speaker of AJK Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu and Kashmir & Gilgit-Baltistan, Dr Muhammad Mushtaq Khan, Traders President Abdul Raqak Khan, Peoples Party AJK leader, Showket Javeed Mir, APHC AJK media secretary Mushtaq Ahmed Butt, Jammu and Kashmir Shuhada Foundation head Muhammad Shabaz Wani and others speakers paying tributes to Shaheed Burhan Wani and his companions, stated that Wani infused new life into the Kashmir freedom movement with his supreme sacrifice.

Speakers asserted that Burhan Wani's path remains the path to freedom, resonating deeply with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. They emphasized

that the Kashmiri people stand united in their struggle against Indian occupation and stressed the urgent need for unwavering support to them.

The speakers highlighted Burhan Wani's role in inspiring Kashmiri youth through social media and praised the unwavering spirit of Kashmiris who continue to resist Indian oppression despite countless sacrifices. They also expressed disappointment over the silence of the international community.

They said Burhan Wani opened a new chapter in the freedom movement and emphasized that his ideology must be carried forward with resolve. The speakers warned that the unresolved Kashmir dispute poses a nuclear threat to South Asia.

## PPP condemns Rustam chairman statement

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Pakistan Peoples Party office bearers and activists have said that the statement made by the Tehsil Rustam Chairman against the respected, fearless and always truthful PPP leader Nawabzada Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti, is regrettable and condemnable.

While holding a press conference at the Mardan Press Club here on Tuesday, PPP Tehsil Rustam President Haji Nawab Khan along with other party key leaders including Jahanzeb Khan, Anwar Khan, Tahir Khan and elders of the relevant tehsil said that Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti did not make any personal remarks against the Tehsil Rustam Chairman Mufti Mubarak Ahmad but only said that despite of the

passage of four years, nothing had been done for the welfare of the people.

"The ex-federal minister Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti's political character is transparent, he always speaks the truth, even if it is against his own party, criticizing him is a manifestation of political immaturity and ignorance," he added.

The statement of the Tehsil Chairman Mufti Mubarak Ahmad who belonged to Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-F was not only frivolous but also showed that he was unaware of the basic values and ethics of politics. He said that basic facilities are not available in Tehsil Rustam Hospital and bodies are lying for hours waiting for post-mortem but the Tehsil Chairman has never paid attention to these issues.

On the occasion other

PPP and elders also spoke. They said that the Rustam tehsil chairman should present the development plans of his tenure in front of the public and explain them. They claimed that Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti served the public by selling his own properties as well as being credited with corruption-free politics. Similarly, the people themselves were witnessing him as having a clean and good character.

Those who criticized should first look into their own pockets to see which elements they were playing into and making unjustified statements. Instead of blaming others, the Tehsil Chairman should also look at his four-year performance in which he had only distributed garbage bags. He should focus on public service and practical measures, they maintained.

## Bangladesh after Hasina: Shifting alliances and emerging friendships

## Dr. Fakhr-ul-Islam

**THE political landscape of Bangladesh has witnessed a dramatic transformation following the departure of Sheikh Hasina Wajid from power. Her long-standing leadership was marked by strong ties with India and a pro-Western orientation. However, in the wake of her fall, a significant reconfiguration of Bangladesh's foreign policy and regional alignments is unfolding.**

The most notable shift has been the warming of relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan, a development that would have been unthinkable

just a few years ago. This change, reflected in recent public sentiment and foreign policy gestures, signals a turning point in South Asian geopolitics.

In a striking development, Pakistan has emerged as the most favored foreign country among Bangladeshis. According to a recent Gallup survey, 46% of Bangladeshis now consider Pakistan a friend, surpassing even long-time allies like China and Saudi Arabia. This rise in favorability suggests a deliberate departure from the historic antagonism that defined Bangladesh-Pakistan relations since 1971. The growing public approval reflects both dissatisfaction with past regional

dynamics and a desire for broader regional engagement, particularly with Muslim-majority countries that share cultural and religious affinities.

The same Gallup survey reveals other key players in the reshaped Bangladeshi worldview. China follows closely with a 43% favorability rating, reaffirming its longstanding investments and strategic presence in the country. Saudi Arabia, with 42%, continues to benefit from religious ties and the large Bangladeshi diaspora in the Gulf. Turkey, too, is gaining popularity, viewed favorably by 32% of the population. The United States, traditionally influential, now holds a modest

24% approval, indicating a shift toward alternative global partnerships as Dhaka seeks to assert its autonomy in foreign policy.

One of the most notable reversals in public opinion has been toward India. Once considered a strategic partner and cultural neighbor, India is now seen as an enemy by 47% of Bangladeshis, according to the same survey. This erosion of goodwill stems from a range of factors, including border tensions, unresolved water-sharing disputes, and perceptions of Indian interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs during Hasina's tenure. The new leadership appears to be recalibrating its relationship with India, perhaps to reflect the pop-

ular mood and to pursue a more balanced regional diplomacy.

The Bangladesh-Pakistan rapprochement could be viewed as both symbolic and strategic. Symbolically, it marks the beginning of a post-1971 mindset among younger generations more concerned with economic opportunities than historical grievances. Strategically, it allows Bangladesh to diversify its regional partnerships and reduce overdependence on any single country. As the new government steers a course of renewed non-alignment, it may leverage improved ties with Pakistan, China, and Gulf nations to create a more multipolar and independent foreign pol-

icy framework.

The fall of Hasina Wajid has ushered in a new era in Bangladesh's political and diplomatic journey. The surprising embrace of Pakistan, the cooling of relations with India, and the reorientation toward a broader range of international partners suggest a country redefining its place in the region and the world. While the road ahead is uncertain, these shifts reflect the changing aspirations of the Bangladeshi people, who now seek a foreign policy that aligns more closely with their national interests and evolving identity.

*The writer is former Director Area Study Center, University of Peshawar.*





# China extends visa-free entry to 70 countries

WASHINGTON (AP): Foreign tourists are trickling back to China after the country loosened its visa policy to unprecedented levels. Citizens from 74 countries can now enter China for up to 30 days without a visa, a big jump from previous regulations. The government has been steadily expanding visa-free entry in a bid to boost tourism, the economy and its soft power. More than 20 million foreign visitors entered without a visa in 2024 - almost one-third of the total and more than double from the previous year, according to the National Immigration Administration. "This really helps people to travel because it is such a hassle to apply for a visa and go through the process," Georgi Shavadze, a Georgian living in Austria, said on a recent visit to the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. While most tourist sites are still packed with far more domestic tourists than foreigners, travel companies and tour guides are now bracing for a bigger influx in anticipation of summer holiday goers coming to China. "I'm practically overwhelmed with tours and struggling to keep up," says Gao Jun, a veteran English-speaking tour guide with over 20 years of experience. To meet growing demand, he launched a new business to train anyone interested in becoming an English-speaking tour guide. "I just can't handle them all on my own" he said. After lifting tough COVID-19 restrictions, China reopened its borders

to tourists in early 2023, but only 13.8 million people visited in that year, less than half the 31.9 million in 2019, the last year before the pandemic. In December 2023, China announced visa-free entry for citizens of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia. Almost all of Europe has been added since then. Travelers from five Latin American countries and Uzbekistan became eligible last month, followed by four in the Middle East. The total will grow to 75 on July 16 with the addition of Azerbaijan. About two-thirds of the countries have been granted visa-free entry on a one-year trial basis. For Norwegian traveler Øystein Sporsheim, this means his family would no longer need to make two round-trip visits to the Chinese embassy in Oslo to apply for a tourist visa, a time-consuming and costly process with two children in tow. "They don't very often open, so it was much harder" he said. "The new visa policies are 100% beneficial to us," said Jenny Zhao, a managing director of WildChina, which specializes in boutique and luxury routes for international travelers. She said business is up 50% compared with before the pandemic. While the US remains their largest source market, accounting for around 30% of their current business, European travelers now make up 15-20% of their clients, a sharp increase from less than 5% before 2019, according to Zhao. "We're quite optimistic" Zhao said, "we

hope these benefits will continue." Trip.com Group, a Shanghai-based online travel agency, said the visa-free policy has significantly boosted tourism. Air, hotel and other bookings on their website for travel to China doubled in the first three months of this year compared with the same period last year, with 75% of the visitors from visa-free regions. No major African country is eligible for visa-free entry, despite the continent's relatively close ties with China. Those from 10 countries not in the visa-free scheme have another option: entering China for up to 10 days if they depart for a different country than the one they came from. The policy is limited to 60 ports of entry, according to the country's National Immigration Administration. The transit policy applies to 55 countries, but most are also on the 30-day visa-free entry list. It does offer a more restrictive option for citizens of the 10 countries that aren't: the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Sweden, Russia, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Indonesia, Canada, the US and Mexico. Aside from the U.K., Sweden is the only other high-income European country that didn't make the 30-day list. Ties with China have frayed since the ruling Chinese Communist Party sentenced a Swedish book seller, Gui Minhai, to prison for 10 years in 2020. Gui disappeared in 2015 from his seaside home in Thailand but turned up months later in police custody in mainland China.

## Syrian wildfires spread due to heavy winds

LATAKIA, Syria (AP): Syrian firefighters are facing heavy winds, high temperatures and ordnance left behind from the 13-year civil war as they try to extinguish some of country's worst wildfires in years, a government minister said. The fires, which started last week, have proven difficult to bring under control despite reinforcements from Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon that came to the war-torn country to help Syrian teams fight the blaze. Syrian Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management Raed al-Saleh said their main challenges are two locations in the coastal province of Latakia that they have been trying to control for two days. "We have controlled other locations," al-Saleh told The Associated Press at the scene. On the second day of the fire, firefighters managed to get 90% of the wildfires under control but explosions of left-over war ordnance and heavy winds helped spread the fires again, al-Saleh said. He added that 120 teams are fighting the blazes. The Lebanese army said it sent two helicopters to help fight the fires in coordination with Syrian authorities. Over the weekend, UN teams deployed to the Syrian coast where they are conducting urgent assessments to determine the scale of the damage and to identify the most immediate humanitarian needs. Summer fires are common in the eastern Mediterranean region, where experts warn that climate change is intensifying conditions that then lead to blazes. Also, below-average rainfall over the winter left Syrians struggling with water shortages this summer, as the springs and rivers that normally supply much of the population with drinking water have gone dry.



WARSAW: Polish border police checking vehicles at a checkpoint bordering Germany, in Slubice, Poland.

# Russian forces claim first foothold in new Ukraine region

MOSCOW (AFP): Russia said it captured its first village in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region after grinding towards the border for months, dealing a psychological blow to Kyiv as its worries mount. Moscow launched a fresh large-scale drone and missile barrage before the announcement, including on Ukraine's army recruitment centres, as part of an escalating series of attacks that come as ceasefire talks led by the United States stall. Kyiv also said it carried out a drone attack on a Russian ammunition factory in the Moscow region. Russia announced its forces captured the village of Dachne in the Dnipropetrovsk region, an important industrial mining territory that has also come under mounting Russian air attacks. Russian forces appear to have made crossing the border a key strategic objective over recent months, and deeper advances into the region could pose logistics and economic problems for Ukraine. Kyiv has so far denied any Russian foothold in Dnipropetrovsk. Moscow first said last month its forces had crossed the border, more than three years since launching its invasion and pushing through the neighbouring Donetsk region. Earlier, Ukraine's army said its forces "repelled" attacks in Dnipropetrovsk, including "in the vicinity" of Dachne. Dnipropetrovsk is not one of the five Ukrainian regions -- Donetsk,

Kherson, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Crimea -- that Moscow has publicly claimed as Russian territory. Russia used the region's main city, Dnipro, as a testing ground for its "experimental" Oreshnik missile in late 2024, claiming to have struck an aeronautics production facility. Ukrainian military expert Oleksiy Kopytko told AFP the "situation is objectively difficult" for Ukraine's forces in Dnipropetrovsk and that Russia hopes to create some kind of buffer zone in the region. But he said: "Our troops are holding their ground quite steadily." An AFP reporter in the eastern city of Kharkiv saw civilians with their belongings being evacuated from a residential building damaged during Russia's overnight attacks, and others sheltering with pets in a basement. At least four people were killed and dozens wounded across Ukraine in the latest violence, mostly in the Kharkiv region bordering Russia and in a late-morning attack on the industrial city of Zaporizhzhia. Ukraine's police said a 34-year-old woman was killed in Kharkiv in attacks that wounded dozens in the northeastern city. In the southern city of Zaporizhzhia, regional governor Ivan Fedorov said 20 people needed medical assistance after Russian attacks. "Air defence remains the top priority for protecting lives," President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social

media after the attacks, as fears mount over whether US President Donald Trump's government will continue supplying military aid to Ukraine. Zelensky said Ukraine was "strongly counting on our partners to fully deliver on what we have agreed". Ukraine's air force said Moscow had launched 101 drones across the country and four missiles. Seventy-five of the drones were downed, it added. Attacks targeted two recruitment centres in separate cities, wounding four people, the Ukrainian army said, in what appears to be a new trend following similar strikes over the weekend and last week. "These strikes are part of a comprehensive enemy operation aimed at disrupting mobilisation in Ukraine," Ukraine's Centre for Strategic Communications, a government-funded body, wrote on social media. It added that Russia had attacked recruitment centres last week in the cities of Kremenchuk, Kryvyi Rig and Poltava. The Ukrainian army announced it hit the Krasnozavodsky Chemical Plant in the Moscow region with drones, saying the plant makes components for Russian drones used against Ukraine. In Russia, the defence ministry said it had shot down 91 Ukrainian drones overnight, including eight in the Moscow region, with the majority of the rest in regions bordering Ukraine.

# Slovak gunman who shot PM to go on trial

BRATISLAVA (AFP): The man who admitted to shooting Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico is due to stand trial on terror charges, more than a year after the attack shocked the central European country. Nationalist, Kremlin-friendly Fico was shot four times from close range after a government meeting in the central Slovak mining town of Handlova on May 15, 2024, leaving him seriously wounded. Detained at the scene, Juraj Cintula, a 72-year-old poet, who has admitted to shooting the leader with the intention to wound but not kill him, is facing up to life in prison if convicted. The hearing at a special penal court in the central city of Banska Bystrica is due to start. Prosecutors argue that Cintula sought to "permanently prevent Fico from serving as prime minister, thereby preventing the Slovak government from proper functioning and fulfilling its programme". Just after the shooting, Cintula told the police he wanted to protest against steps taken by Fico's government, including the halting of military aid to war-ravaged Ukraine, according to a leaked video. Cintula,

who used a legally owned gun, told the Novy cas tabloid in a rare interview in May that he did not want to kill Fico: "I did not shoot at the heart or the head." He said he had plotted the attack for two days and added he was relieved to see Fico survived. "I have lost physical freedom, but mentally I was liberated... I feel no inner tension. In prison, one must run across green meadows in the mind to stay sane," Cintula told Novy cas. The Cintula case file comprises 18 volumes and more than 6,200 pages. Cintula was originally charged with premeditated murder, but prosecutors later reclassified the shooting as a terror attack. This means they will have to prove Cintula wanted to harm the state, Tomas Stremly, a criminal law professor at Comenius University in Bratislava, told AFP. "It is essential to examine the perpetrator's intent," he said. Fico underwent two lengthy operations and returned to work two months after the attack. The 60-year-old is serving a fourth term as premier, heading a three-party coalition governing the EU and NATO member of 5.4

million people since 2023. Since his return to office, Fico's government has launched a crackdown on non-profit organisations, LGBTQ rights, cultural institutions and some media it deems "hostile", drawing protests in the heavily polarised country. Fico's friendship with Russian President Vladimir Putin has also led thousands of Slovaks to rally against him under the slogan of "Slovakia is Europe" as Russian troops keep pounding Ukraine. Fico himself called Cintula a "product of hatred, an assassin created by media and the opposition". "The governing coalition naturally tried to use (the shooting) to its advantage," Grigorij Meseznikov, a political analyst at the Institute for Public Affairs, told AFP. "This included associating the horrible act with the activities of opposition parties without any evidence or witness testimony to support these claims," he added. But he said the shooting did not change Slovakia's political landscape. He said the trial would be closely watched, but regardless of the verdict, "the polarisation will last".

## France backs returning colonial-era

PARIS (AFP): France's parliament approved returning to Ivory Coast a "talking drum" that colonial troops took from the Ebrie tribe in 1916, in the latest boost to the repatriation of colonial spoils. The Djidji Ayokwe drum is a communication tool more than three metres (10 feet) long and weighing 430 kilograms (almost 950 pounds) that was once used to transmit messages between different areas, for example to warn others of a forced recruitment drive. France's lower house of parliament approved removing the artefact from the national museum collections to enable its return, after the upper-house Senate backed the move in April. The talking drum had been in the care of the Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac Museum in Paris. In late 2018, Ivory Coast asked Paris to return the Djidji Ayokwe among 148 works of art taken during the colonial period. President Emmanuel Macron promised in 2021 to send the drum and other artefacts back home to the west African country. "Local communities have been requesting it since independence" in 1960, said Serge Alain Nhang'O, the founder of the Ivoire Black History Month association in Abidjan. The drum's return "could become very symbolic", he said. Clavaire Aguego Mobio, leader of the Ebrie, in 2021 called Macron's pledge "a highly historic move" as his people had long given up on the return of the drum, "which was our loudspeaker, our Facebook". Since his election in 2017, Macron has gone further than his predecessors in admitting to past French abuses in Africa. The restitution of looted artworks to Africa is one of the highlights of the "new relationship" he wanted to establish with the continent. France still has in its possession tens of thousands of artworks and other prized artefacts that it looted from its colonial empire from the 16th to the first half of the 20th century. According to a 2018 report, some 90,000 objects from sub-Saharan Africa are in French public museums.

# Poland reinstates border controls with Germany and Lithuania

SLUBICE, Poland (AP): Poland reinstated border controls with Germany and Lithuania, following similar German restrictions imposed earlier this year aimed at discouraging asylum-seekers. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, whose government recently survived a confidence vote in parliament, announced the restrictions last week. Pressure has been mounting after far-right groups in Poland have alleged that Germany was transporting migrants into Polish territory after they reached Western Europe. The reinstated controls, which will last for an initial period of 30 days, though authorities haven't ruled out extending them, according to the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. "Illegal migration is simply a crime," Polish Interior Minister Tomasz Siemoniak said during a news conference. The border guard discovered an alleged smuggling operation within minutes of the controls taking effect overnight, officials said. An Estonian citizen was allegedly trying to take four Afghan nationals over the Lithuanian border, according to the Polish News Agency. "We're doing this for you as well," Tusk said during a joint news conference with Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof, the news agency reported. "For the Germans, for the Dutch, for the French -- because this is the European Union border." The Polish border with Lithuania, which stretches 104 kilometers (65 miles), will see checks in 13 locations. Poland's border with Germany, 467 kilometers (290 miles) long, will have controls at 52 crossing points. Lithuanian authorities said they were ready to deal with possible traffic jams at the Polish border.

"If traffic begins to build up, we will start managing the flow ... to minimize disruptions and keep checks as brief as possible," Antanas Montvydas, deputy head of Lithuania's State Border Guard Service told Lithuania radio. After taking office in May, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who made a tougher migration policy a pillar of his election campaign, ordered more police at the border and said that some asylum-seekers trying to enter Europe's biggest economy would be turned away. Last week, Merz said that Poland and Germany were in close contact to keep the impact of Germany's border controls "as low as possible." "The protection of borders against irregular migration is an interest that Germany has, that Poland has, that our European neighbors share with us," Stefan Kornelius, Merz's

spokesperson, said. "We do not want permanent border controls." The European Union has a visa-free travel area, known as Schengen, that allows citizens of most member states to travel easily across borders for work and pleasure. Switzerland also belongs to Schengen, although it's not an EU member. According to the EU, member states are allowed to temporarily reintroduce border controls in cases of a serious threat, like internal security. It says border controls should be applied as a last resort in exceptional situations, and must be limited in time. "Such measures must undoubtedly be temporary and must achieve results as quickly as possible and be terminated," Lithuania President Gitanas Naus'da told reporters, adding that Poland's decision shows that it is not yet possible to "ideally control" the external borders.

# Man killed after firing at US Border Patrol station in Texas

WASHINGTON (Reuters) : A 27-year-old Michigan man was shot dead by US Border Patrol agents after opening fire with an assault rifle on a US Border Patrol station in the southern Texas city of McAllen, local police said. Ryan Louis Mosqueda fired dozens of rounds at the entrance of the facility shortly before 6 a.m. and agents returned fire, McAllen Police Chief Victor Rodriguez told reporters. A McAllen police officer was shot in the knee during the exchange of fire and was taken to hospital, Rodriguez said. The US Department of Homeland Security said a Border Patrol employee was also injured. Law enforcement found additional assault firearms and more ammunition in Mosqueda's Chevrolet passenger car, which was parked outside the facility, Rodriguez added. "There were many, many, dozens of rounds fired by the suspect towards the building and agents in the

building," he said. Writing, thought to be Latin, was spray-painted on the side of the vehicle, but Rodriguez said it did not give any indication of the motive for the attack. Images from the scene showed "Cordis DIE," a Latin phrase meaning "Heart Day," written on the driver's door of the white, two-door car. "Cordis Die" is also a fictional populist revolutionary movement in the "Call of Duty: Black Ops II" video game, according to law websites. Mosqueda is believed to have ties to the area and was reported missing at 4 a.m. from a residence in Weslaco, about 18 miles (29 kilometers) east of McAllen, Rodriguez said. Mosqueda's father was stopped for a traffic infraction at 3:48 a.m. in Weslaco and told police he was searching for his son, according to a report by local Telemundo station T40, citing Weslaco police. Mosqueda's father, Jose

Mosqueda, told an officer his son had a "mental deficiency," had not taken any medication and was carrying firearms in his vehicle, according to the T40 report. Police identified the license plate of Ryan Mosqueda's vehicle and alerted authorities, the report said. Weslaco police did not respond to a request for comment and it was not immediately possible to contact Jose Mosqueda. The facility where the shooting took place houses Border Patrol's special operations teams, according to a former US Customs and Border Protection official. Flights at the nearby McAllen International Airport were delayed for several hours as law enforcement secured the area. President Donald Trump, a Republican, has made combating illegal immigration a top priority, sending troops to secure the US-Mexico border and launching aggressive raids in US cities.

# US envoy says satisfied with Lebanese response on disarming of Hezbollah

WASHINGTON (AFP): US envoy Thomas Barrack said he was satisfied by the response of Lebanon's authorities to a request to disarm Hezbollah, although warned Lebanon risked being left behind as change sweeps other countries in the region. Lebanese leaders who took office in the aftermath of more than a year of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah have vowed a state monopoly on bearing arms, while demanding Israel comply with a November ceasefire. Israel has warned it will continue to strike until Hezbollah has been disarmed, while the movement's leader Naim Qassem said his group would not surrender or lay down its weapons in response to Israeli threats. "I'm unbelievably satisfied with the response," Barrack, Washington's ambassador to Turkey and special envoy to Syria, told a press conference after meeting President Joseph

Aoun. "It's thoughtful, it's considered. We're creating a go-forward plan," he said. "Now what it takes is a... thrust to the details, which we're going to do. We're both committed to get to the details and get a resolution," he said, adding: "I'm very, very hopeful." Lebanon's health ministry said two people were killed in Israeli strikes in the country's south, the latest report of deadly raids despite the ceasefire. Last month, Barrack asked Lebanese leaders to formally commit to disarming Hezbollah, the only group that retained its weapons after Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, doing so in the name of "resistance" against Israel which occupied southern Lebanon at the time. Hezbollah was heavily weakened in the latest conflict, with Israel battering the group's arsenal of missiles and rockets and killing senior commanders including longtime chief Hassan

Nasrallah. The presidency said on X that Aoun handed Barrack "ideas for a comprehensive solution". Parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, said his own meeting with Barrack was constructive and "considered Lebanon's interest and sovereignty... and the demands of Hezbollah", according to a statement. Barrack said that Hezbollah "needs to see that there's a future for them, that that road is not harnessed just solely against them." He warned that "the rest of the region is moving at Mach speed, and you will be left behind", adding that "dialogue has started between Syria and Israel, just as the dialogue needs to be reinvented by Lebanon." Syria said it was willing to cooperate with the United States to reimplement a 1974 disengagement agreement with Israel, nearly seven months after Islamists ousted longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad, a Hezbollah ally who was also backed by Iran. Syria has also admitted to holding indirect talks with Israel to reduce tensions. A Lebanese official told AFP on condition of anonymity that late last week, Beirut submitted an initial response to Washington, which requested modifications, then officials worked through the weekend to develop the final version. Under the ceasefire, Hezbollah was to pull its fighters back north of the Litani river, some 30 kilometres (20 miles) from the Israeli frontier. Israel was to withdraw its troops from Lebanon, but has kept them deployed in five areas that it deemed strategic. The truce was based on a United Nations Security Council resolution that says only Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers should bear arms in south Lebanon, and calls for the disarmament of all non-state groups.



The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

# The Palisades fire spewed toxins into the Pacific

THE wave is all anger and elegance. Shaped like a cursive C, it hurtles toward the Santa Monica shore. A child on a surfboard balances on its crest. Or at least he tries to. The boy wipes out. Hard. But then he pops up in the white-wash, all smiles. His Aqua Surf School instructor is grinning too. On this happy day, the Palisades fire, which in January burned all the way to the shores of the Pacific about five miles north of this Santa Monica beach, feels like a distant memory for student and teacher, according to Tribune News Service.

But back on the sand, surf camps — long mainstays of Santa Monica Bay's shorelines — are suffering this summer. Several have seen a significant drop in attendance because families are concerned the surf or sand is contaminated with fire pollutants. At Aqua Surf's camps alone, business is down by 20% to 30%, said Dylan Sohngen, executive director. "I talk to parents about this issue every day, and it's really sad," said Sohngen, who has trimmed Aqua Surf's staff due to the drop in campers. "There are a lot of families who are just going to pass on it this year — it's considered a luxury item for them. You know, 'Let's do other activities this summer.' We have an entire ocean, an incredible resource ... and it's sad that people are getting that taken away from them."

Four other youth surf camp or surf school operators said business is notably lower this summer as many families express angst over possible health dangers — even though public health authorities say it is safe to go in the water at the beaches where they operate. That disconnect has left instructors frustrated, predicting economic hardship — and a hit to a classic summertime tradition — if the slide continues. "Everyone's gonna go bankrupt," said Anthony Petri, owner of Always Summer Surf School in Malibu. "These are people's livelihoods; this is how you feed yourself, feed your family." For decades, surf camps have offered parents an easy way to introduce kids to a quintessential Southern California pastime. Most begin in June, and last well into August; children ages 5 through 17 are typically welcome. Prices vary, with some camps costing about \$150 for a day pass and upward of \$600 for a week. A few of the larger operators said that more than 1,000 kids attend their camps over the course of the summer.

At a time when many kids' summers have become highly programmed — filled with sleep-away camps, academic enrichment and organized sports — surf camp has been seen by many parents as a refreshing throwback. And one that they didn't have to wring their hands over. Until now.

Take West LA parent Ivy Cavic. For her, it's too soon to send 9-year-old son Wolf back to surf camp. He long attended Fitness by the Sea in Santa Monica. Not this year. "They have the answers for today, but they have no ability to forecast how this will affect us a year down the line, two years, 10 years," she said of authorities' testing efforts.

"There's just so much out there — between air quality and all of these crazy things — that we've had to worry about for our children. The only thing I can control is protecting my kid." Surf camp operators said that they understood parents' reticence. And some pointed out different reasons for a decline in business, including the deleterious effect that recent immigration enforcement raids — and the protests they spurred — have had on tourism. Still, so far, no camps or surf schools have shut down, according to several operators.

The Palisades fire did force the relocation of a handful of camp companies that operated at Will Rogers State Beach, where a parking lot was tapped to temporarily process fire debris. Though the beach, located in Pacific Palisades, is open, lots there remained closed for months.

Mar Vista parent Angelica Mistro, whose children have long attended Freedom Surf Camps, said that earlier this year she briefly harbored "those doubts" about the safety of the ocean after the fire. But after discussing the issue with Freedom's owner, she decided to send her 8- and 15-year-old daughters back to the company's camp in Venice this summer.

## Important Notice

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



# Is Russia really ‘grooming’ Western AI?

Maxim Alyukov

IN March, NewsGuard — a company that tracks misinformation — published a report claiming that generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, were amplifying Russian disinformation. NewsGuard tested leading chatbots using prompts based on stories from the Pravda network — a group of pro-Kremlin websites mimicking legitimate outlets, first identified by the French agency Viginum. The results were alarming: Chatbots “repeated false narratives laundered by the Pravda network 33 percent of the time”, the report said.

The Pravda network, which has a rather small audience, has long puzzled researchers. Some believe that its aim was performative — to signal Russia's influence to Western observers. Others see a more insidious aim: Pravda exists not to reach people, but to “groom” the large language models (LLMs) behind chatbots, feeding them falsehoods that users would unknowingly encounter.

NewsGuard said in its report that its findings confirm the second suspicion. This claim gained traction, prompting dramatic headlines in The Washington Post, Forbes, France 24, Der Spiegel, and elsewhere.

But for us and other researchers, this conclusion doesn't hold up. First, the methodology NewsGuard used is opaque: It did not release its prompts and refused to share them with journalists, making independent replication impossible.

Second, the study design likely inflated the results, and the figure of 33 percent could be misleading. Users ask chatbots about everything from cooking tips to climate change; NewsGuard tested them exclusively on prompts linked to the Pravda network. Two-thirds of its prompts were explicitly crafted to provoke falsehoods or present them as facts. Responses urging the user to be cautious about claims because they are not verified were counted as disinformation. The study set out to find disinformation — and it did.

This episode reflects a broader problematic dynamic shaped by fast-moving tech, media hype, bad actors, and lagging research. With disinformation and misinformation ranked as the top global risk among experts by the World Economic Forum, the concern about their spread is justified. But knee-jerk reactions risk distorting the problem, offering a simplistic view of complex AI.

It's tempting to believe that Russia is intentionally “poisoning” Western AI as part of a cunning plot. But alarmist framings obscure more plausible explanations — and generate harm.

So, can chatbots reproduce Kremlin talking points or cite dubious Russian sources? Yes. But how often this happens, whether it reflects Kremlin manipulation, and what conditions make users encounter it are far from settled. Much depends on the “black box” — that is, the underlying algorithm — by which chatbots retrieve

information.

We conducted our own audit, systematically testing ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, and Grok using disinformation-related prompts. In addition to retesting the few examples NewsGuard provided in its report, we designed new prompts ourselves. Some were general — for example, claims about US bio labs in Ukraine; others were hyper-specific — for example, allegations about NATO facilities in certain Ukrainian towns.

If the Pravda network was “grooming” AI, we would see references to it across the answers chatbots generate, whether general or specific.

We did not see this in our findings. In contrast to NewsGuard's 33 percent, our prompts generated false claims only 5 percent of the time. Just 8 percent of outputs referenced Pravda websites — and most of those did so to debunk the content. Crucially, Pravda references were concentrated in queries poorly covered by mainstream outlets. This supports the data void hypothesis: When chatbots lack credible material, they sometimes pull from dubious sites — not because they have been groomed, but because there is little else available.

If data voids, not Kremlin infiltration, are the problem, then it means disinformation exposure results from information scarcity — not a powerful propaganda machine. Furthermore, for users to actually encounter disinformation in chatbot replies, several conditions

must align: They must ask about obscure topics in specific terms; those topics must be ignored by credible outlets; and the chatbot must lack guardrails to deprioritize dubious sources.

Even then, such cases are rare and often short-lived. Data voids close quickly as reporting catches up, and even when they persist, chatbots often debunk the claims. While technically possible, such situations are very rare outside of artificial conditions designed to trick chatbots into repeating disinformation.

The danger of overhyping Kremlin AI manipulation is real. Some counter-disinformation experts suggest the Kremlin's campaigns may themselves be designed to amplify Western fears, overwhelming fact-checkers and counter-disinformation units. Margarita Simonyan, a prominent Russian propagandist, routinely cites Western research to tout the supposed influence of the government-funded TV network, RT, she leads.

Indiscriminate warnings about disinformation can backfire, prompting support for repressive policies, eroding trust in democracy, and encouraging people to assume credible content is false. Meanwhile, the most visible threats risk eclipsing quieter — but potentially more dangerous — uses of AI by malign actors, such as for generating malware reported by both Google and OpenAI.

Separating real concerns from inflated fears is crucial. Disinformation is a challenge — but so is the panic it provokes.

# How Western governments avoid confronting Israel

Chris Doyle

FLYING in the teeth of mass public opinion, governments allergic to getting tough with Israel have deployed a host of tactics to put off implementing any measures that might hold it to account. In doing so, they have been prepared to smash much-cherished ethical principles and norms, as well as international law.

Keeping the US administration happy is a cornerstone of the approach of many leaders, no matter how many atrocities or crimes against humanity Israel perpetrates.

This has contaminated the entire international system.

The most egregious failing is not just to ignore the crimes, but to be complicit with Israel's genocide in Gaza and its regime of apartheid. But the complicity brings additional side effects — notably the trivialization of values most of us hold dear.

Above all, this has meant hollowing out the international legal system. The International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court are only respected when ruling against the foes of Western powers. When the latter issued an arrest warrant for Israeli leaders, the US sanctioned the court's key actors.

The UK has been an alarming exemplar of this. The actions of the government have trivialized ter-

rorism, racism and antisemitism, while belittling genocide, war crimes and rape.

Last week, the British government decided to proscribe as terrorist a pro-Palestine protest group that engages in direct action. It is now a criminal offence to join or to express support for Palestine Action, punishable by up to 14 years in prison. This move came as part of a bill that lumped it together with two genuinely violent neo-Nazi organizations, helping to ensure the legislation passed through Parliament. This came after four members of Palestine Action, protesting against Israel's genocide, broke into a British military base and spray painted aircraft red. Vandalism, yes; criminal, certainly; but hardly terrorism.

The farcical nature of the legislation was exposed when police arrested 27 protesters on the day it came into effect. One of them was an 83-year-old female priest.

Terrorism should always be treated as a serious offence. Yet those who spray paint buildings and aircraft are now in the same category as those who blow themselves up at pop concerts, for example. Police resources risk being diverted away from genuinely violent groups.

This will, by design, have massive implications for the right to protest and

the right to free speech.

The chilling effect on the movement for Palestinian rights will be Arctic. It echoes the way in which ministers in the previous government described pro-Palestinian protests as “hate marches.”

Racism and antisemitism have also been trivialized and for similar reasons. The weaponization of antisemitism by anti-Palestinian groups has often been echoed in government statements.

A once pretty obscure rap act has become known globally owing to one of its member's chant at the Glastonbury Festival of “death, death to the IDF.” All death chants are vile, but this soon mutated in headlines into being an antisemitic chant calling for the killing of Israelis, which it was not. The Israeli army has been conducting genocide and war crimes, livestreamed to the world.

The British government has voiced more criticism of the BBC for not cutting its live feed of this show than it has of the incitement to genocide by Israeli leaders.

Serious acts of antisemitism are all too frequent, such as the arson attack on the oldest synagogue in Melbourne last week. So, when government ministers pitch in to this weaponization, it jeopardizes the fight against real antisemitism. It blurs

the line between legitimate political speech and prohibited speech.

As for anti-Arab racism, this remains the least discussed and researched form of racism imaginable. This is quite something when the people of Gaza are the victims of genocide and all Palestinians under Israeli control suffer from varying degrees of institutionalized discrimination as part of its regime of apartheid.

All this threatens freedom of speech. Add to that the way in which many states or cities have banned pro-Palestinian demonstrations or even the flying of the Palestinian flag. Israel has destroyed every single university in Gaza, but in the US the issue has been reduced to alleged antisemitism on college campuses.

It is a deliberate exercise in distraction and diversion. Get the debate on to antisemitism or the nature of protests and the media focus switches away from the real crimes on the ground — every single day, the Israeli military's killing and starvation machine is at work in Gaza. The distraction allows governments to avoid having to answer why they are doing so little to stop Israel.

The combination of trivialization and distraction is part of the complicity of these governments. They treat the public as fools, but people are not blind to their leaders' abject moral failure on Palestine.

# Why we need to retire the term ‘pro-Palestinian’

Ibrahim Abusharif

A July 5 CNN article reported on three incidents in Melbourne, Australia: attempted arson at a synagogue, a confrontation at a restaurant and three cars set on fire near a business. The piece was scant on the details of the alleged crimes and the identities of the perpetrators, but it did clarify that the business “has been targeted by pro-Palestine protesters in the past”.

That the author chose to conflate activism in support of the Palestinian cause with violent acts that are low on facts and high on conjecture is indicative of how Western media have come to operate. Media reports are increasingly linking by default acts of aggression to activism they call “pro-Palestinian”.

Here are more examples: Before his name was released, we learned that a gunman shouted, “Free, free Palestine,” in a shooting rampage that killed two Israeli embassy staff members outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, DC, on May 21. Reports linked the suspect to what news outlets described as “pro-Palestinian” advocacy.

When on June 1 an Egyptian national attacked demonstrators voicing support of Israel in Colorado, the media also linked the incident to “pro-Palestinian protests”.

Softly landing on the term “pro-Palestinian” allows reporters to meet editorial standards for brevity. But brevity is not a fixed journalistic value. Accurately informing the public is.

The word “pro-Palestinian” has become political shorthand for a well-worn and misleading coupling: Palestinian advocacy and violence. Stripped of critical context, the term offers news consumers a reductive explanation — a violent act distilled and opaquely linked to “Palestinian” entities as imagined and understood through a narrow and distorted lens.

.....

The word “pro-Palestinian” has become political shorthand for a well-worn and misleading coupling: Palestinian advocacy and violence. Stripped of critical context, the term offers news consumers a reductive explanation — a violent act distilled and opaquely linked to “Palestinian” entities as imagined and understood through a narrow and distorted lens. A failure to engage with contexts is not neutral omission. Rather, it is an affront to knowledge processes and a bow to power structures that govern mainstream journalistic storytelling. What historical, cultural and religious claims do Palestinians make? Most news consumers in the West are unprepared to answer this question. In a closed information ecology, they rarely encounter these claims in full — or at all. Like many who have followed the historical arc of all things Palestine or reported on it, I've used the term pro-Palestinian myself. It felt functional at the time: concise and seemingly understood. Now, however, that shorthand misleads. Any word that is prefaced by “pro-” demands honest re-examination. When circumstances shift and new meanings emerge, the hyphenation clanks as anachronistic. We're in one of those moments — a circumstance that is the epicentre of global opprobrium, humanitarian collapse and spectacular moral failure. To describe activism and peaceful protests against the genocidal violence in Gaza as “pro-Palestinian” is disparaging. Opposing the strategic starvation of a trapped population is hardly pro-Palestinian. It is pro-humanity.

.....

A failure to engage with contexts is not neutral omission. Rather, it is an affront to knowledge processes and a bow to power structures that govern mainstream journalistic storytelling.

What historical, cultural and religious claims do Palestinians make? Most news consumers in the West are unprepared to answer this question. In a closed information ecology, they rarely encounter these claims in full — or at all.

Like many who have followed the historical arc of all things Palestine or reported on it, I've used the term pro-Palestinian myself. It felt functional at the time: concise and seemingly understood.

Now, however, that shorthand misleads. Any word that is prefaced by “pro-” demands honest re-examination. When circumstances shift and new meanings emerge, the hyphenation clanks as anachronistic. We're in one of those moments — a circumstance that is the epicentre of global opprobrium, humanitarian collapse and spectacular moral failure.

To describe activism and peaceful protests against the genocidal violence in Gaza as “pro-Palestinian” is disparaging. Opposing the strate-

gic starvation of a trapped population is hardly pro-Palestinian. It is pro-humanity.

Is it “pro-Palestinian” to call for the end of violence that has claimed the lives of more than 18,000 children? Is it “pro-Palestinian” to call for the end of starvation that has killed dozens of children and elderly? Is it “pro-Palestinian” to express outrage at Gaza parents forced to carry body parts of their children in plastic bags?

The term “pro-Palestinian” operates within a false linguistic economy. It flattens a grossly unequal reality into a story of competing sides as if an occupied, bombarded and displaced people were an equal side to one of the most advanced armies in the world.

Gaza is not a side. Gaza is, as one UNICEF official put it, a “graveyard for children”. It is a place where journalists are killed for bearing witness, where hospitals are obliterated and universities reduced to rubble, where the international community is failing to uphold minimal standards of human rights.

In an era of impatience with rigour, “pro-Palestinian” is the rhetorical crutch that satisfies the manufactured need for immediate alignment (fandom) without critical thought. It permits bad-faith actors to stigmatise dissent, dismiss moral clarity and delegitimise outrage.

To call Elias Rodriguez, who carried out the shooting in Washington, DC, a “pro-Palestinian” shooter is a framing device that invites readers to interpret words of Palestinian solidarity as potential precursors to violence. It encourages institutions, including universities, to conflate advocacy with extremism and put a chill on free expression on campus.

Obfuscations in the conventions of reportage, euphemism or rhetorical hedging are the last things

.....

we need in this catastrophic moment. What's needed is clarity and precision.

Let us try something radical: Let us say what we mean. When people protest the destruction of lineage and tillage in Gaza, they are not “taking a side” in some abstract pro-and-con debate. They are affirming the value of life. They are rejecting the idea that one people's suffering must remain invisible for another's comfort.

If people are advocating for human rights, then say so. If they believe that Palestinian life is worthy of dignity, safety and memory, say so.

And if they are calling for the “liberation” of Palestine and use phrases like “free Palestine” — phrases charged with decades of political, historical and emotional weight — that too deserves clarity and context. Liberation and freedom in most of these calls do not imply violence but a demand for freedom from occupation, siege, starvation, statelessness, and killing and imprisonment with impunity.

Collapsing these diverse expressions into a vague label like “pro-Palestinian” blurs reality and deepens public misunderstanding.



# Today’s trade deadline was no such thing

THREE months later, President Donald Trump’s endgame for his once market-rattling tariffs was supposed to arrive tonight at midnight. But it won’t.

As the clock rapidly ticked toward the long-standing July 9 end of Trump’s 90-day pause on soaring “reciprocal” tariff rates on more than 60 countries, Trump on Monday signed an executive action extending that reprieve until August 1.

Despite significant progress with several trading partners, including India, Brazil, the European Union and several Asian countries, according to US officials, the global financial system has started to grapple with the reality that the deals, the details and even the deadline sit in a state of limbo.

Trump’s top trade and economic advisors insisted, as they have for the better part of the last

financial system. Trump didn’t mention that several BRICS countries are top US trade partners and currently engaged in intensive bilateral trade talks with Trump’s lead negotiators.

The actual deadline – whether August 1 or some future date Trump announces on social media – is a lot like the months-long bilateral talks launched in early April: fuzzy on actual details, light on actual outcomes, ambiguous on actual goals, all while projecting unflinchingly bold predictions of success.

All of it, most critically, contingent on the whims of the current inhabitant of the Oval Office.

“When you think about it, it’s kind of the perfect window into the whole second term approach,” a trade lawyer who worked in Trump’s first term told CNN.

“Everything revolves around the pres-

Phil Mattingly

cerned about is the quality of the deals, not the quantity,” Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Monday on CNBC.

The US economy has held up and overcome the dire predictions of catastrophe that sent the stock and bond markets into a sustained period of tumult through the spring. Wall Street has settled into a general state of Zen about Trump’s actual tariff intentions after a series of pauses and de-escalations.

The general exhaustion consuming investors after months on a hair trigger isn’t an insignificant factor driving that view, according to several market participants, who nonetheless expressed little anxiety about the optimism that has driven stocks to record highs.

Trump just signed the cornerstone of his legislative agenda into law,

merce.

Trump has inked a trade framework with the UK (which wasn’t actually subject to the stratospheric “reciprocal” rates announced on April 2 in the Rose Garden). The granular details of that agreement are still in process, officials said.

Trump announced on social media last week that he’d signed off on a deal with Vietnam, which was facing a catastrophic 46% “reciprocal” rate at the end of the 90-day pause. The agreement would implement a 20% tariff on the country and a more draconian penalty on goods deemed by the US to be of Chinese origin but passed through Vietnam to avoid harsher tariffs.

The details remain opaque on how exactly that would be applied – or defined – and Vietnamese officials have been more cautious about declaring the agreement final.

It has been a whirlwind since then: Trump then announced on social media late Sunday night that he’d begin sending letters outlining the tariff rates or terms of bilateral agreements to trading partners. Then he announced a 25% tariff on Japan and South Korea and higher tariffs on a number of smaller trading partners Monday, with more letters expected to come in the days ahead. He also launched a new tariff threat at the 10-nation bloc known as BRICS, which he’s long viewed as a direct and acute threat to US dominance in the global financial system. Trump didn’t mention that several BRICS countries are top US trade partners and currently engaged in intensive bilateral trade talks with Trump’s lead negotiators. The actual deadline – whether August 1 or some future date Trump announces on social media – is a lot like the months-long bilateral talks launched in early April: fuzzy on actual details, light on actual outcomes, ambiguous on actual goals, all while projecting unflinchingly bold predictions of success. All of it, most critically, contingent on the whims of the current inhabitant of the Oval Office. “When you think about it, it’s kind of the perfect window into the whole second term approach,” a trade lawyer who worked in Trump’s first term told CNN. “Everything revolves around the president, and you can safely assume he rather enjoys everything that entails.” Trump has spent the last 80-plus days fielding a steady stream of offers with concessions on market access for US products, reduced tariff rates, delayed tax and regulatory enforcement for US-based companies and a veritable potpourri of offers on unrelated policy matters thought to be important to his domestic agenda, according to multiple people involved in the process. Trump views the deadline – or deadlines – as the most critical leverage to squeeze trading partners for a few more concessions or to drop their own red lines in the ongoing bilateral talks, officials said. In other words, the pervasive uncertainty and ambiguity are kind of the point. “I think what President Trump is concerned about is the quality of the deals, not the quantity,” Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Monday on CNBC. The US economy has held up and overcome the dire predictions of catastrophe that sent the stock and bond markets into a sustained period of tumult through the spring. Wall Street has settled into a general state of Zen about Trump’s actual tariff intentions after a series of pauses and de-escalations. The general exhaustion consuming investors after months on a hair trigger isn’t an insignificant factor driving that view, according to several market participants, who nonetheless expressed little anxiety about the optimism that has driven stocks to record highs. Trump just signed the cornerstone of his legislative agenda into law, a major win. At the same time, the US has collected \$81.5 billion in tariff revenue through June, according to the US Customs and Border Protection, only serving to bolster Trump’s position, officials say. “In his mind, he’s in a no-lose situation,” the former official said. “He’s going to keep amping up the pressure.” That’s the backdrop to keep in mind throughout the critical week ahead. The Trump administration has announced two bilateral agreements and a third with China that is better described as a de-escalation than a deal. That’s not to dismiss the China détente, as the de facto trade embargo between the world’s two largest economies that existed in April carried with it the potential to fracture the backbone of global commerce. Trump has inked a trade framework with the UK (which wasn’t actually subject to the stratospheric “reciprocal” rates announced on April 2 in the Rose Garden). The granular details of that agreement are still in process, officials said. Trump announced on social media last week that he’d signed off on a deal with Vietnam, which was facing a catastrophic 46% “reciprocal” rate at the end of the 90-day pause. The agreement would implement a 20% tariff on the country and a more draconian penalty on goods deemed by the US to be of Chinese origin but passed through Vietnam to avoid harsher tariffs.

two months, that deals will be announced in rapid succession this week. They also spent Sunday telling the world that tariff rates wouldn’t snap back into place until August 1, in an implicit hedge if those deal predictions once again proved hollow.

It has been a whirlwind since then: Trump then announced on social media late Sunday night that he’d begin sending letters outlining the tariff rates or terms of bilateral agreements to trading partners. Then he announced a 25% tariff on Japan and South Korea and higher tariffs on a number of smaller trading partners Monday, with more letters expected to come in the days ahead.

He also launched a new tariff threat at the 10-nation bloc known as BRICS, which he’s long viewed as a direct and acute threat to US dominance in the global

ident, and you can safely assume he rather enjoys everything that entails.”

Keeping trading partners on their toes

Trump has spent the last 80-plus days fielding a steady stream of offers with concessions on market access for US products, reduced tariff rates, delayed tax and regulatory enforcement for US-based companies and a veritable potpourri of offers on unrelated policy matters thought to be important to his domestic agenda, according to multiple people involved in the process.

Trump views the deadline – or deadlines – as the most critical leverage to squeeze trading partners for a few more concessions or to drop their own red lines in the ongoing bilateral talks, officials said. In other words, the pervasive uncertainty and ambiguity are kind of the point.

“I think what President Trump is con-

a major win.

At the same time, the US has collected \$81.5 billion in tariff revenue through June, according to the US Customs and Border Protection, only serving to bolster Trump’s position, officials say.

“In his mind, he’s in a no-lose situation,” the former official said. “He’s going to keep amping up the pressure.”

That’s the backdrop to keep in mind throughout the critical week ahead.

The agreements so far

The Trump administration has announced two bilateral agreements and a third with China that is better described as a de-escalation than a deal. That’s not to dismiss the China détente, as the de facto trade embargo between the world’s two largest economies that existed in April carried with it the potential to fracture the backbone of global com-

The letters

We got our first glimpse Monday of Trump’s regularly promised trade letters, with missives sent to the leaders of South Korea, Japan, South Africa, Malaysia and several others that the president posted to Truth Social. He decried America’s imbalance of trade with those countries, as well as tariffs and other non-tariff barriers they place on US goods. Trump said the door was open to negotiation, but he threatened the countries with higher tariffs if they retaliate. Is this how trade talks actually work? Not normally.

Bessent during his CNBC interview described the contents like this: “Thank you for wanting to trade with the United States of America. We welcome you as a trading partner, and here’s the rate unless you want to come back and try to negotiate.”

# New axis for resilient growth

FAJAR HIRAWAN

WHEN leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council and China convened in Kuala Lumpur in May for the inaugural ASEAN-China-GCC Summit, expectations were high that the event would redefine trade diplomacy for the Global South. Against the backdrop of rising tariff barriers and escalating protectionism, this new trilateral alignment — now widely referred to as the “China-ASEAN+” model — is emerging as a vital counterweight. It offers a pragmatic framework for inclusive global development at a time when the traditional multilateral order is under strain.

The global economy remains in flux. Although a recent partial truce has paused the escalation of United States-China trade tensions, key tariffs remain in place — particularly those targeting Chinese electric vehicles, solar components and critical technologies. This reflects the persistence of strategic decoupling and continues to disrupt global value chains, prompting countries in Asia and the Gulf to recalibrate their economic strategies.

In this environment, the “China-ASEAN+” model emerges as a compelling antidote. It fosters cross-regional South-South partnerships that facilitate trade, investment and innovation through tariff-light corridors.

In 2024, trade between China and ASEAN reached \$982 billion, with an additional \$234 billion recorded in Q1 2025 — placing ASEAN firmly as China’s top trading partner. Meanwhile, China-GCC trade surged to \$288 billion in 2024.

Together, this triangular alliance represents a \$25 trillion economic zone encompassing over 2 billion people. It binds together commodity exporters, advanced manufacturers and capital-rich nations in a networked model of growth.

Unlike traditional blocs formed around security pacts or ideological alliances, the “China-ASEAN+” model is rooted in economic complementarity.

China offers advanced manufacturing capabilities, digital infrastructure and green technology. ASEAN contributes abundant natural resources, scalable industrial capacity, and a young, dynamic labor force. The GCC brings energy wealth and deep pools of investment capital.

This synergy is already producing tangible results. Notably, Indonesia’s \$6 billion electric vehicle battery complex, developed by CATL, Indonesia Battery Corporation and other partners, broke ground in West Java. Saudi Arabia is committed to co-developing Indonesia’s nickel and copper mining projects.

In the digital economy,

ASEAN’s Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) aims to generate \$2 trillion in digital output by 2030. China supplies the core infrastructure (such as 5G and e-commerce platforms), while the Gulf sovereign wealth funds are financing data center expansions across the region. A trilateral green finance platform can be launched to merge GCC capital, Chinese technology and ASEAN renewable energy pipelines.

For Indonesia, the “China-ASEAN+” model is not merely an economic opportunity — it is a strategic tool to achieve national development goals and diversify geopolitical dependencies.

By leveraging this platform, Indonesia can secure long-term liquefied natural gas contracts with Qatar or the United Arab Emirates, denominated in rupiah or renminbi via China’s Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS). This would help insulate its current account from dollar volatility and commodity price swings.

Indonesia’s central bank, Bank Indonesia, is reinforcing this strategy by expanding local currency settlement arrangements with key trading partners, including China, Malaysia and Thailand.

These frameworks provide exporters and importers with alternatives to dollar-based transactions, helping reduce currency risk and enhance financial stability.

Indonesia’s participation in the CIPS pilot, along with its development of a central bank digital currency under “Project Garuda”, positions the country to align with emerging financial architectures in Asia and the Gulf.

Meanwhile, market integration is progressing. China has become the largest importer of Indonesian durian. The Kuala Lumpur summit laid the groundwork for harmonized sanitary and halal standards — easing market access for Indonesian SMEs. Gulf investors such as the Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund and the UAE’s Mubadala are filling financing gaps left by Western lenders, with equity stakes in geothermal projects and interest in broader renewable sectors.

Indonesia’s e-commerce unicorns, meanwhile, are poised to integrate with China’s super apps and Gulf fintech ecosystems under a unified data governance framework, supported by ongoing DEFA negotiations.

These digital bridges are enabling Indonesian companies to scale beyond traditional markets, riding the momentum of South-South integration.

The true strategic value of the “China-ASEAN+” model lies in its ability to buffer economies from trade shocks. Each new wave of US tariffs redirects

production and trade toward lower-friction partners.

After the US raised tariffs in the last few months, ASEAN’s share of Chinese exports jumped to 16.6 percent.

Similarly, Gulf countries are increasingly transacting in renminbi and dirham to sidestep secondary US sanctions. For oil exporters and machinery importers, this kind of “currency hedging” is becoming essential in an era where finance is increasingly politicized. With Bank Indonesia strengthening local currency liquidity and modernizing payment systems, Indonesia is well-placed to thrive in this new financial landscape — without sacrificing macroeconomic stability.

That said, this model is not without risks. Maritime tensions in the South China Sea may erode investor confidence. On the trade front, the US is escalating enforcement. Anti-circumvention investigations into Vietnamese and Malaysian exports have begun, and Washington is weighing the removal of Generalized System of Preferences privileges. If ASEAN’s growing trade role is mischaracterized as a conduit for tariff evasion, it may invite external scrutiny.

To reap the full benefits while managing downside risks, Indonesia should move swiftly on several fronts. Ratifying the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 would ease rules-of-origin restrictions, helping exporters avoid transshipment accusations. Deepening participation in the CIPS pilot could enable cross-border rupiah settlements for key commodities such as nickel and LNG — furthering the de-dollarization agenda.

Issuing green sukuk, a type of Islamic bond, aligned with both Chinese and Saudi ESG taxonomies, would unlock diversified investment flows. Leading efforts to harmonize ASEAN-GCC halal standards would elevate Indonesia’s role as a global Islamic economy hub.

The world is unlikely to return to the pre-2018 era of free trade and multilateralism.

But rather than choosing sides in a binary geopolitical contest, Indonesia can leverage the “China-ASEAN+” model to enhance resilience, access new markets and assert economic autonomy. In line with its *bebas-aktif* (independent and active) foreign policy tradition, this approach is not anti-Western — it is a pragmatic hedge against uncertainty.

The opportunity now is to convert bold summit declarations into concrete cooperative moves. With careful diplomacy and economic foresight, Indonesia can help shape a new era of shared prosperity before the next wave of protectionism closes yet another chapter in global growth.

— China Daily

# Can Mamdani become the next New York City mayor?

WHEN you land in New York these days, all the talk is about Zohran Mamdani, the young immigrant politician who last month won the Democratic Party’s nomination to be its candidate for mayor of New York City, winning easily against more powerful candidates. His challenge now is to win the mayoral election in November despite a national campaign, led by President Donald Trump, to discredit him, including threats to arrest or deport him.

At a highly polarized time in American politics, in which conservatives have the upper hand, Mamdani’s stunning success is an anomaly. He is not only a member of the Democratic Party, but also of the Democratic Socialists of America, a leftist political organization and the largest socialist grouping in the country.

He has taken on New York’s dominant landlords,

real estate developers and Wall Street tycoons. At a time of nativist revolt against immigrants, Mamdani bucks that trend as an immigrant who was born in Uganda 33 years ago and who became a naturalized US citizen just seven years ago.

More astonishingly, in a city long known for its politicians’ blind support of Israel and with the largest Jewish population outside Israel, Mamdani has been a strong supporter of Palestinian rights and has criticized Israel’s Gaza campaign, vowing that as mayor he would seek to arrest Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the outstanding International Criminal Court warrant. Nevertheless, he has gained the respect and votes of many Jewish New Yorkers, especially those who oppose Israel’s policies and those who prioritize local issues such as eldercare, paid family leave, rising prices and affordable housing.

Mamdani’s appeal to

New Yorkers, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion, appears to be a function of his focus on economic issues and improving living conditions and housing affordability, in addition to his direct and open communication style. He addresses their everyday struggles and offers concrete, easily understood solutions, including free public transport, rent freezes and tax increases on the wealthy to fund social programs.

In a city long plagued by corrupt politicians, nothing incriminating has surfaced about his political career as an assemblyman. In the murky style of New York politics, corruption has been the norm for decades, chronicled in numerous books, movies and TV series. As such, Mamdani stands out as a rare honest politician.

Mamdani’s status as a naturalized citizen and recent immigrant appeals to many in New York, where more than 35 percent are foreign born, hailing from more

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

than 150 countries.

Historically, when candidates win the Democratic nomination for New York mayor, they are assured of winning the election because it is primarily a one-party city. In 2024, 56 percent of registered voters identified as Democrats, 26 percent as Republicans and 18 percent as neither. As such, Mamdani has a very good chance of winning in November, except for the fact that he is now facing a storm of opposition, not only from his New York rivals and big business, but also from across the country.

Andrew Cuomo, who lost the Democratic primary to Mamdani, may now run as an independent. Cuomo has a large following among Democrats, but he is weakened by the fact that he is a disgraced former governor who was forced to resign in 2021 in the face of numerous allegations of sexual misconduct.

Current Mayor Eric

Adams may also run against Mamdani, but he too comes with baggage. In September 2024, he was indicted on federal charges of bribery, fraud and soliciting illegal foreign campaign donations. He was saved only by the Trump administration, which instructed federal prosecutors to drop the charges against him. Conservative businessmen and anti-Palestinian politicians are supporting the rivals running against Mamdani in the November election. Led by billionaire hedge fund manager Bill Ackman, they are trying to raise astronomical funds to oppose him, despite the fact the millions they previously raised for Cuomo were not enough to stop him being well beaten by Mamdani in the primary. However, the biggest obstacle Mamdani is facing is the campaign led by the White House, which could sink his candidacy if it persists.

After he won the primary,

controversy over Mamdani’s immigration status intensified, with calls to strip him of his US citizenship. Rep. Andy Ogles, a Republican, wrote to Attorney General Pam Bondi calling for an investigation into Mamdani, saying that “he may have procured US citizenship through willful misrepresentation or concealment of material support for terrorism.”

In a post on X, Ogles went further: “Mamdani is an antisemitic, socialist, communist who will destroy the great city of New York. He needs to be deported.” Similarly unhinged comments were made by Rudy Giuliani, the controversial former New York mayor.

When Trump was asked about Mamdani’s pledge to stop masked Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents “from deporting our neighbors,” he said: “Well, then, we’ll have to arrest him.” Calling him a “pure communist,” Trump threatened to cut off funds to New York if Mamdani becomes

mayor and “doesn’t behave himself.” “We don’t need a communist in this country, but if we have one, I’m going to be watching over him very carefully on behalf of the nation,” said the president.

Trump later doubled down on the “communist” label and referred to the claims that Mamdani may have obtained his citizenship illegally. “We’re going to be watching that very carefully. A lot of people are saying he’s here illegally. We’re going to look at everything, but ideally, he’s going to turn out to be much less than a communist. Right now, he’s a communist, that’s not a socialist,” Trump said. Trump’s distinction between communism and socialism is an acknowledgement of the fact that Mamdani would not be the first “socialist” to be elected mayor of New York, and that scores of American cities have had socialist mayors in the past without them being destroyed. Last Thursday,

Trump described Mamdani as a “communist at the highest level,” saying that he wants to “destroy” New York City, but “we’re not gonna let him do that.”

If Trump’s relentless campaign continues, it could make it difficult for Mamdani to win the mayoralty in November.

In response to the White House’s attacks, Democratic politicians have come to Mamdani’s defense. Sen. Chris Murphy denounced calls to denaturalize Mamdani, saying that “Trump will stop at nothing to protect billionaires and price-gouging corporations.” He added: “Zohran won because he ran a campaign laser-focused on putting power back in the hands of working people.” Others have come to Mamdani’s defense, but nothing can match the White House’s influence in these matters. If he were to win in November, it would be one of the most stunning upsets in American political history.





# Revival of manufacturing sector: SCCI welcomes government's initiatives

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has welcomed the government's announcement of a new industrial policy for revival of the country's declining manufacturing sector.

However, it cautioned that without immediate, inclusive, and practical measures, the manufacturing sector—already gasping for survival—may face irreversible collapse.

Fazal Moqem Khan, president Abdul Jalil Jan, senior vice president and Shehryar Khan, vice president and members of the SCCI's executive committee in a joint statement issued here on Tuesday took a stance that the announcement signals recognition of the crisis, the

business community, particularly industrialists, are standing at the edge of despair.

Senior office bearers went on to say that skyrocketing energy costs, an unpredictable policy environment, insecurity, and a crippling taxation regime have rendered operations unsustainable for many manufacturers, especially small and medium enterprises,

"Our factories are shutting down, our machines are falling silent, and our workers are being laid off. If this continues, we won't just lose industrial output—we'll lose hope," the SCCI said.

President Fazal Moqem Khan expressed serious concern over the consistent decline in the industrial sector's share in GDP—

from 26% in 1996 to just 18% in 2025—calling it not just a number but a reflection of lost jobs, shuttered businesses, and fading confidence in Pakistan's economic future.

The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief, while appreciating the proposed steps such as fiscal incentives, legal reforms, and industrial rehabilitation, stressed that without direct and meaningful engagement with stakeholders, including regional chambers, these efforts may once again remain limited to paper.

"The policies designed in Islamabad must reflect the ground realities of Faisalabad, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta," Moqem added.

"Decisions made without us, will not serve us."

The SCCI president emphasized that the true revival of industry requires bold political will, structural reforms, and an enabling environment where enterprise is rewarded—not punished.

Fazal Moqem urged the government to prioritize transparency, predictability, and regional inclusivity in the implementation of this policy.

Reiterating its commitment, the SCCI president pledged full cooperation in any sincere efforts aimed at pulling the country's industrial sector back from the brink—but warned that time is running out.

"We are not asking for favors; we are demanding our right to survive, contribute, and grow. The economy cannot thrive if its industries are in free fall."

## Pakistan Stock Exchange's KSE-100 Index gains 33 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index gained 33.04 points, on Tuesday, a positive change of 0.02 percent, closing at 133,403.19 points against 133,370.15 points last trading day.

A total of 1,206,524,901 shares were traded during the day as compared to 919,907,440 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 42.028 billion against Rs 45.311 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 480 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 217 of them recorded gains and 231 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 32 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were TPL Properties with 96,716,252 shares at Rs 10.72 per share, WorldCall Telecom

with 64,365,959 shares at Rs 1.60 per share and Hascol Petrol with 47,695,588 shares at Rs 11.33 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 138.42 per share price, closing at Rs 7,224.92, whereas the runner-up was Indus Motor Company Limited with Rs 92.36 rise in its per share price to Rs 2,021.18.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs2,138.50 per share closing at Rs 19,649.09 followed by Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs160.51 decline in its share price to close at Rs23,238.64.

**Rupee loses 15 paise against US Dollar**

The Rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 15 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 284.36 against

the previous day's closing of Rs 284.21.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.7 and Rs 286.85 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 0.48 to close at Rs 334.29 against the last day's closing of Rs 333.81, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen depreciated by 01 paise and was traded at Rs1.94 against Rs.1.95, whereas an increase of Rs 1.06 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 387.71 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 386.65.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 04 paise and 05 paise to

close at Rs 77.41 and Rs 75.82 respectively.

**Gold up by Rs.1,500 to Rs.354,500 per tola**

The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.1,500 and was traded at Rs.354,500 on Tuesday as compared to its sale at Rs. 353,000 on the last trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs1,286 to Rs.303,926 from Rs. 302,640 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went up by Rs.1,178 to Rs.278,608 from Rs. 277,430

The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,841 and Rs.3,293 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$15 to \$3,325 from \$3,310, whereas that of silver remained stagnant at \$36.57, the Association reported.



PESHAWAR: Patron-in-Chief of Sarhad Business Alliance Haji Ghulam Ali visiting affected shops and residence in fire incident.

## NSPC amalgamates into PSPC

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Security Printing Corporation (Private) Limited (PSPC) is pleased to announce the amalgamation of its recently acquired wholly owned subsidiary, National Security Printing Company (Private) Limited (NSPC), with and into PSPC with effect from the start of business on July 1, 2025. As a result of this amalgamation, all assets, liabilities, rights, obligations, undertakings, and contracts of NSPC now stand amalgamated and vested permanently in PSPC. NSPC has ceased to exist as a separate legal entity from the date of amalgamation, and has been dissolved without winding up.

PSPC, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the State Bank of Pakistan, acquired NSPC from the Federal Government. The acquisition has been carried out in order to achieve operational synergies and enhance value for the customers. This strategic integration will result in improved resource utilization and greater coordination in the delivery of security printing services. It will also provide an opportunity to serve the customers with better, innovative products.

All stakeholders and customers of NSPC in public and private sector will continue to receive the services under the existing arrangements without any disruption. PSPC remains fully committed to meeting its obligations and looks forward to working with its customers for delivering high-quality products and services.

## Ghulam Ali expresses deep sorrow over tragic fire incident in City

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Patron-in-Chief of Sarhad Business Alliance Haji Ghulam Ali has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic fire incident in Kochi Bazaar, Peshawar, which claimed the lives of four people, including a husband and wife. Terming the incident as a serious failure of the provincial government and rescue services, he questioned, "Despite spending millions of rupees, when will our institutions become upgraded and professional enough to prevent such disasters?"

He made these remarks while speaking to the media during a condolence visit to the affected shops and residence in Chowk Nasir Khan, Kochi Bazaar. He was accompanied by Chairman Sarhad Business Alliance and former Provincial Minister Syed Zahir Ali Shah, and President of Tajir Tanzeem and former Provincial

Minister Malik Mehr Elahi.

The delegation met the affected traders of the bazaar, extended condolences, and expressed their heartfelt solidarity with the victims. Haji Ghulam Ali said that the fire not only caused the heartbreaking loss of four precious lives but also completely destroyed shops and residential property.

During the visit, the delegation met with local traders, including Bazaar President Zahoor and other senior members, and conveyed that the incident was not just an accident - it turned a family's lifetime of hard work into ashes. The government must immediately provide financial assistance and begin rehabilitation measures for the affected families.

Haji Ghulam Ali and his delegation urged the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the district administration to promptly offer compensa-

tion and reassure the families that the government stands with them in this time of grief. He also emphasized the need to support the families of the victims and to implement permanent fire safety measures in markets. He particularly called for PESCO to replace the dangerously outdated wiring in the bazaars with insulated cables.

Local residents appreciated the presence of Haji Ghulam Ali and his team, calling it a true reflection of their pain.

Also present on the occasion were religious scholars Maulana Muhammad Iqbal Shah Haidari, Qari Abdul Basit, Maulana Fazal Rabbi, Maulana Saiful-Islam, Haji Abdul Wakeel, Qari Hameedullah, and a large number of members from the trader community.

The bazaar remained completely closed as a mark of mourning over the tragic incident.

## CCP devises enforcement policy measures for targeting cartelization

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has devised the enforcement policy measure for targeting cartels and deceptive marketing practices to maintain transparency and fairness.

To ensure fair business practices in markets, the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) undertook robust enforcement measures in FY 2024-25, targeting cartelization, abuse of dominant position, and deceptive marketing practices, according to data issued by the CCP here.

The Commission initiated 24 new inquiries—11 related to cartelization and 13 concerning deceptive marketing practices. It successfully concluded 14 investigations, which were forwarded for the adjudication process.

The sectors under scrutiny included e-commerce,

telecommunications, aviation, steel, transport, edible ghee and cooking oil, pharmaceuticals, construction, commodities, and education.

The Cartel and Trade Abuse Department of the CCP, in its efforts to curb cartelization and market manipulation, initiated 11 new inquiries across various sectors, including e-commerce, telecommunications, aviation, steel, transport, edible ghee, cooking oil, and gas.

In addition, 10 ongoing inquiries from previous periods were also under investigation.

The department successfully concluded 9 inquiries, which were subsequently forwarded for adjudication.

A key case involved ten steel structure suppliers allegedly engaged in bid rigging in tenders issued by power distribution companies (DISCOs).

Another major case focused on two leading flat steel manufacturers accused of price fixing.

In the transport sector, proceedings were initiated against the Transporters Goods Association (TGA) and the Local Goods Transport Association (LGTA) for allegedly fixing freight rates for cargo transport from Port Qasim.

In the cables industry, leading companies were investigated for restricting their dealers from offering discounts below the notified prices—an act considered a prohibited agreement under Resale Price Maintenance (RPM).

The CCP's Office of Fair Trade (OFT) initiated 13 new investigations against businesses involved in deceptive marketing practices. Additionally, 8 inquiries from the previous year remained ongoing. OFT successfully concluded

five investigations—two in the pharmaceutical sector and one each in the construction, commodities, and education sectors.

Notable cases of deceptive marketing included AR Amreli Builders for unauthorized use of Amreli Steels' trademark, Panther Tyres for allegedly misleading claims of being "Pakistan's No. 1 Tyre," and FS Cosmetics for copying Dabur Amla Hair Oil's packaging—for making misleading claims.

Chairman CCP, Dr. Kabir Sidhu, stated that cartelization, market manipulation through abuse of dominance, and deceptive marketing severely harm consumer rights and distort healthy competition. He emphasized that the CCP maintains zero tolerance for such practices and is committed to taking strict action against them.

## 9 Pakistani companies to join exhibition

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Nine Pakistani companies are set to participate in Texworld NYC Summer 2025, one of the largest textile and apparel sourcing events on the East Coast, to be held at the Javits Center in New York City from July 23-25.

The event, which features over 400 international exhibitors, focuses on ethical sourcing, sustainable materials, and innovation in the textile, apparel, and home textile sectors.

The exhibition offers attendees access to high-quality clothing, home goods, and textiles from key sourcing regions worldwide.

The show floor provides professionals with resources and connections to navigate the evolving global marketplace, from advanced fabrics to sustainable sourcing solutions.

Pakistan's presence will be significant, with nine companies showcasing the nation's capabilities in fashion apparel and denim.

Six exhibitors, Mym Knitwear, Niza Sports, Chawala Enterprises, Hometex Corporation, Roomi Tex, and Baraka Textiles, will exhibit under the umbrella of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).

Az Apparel, Yarana Textiles, and Mahmood Textiles Mills will participate independently, demonstrating Pakistan's expanding role in the global textile and apparel sector.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to China witnessed a decrease of 11.19 per cent from \$2556.126 million last year to \$2270.032 million this year whereas exports to Afghanistan surged to \$723.442 million from \$511.627 million.

The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$4.085 billion, which is 13.75 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$29.690 billion during July-May (2024-25), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Pakistan carried out its border trade with farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan exports to Maldives increased by 2 per cent to \$8.588 million from \$8.419 million while exports to India decreased to \$0.405 million from \$3.428 million, it added.

On the other hand, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$15.256 billion during the period under review as compared to \$12.452 billion during last year, showing an increase of 22.51 per cent.

The imports from China during July-May 2024-25 were recorded at \$14.890 billion against the \$12.146 billion during July-May 2023-24, showing an increase of 22.58 per cent.

Among other countries, imports from India increased to \$211.419 million from \$189.075 million whereas imports from Afghanistan also increased by 142.63 per cent from \$10.188 million to \$24.720 million.

Imports from Sri Lanka surged by 1.13 per cent from \$53.629 million to \$54.238 million whereas imports from Bangladesh recorded at \$ 73.347 million from \$51.673 million during last year.

The imports from Nepal into the country were recorded at \$1.984 million as compared to \$0.366 million last year, it added.

## SECP achieves record-breaking milestones

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has made unprecedented strides in corporate registry reforms and digital transformation during fiscal year 2025.

The SECP recorded over 35,000 company incorporations in FY 2025—the highest number in a single fiscal year. Historic peaks were observed in January (3,442) and May (3,605), said a release issued here on Tuesday.

The corporate registry now encompasses over 258,000 companies, with 99.9% of incorporations processed online, reflecting a 27% year-on-year growth compared to FY 2024.

The eZfile platform has been significantly upgraded, introducing mandatory digital verification for management changes and the issuance of cybersecurity guidelines.

To further enhance the ease of doing business, SECP

launched the Electronic Mortgage Register (EMR), enabling financial institutions to access mortgage data in real time.

Additionally, SECP is working on same-day bank account integration and developing an AI-based incorporation feature to streamline company registration. The SECP remains

committed to fostering a facilitative regulatory environment.

Effective March 3, 2025, all newly incorporated companies must issue shares in dematerialized form to mitigate ownership disputes.

### Lost & Found

I Mr. Kashfudduja S/O Badrudduja holding CNIC # 16101-1635177-9 am the legal and rightful owner of Toyota Hilux Revo, model year 2018, un-registered, engine no. 1GD0427551 and chassis no. GUN126R-5530458. The original Sale Invoice and Sale Certificate of this vehicle issued in the name of Zain Ul Abiddin by Indus Motor Company Ltd. have been lost on date: 21-April-2025 in Babeene Mardan. Finder may please return these documents to: Customer Relations, Indus Motor Company Ltd., Plot # NWZ/1/P-1, Port Qasim Authority, Karachi. Telephone number (toll free): 0800 111-23.

### اطلاع عام

مکی اساتیس راؤ صاحب منجھ مگر خان مسعود احمد خان پران، مصیبت بھرت شاہین قرظان غلام حسین نے اس امر کی درخواست کردی ہے کہ غلام حسین ولد احمد خان جو کہ باغیان شپ فٹر ایس ہائی پائپر نمبر 39 دیکر 6/12 مارچ کے مالک ہے چنگے 19-11-2015 اور ریکارڈ روا، کے بیانات عام ذرائع سے حاصل نہیں کئے جاسکتے لہذا مشترکہ کامیاب ہے کہ اگر ریکارڈ کا کسی شخص کوئی اعتراض ہو تو اندر معیار پریمبر (15) دن از اشتیاد ادائیگی مداری دفتر پر ہی پیش چلی جس کے دن وہ بیانات مقدمہ درخواست جحدو کے نام پر منجھ مگر خان پران کا ہے۔

پابگ ٹھہر ایس ای ریڈیو پبلشنگ آفیس، فون نمبر 0928-633013





In brief

Scotland beat Dutch

LONDON (Agencies): Scotland's bowlers secured a narrow victory over the Netherlands and boosted hopes of T20 World Cup qualification. The Scots won the toss and batted first but George Munsey was caught by Noah Croes off the third ball of the day. Brandon McMullen, Michael Leask, Matthew Cross, Mark Watt and Safyaan Sharif also fell quickly to the Dutch bowlers. Oli Hairs' 52 offered some resistance and Richie Berrington (28) and Charlie Tear (32) also chipped in to help Scotland post 148-9. McMullen took the wickets of Max O'Dowd and Zach Lion-Cachet early in the Netherlands' innings and Sharif bowled Michael Levitt for 22. Chris Greaves added the wickets of Scott Edwards, Bas de Leede, who went lbw, and Teja Nidamanuru. With overs running out, Brad Currie bowled Roelof van der Merwe for 20 and Croes and Aryan Dutt were respectively 52 and six not out as Scotland triumphed by six runs. Doug Watson's side move on to one win and one draw from two matches after their opening match with Guernsey was rained off. The Scots' next opponents Italy have the same record while Jersey have three points from three matches. The top two will progress to next year's World Cup in India and Sri Lanka. Scotland face Italy on Wednesday before meeting Jersey two days later.

Archer can help England

LONDON (AFP): Stuart Broad believes a Test cricket return for Jofra Archer could help England hit back against India after the tourists' "borderline perfect" performance at Edgbaston. England won the series opener with a commanding last-day chase at Headingley but were thrashed in Birmingham, where India won the second Test by a colossal 336 runs. India captain Shubman Gill led from the front with a mammoth 430 runs as his side levelled the five-Test series at 1-1, with Akash Deep taking 10 wickets in this match. "Look at this series so far: we've had 10 Test match days and I reckon India have won nine of them," Broad said on his podcast ahead of the first day of the third match at Lord's on Thursday. "They are going to be way stronger because they're bringing the best bowler in the world (Jasprit Bumrah) back in on the back of a performance that was borderline perfect. That's a pretty strong place to be. "When you get such a one-sided result it's easy to be really critical of the other team but I'd lean against that, India were just superb." Archer burst onto the international scene in 2019, starring in England's 50-over World Cup triumph and drawn Ashes series. But the 30-year-old played the last of his 13 Tests in February 2021 and this season has bowled just 18 first-class overs for county side Sussex. "His attributes are amazing. He's tall, incredibly athletic, gets bounce and pace and he does move the ball," said Broad of Archer. "Time has made him more exciting as well. When he's not been around for a huge amount of time you want to tune in and see what's coming." Broad believes Archer's extra speed could even stop Gill's remarkable run-spre in its tracks. "You can picture it now, Jofra at the Pavilion End, nipping it down the slope, Shubman Gill (lbw) on the shin.



PALLEKELE: A searing Asitha Fernando yorker ended Tanzid Hasan's innings early.

Injured Shadab and Rauf out of Pakistan's squad for Bangladesh T20Is

KARACHI (AFP/APP): Pakistan on Tuesday left out injured allrounder Shadab Khan and fast bowler Haris Rauf from the fitness-hit squad for the Twenty20 international series in Bangladesh this month. Shadab, vice captain of the team during their 3-0 home win over Bangladesh last month, has undergone a shoulder operation and is recuperating in England. Rauf injured his hamstring during a T20 League game in the United States on Sunday while another pacer, Hasan Ali, is out due to his commitment in county cricket in England. Pakistan continues to leave out former captains

Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan, and spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi as selectors said they want to try some new players in the build up to the World Cup. India and Sri Lanka will co-host the Twenty20 World Cup in February-March next year. Azam and Rizwan were last part of the T20I squad in South Africa last year, while Shaheen featured on the New Zealand tour in March this year. Salman Agha will lead the side in Bangladesh where the matches will be played in Dhaka on July 20, 22 and 24. Also left out are pacers Naseem Shah and Mohammad Wasim who both continue to regain full

fitness after injuries. It left the selectors to choose uncapped pacers in 31-year-old Salman Mirza and Ahmed Daniyal, 28, who both performed well in the Pakistan Super League this year. Spinning allrounder Mohammad Nawaz returns to the squad after last playing for Pakistan in January 2024. Squad: Salman Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Nawaz, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Salman Mirza, Sufiyan Muqem.

PSF welcomes Pakistan jr squash team

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan junior squash team has made the nation proud with their impressive medal wins at the Asian Junior Individual Squash C'chip in South Korea. The contingent, including medalists Muhammad Sohail Adnan (Gold, BU-13), Nauman Khan (Gold, BU-15), Ahmed Rayyan Khalil (Silver, BU-15), Mahnoor Ali (Silver, GU-13), and Abdullah Nawaz (Bronze, BU-19), was greeted by Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) staff, officials, squash enthusiasts, and media representatives here at the Islamabad International Airport on late Monday, said a press release. A large number of squash enthusiasts were present to welcome the champions, who were showered with flowers and bouquets as a token of appreciation. A cake-cutting ceremony was also held at Pakistan Squash Federation to celebrate their remarkable achievements, marking a glorious return for our squash heroes. PSF congratulated all the players on their outstanding performance and well-deserved recognition.

Pakistan outclass Bangladesh

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan defeated Bangladesh 6-3 in the Under-18 Hockey Asia Cup 2025 in Dazhou, China. Pakistan's attack was led by Abdullah Awan and Ali Hanzala, who scored two goals each, while Asam Haider and Atif Ali added one apiece to complete a dominant performance in the encounter. Bangladesh put up a spirited fight, with Ismail Hussain netting two goals and Deen Islam contributing one, but it wasn't enough to stop Pakistan from claiming their third consecutive win of the tournament. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) lauded the team's success. PHF President Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti and Secretary General Olympian Rana Mujahid Ali Khan both congratulated the young players. In a joint message, they praised the team's performance and extended their best wishes for the crucial upcoming fixtures. With this win, Pakistan strengthens its position in the group standings and remains unbeaten in the competition. The team is now set to face host nation China in its fourth and final pool match on July 9.

Sri Lanka crush Bangladesh by 99 runs to seal ODI series

PALLEKELE (AFP): Sri Lanka stormed to a 99-run win over Bangladesh in the third and final ODI at Pallekele on Tuesday, sealing the three-match series 2-1 with a clinical all-round display. Set a challenging target of 286, Bangladesh faltered under pressure and were bundled out for 186 inside 40 overs as Sri Lanka flexed their bowling muscle to wrap up the contest with ease. The victory caps a remarkable turnaround for Sri Lanka in the 50-over format since their dismal World Cup campaign in India in 2023, where they finished ninth and failed to qualify for this year's Champions Trophy. Since that debacle, they have won seven of nine ODI series, including notable triumphs over heavyweights Australia and India. "This is probably one of our best games," Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka said. "We were under pressure and we wanted to win badly and Kusal Mendis was superb today. When we ended up scoring 285, we knew we had the runs on the board and the bowlers' job became easy."

The architect of the series-deciding win against Bangladesh was indeed Mendis, who silenced his critics with 124 off 114 balls – his sixth ODI hundred. The wicketkeeper-batter came into the game under fire after his rash dismissal during Sri Lanka's 16-run defeat in the second ODI in Colombo. But at Pallekele, with the series on the line, Mendis dropped anchor and rebuilt the innings with a mature knock laced with 18 boundaries. 'A lot of positives' Coming in during the fourth over, he put on a vital 124-run stand for the fourth wicket with skipper Asalanka to lay the foundation for a competitive total. "Very pleased with the knock today. Was disappointed with what happened in Colombo. I had got a start and couldn't finish," said Mendis, who was named man of the match and player of the series. "Here I was determined to bat through the innings and very satisfied." At one stage the hosts looked set for a 300-plus total, but Bangladesh clawed back with tight death bowling to restrict them to 285 for seven. The target proved to

be a tall ask once the tourists' top order caved in. Dushmantha Chameera, returning to the fold in this series after more than a year on the sidelines due to injury, hit the deck hard and was a handful with the new ball. The right-arm quick rattled the stumps of informant Najmul Hossain Shanto (0) with a gem that jagged back sharply to kiss the top of off. With Towhid Hridoy then offering some resistance with a half-century, Chameera returned to breach his defence with another sharp in-swinging delivery that crashed through the gate. The quick finished with three for 51 and was ably supported by Asitha Fernando, who also claimed three wickets. The two sides will now be involved in a three-match T20I series beginning Thursday, also at Pallekele. "We started off well and we tried to bat positive, but the scoreboard pressure got to us," Bangladesh captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz said. "But we are rebuilding the team and (there are) a lot of young players... we have a lot of positives."

Pogacar claims 100th victory on stage four of Tour



ROUEN (Agencies): Defending champion Tadej Pogacar outsprinted Mathieu van der Poel and Jonas Vingegaard as he claimed his 100th professional victory on stage four of the Tour de France. The result means that the Slovenian moves level on time with Dutch rider at the top of the general classification with Van der Poel retaining the leader's yellow jersey on count-back. With five categorised climbs in the final 50km of the 174.2km route into Rouen, all the main favourites were involved in a series of attacks that split the race open and delivered a compelling finale. However, Pogacar, delivered a show of strength on another classics-style stage to surge away from Van der Poel in an uphill dash to the finish having initially distanced all his rivals, bar Danish rival Vingegaard, on the short but punishing climb up the Rampe Saint-Hilaire, five kilometres out. "I hope today that everyone was on the limit. I tried with an attack on the second last climb and last climb and Jonas [Vingegaard] followed me and everything came together," Pogacar said. "Joao [Almeida] did such an amazing job to lead me out to the end even if everyone was attacking. I

am super proud of the team today. Amazing. It was such a nice victory. "To win at the Tour is incredible, in this jersey even more and it's 100 victories is amazing. "With so many good riders in the final, you're always a bit on the edge and nervous about what's going to happen. You get this adrenaline and it's pure racing and I enjoy it." It is the 18th time Pogacar, 26, has won a stage in cycling's greatest race as he goes for a fourth Tour triumph. Meanwhile, Scotland's Oscar Onley, 22, who is featuring in only his second Tour, produced a superb ride despite being delayed by a late crash to finish fourth among the elite GC riders, to move up to seventh in the overall race. On Wednesday the riders tackle the first of two individual time trials on a 33km course around Caen, on a stage that Remco Evenepoel has been tipped to triumph in. The 25-year-old Belgian world and Olympic champion in the discipline is currently almost a minute down on Pogacar in the GC race. Stage four results 1. Tadej Pogacar (Slo/UAE Team Emirates-XRG) 3hrs 50mins 29secs 2. Mathieu van der Poel (Ned/Alpecin - Deceuninck) Same time

3. Jonas Vingegaard (Den/Visma - Lease a Bike) " 4. Oscar Onley (GB/Picnic PostNL) " 5. Romain Grégoire (Fra/Groupama - FDJ) " 6. Joao Almeida (Por/UAE Team Emirates - XRG) " 7. Remco Evenepoel (Bel/Soudal Quick-Step) +3secs 8. Matteo Jorgenson (US/Visma-Lease a Bike) " 9. Mattias Skjelmose (Den/Lidl-Trek)+7secs 10. Kévin Vauquelin (Fra/Arkea-B&B Hotels) +10secs General classification after stage four 1. Mathieu Van der Poel (Ned - Alpecin-Deceuninck) 16hrs 46mins 00secs 2. Tadej Pogacar (UAE Team Emirates-XRG) Same time 3. Jonas Vingegaard (Visma-Lease a Bike) +8secs 4. Matteo Jorgenson (Visma-Lease a Bike) +19secs 5. Kevin Vauquelin (Arkéa-B&B Hotels) +26secs 6. Enric Mas (Spa-Movistar) +48secs 7. Oscar Onley (GB/Picnic PostNL) +55secs 8. Joao Almeida (Por/UAE Team Emirates-XRG) Same time 9. Remco Evenepoel (Bel/Soudal Quick-Step) +58secs 10. Mattias Skjelmose (Den/Lidl-Trek) +1min 02secs.

LONDON (Agencies): World number one Aryna Sabalenka narrowly avoided a seismic shock as she fought back to beat Laura Siegemund and claw her way into the Wimbledon semi-finals. Title favourite Sabalenka had to twice come back from a break down in the deciding set to beat the 37-year-old German 4-6 6-2 6-4.



Sabalenka has reached the final of the past three majors and, with most of her rivals falling in the first week of SW19, she has an incredible chance of reaching Saturday's showpiece. But few would have predicted the scare that Siegemund - who had previously never gone beyond the second round in singles here - came within touching distance of completing. World number 104 Siegemund, more noted for her doubles prowess, drove Sabalenka to distraction with her slices, brilliant returning and slow pace of play. It took all of Sabalenka's grit and determination to hang in and eventually advance after two hours and 54 minutes. "After the first set I was looking at my box and thinking, 'book the tickets, we are about to leave'," Sabalenka, 27, said. "I had to make sure I didn't show I was annoyed by her - even if I was slightly, I didn't want to give her that energy." Belarusian Sabalenka will face 13th seed Amanda Anisimova for a place in a first Wimbledon final after the American beat Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-1 7-6 (11-9). There was barely any part of the match on a sun-drenched Centre Court that was enjoyable for Sabalenka. Siegemund previously described her own game style as annoying, and the frustration was written all over Sabalenka's face as she spent nearly three hours chasing down drop shots and slices. There were helpless looks towards her box, chuntering when she missed a vital point and a huge roar when she finally got the best of her opponent. But Sabalenka has said she is making a con-

scious effort to stay calmer on court - and it is credit to her that she never lost control or gave up. "That is one of the most uncomfortable, painful matches Sabalenka has ever had to play in her life," former British number one Annabel Croft said on BBC 5 Live. "Siegemund played so well to make Sabalenka play some of the worst tennis of her career." 'Tough but beautiful' win for Sabalenka Nothing should take away from how brilliant Siegemund was. She stepped forward to the Sabalenka serve, taking it on early, and chopped her way through her opponent's huge groundstrokes. Sabalenka held serve just once in the opening set - and even that required three deuce games - and quickly found herself a double break down. She rescued one as Siegemund served for the first set at 5-2 but slapped a return into the net to concede the opener in 57 minutes. Sabalenka immediately left the court to reset herself and it seemed to have worked. She broke straight away for a 2-0 lead but, visibly unsettled, conceded it in the next game. The match could have slipped away in Sabalenka's next service game as she was taken from 40-0 to deuce - but roared on by the crowd, she held, then won four games in a row to force a decider. An early break to love in the third set - secured on a brilliant passing winner from Siegemund - looked

to have rattled Sabalenka. She should have broken back in the next game but ended up falling to her knees at the net, arms outstretched as she sent the passing shot wide to go 3-1 down. In a nervy ending, Sabalenka broke back, immediately conceded it and then capitalised as Siegemund served to stay in the match, ultimately securing victory with a relieved-looking smash at the net. "It doesn't matter if you are a big-hitter or a big server - you have to work, run and earn the victory," Sabalenka added. "It is tough, but beautiful." Nephew steals the show in Anisimova win In the day's other women's quarter-final, the show was stolen at the end when Anisimova picked up her young nephew Jackson and walked hand in hand with him across Court One to do her on-court interview. She will have been relieved to have been able to do that for him as an early birthday present after a late wobble in her match against Pavlyuchenkova. The American had been cruising, taking the opening set in 27 minutes and going a break up for 4-2 in the second. But she then started making things complicated for herself, missing two match points at 5-4 and then finding herself in a tie-break where she had to save five set points before eventually sealing the win. She promptly fell face first towards the grass in delight as she reached her first Wimbledon semi-final.

Speeding likely cause of Diogo Jota car crash: police

MADRID (AFP): Liverpool and Portugal star Diogo Jota was likely speeding when his car veered off a motorway in Spain last week killing him and his brother, Spanish police said on Tuesday. The shock deaths of Jota, 28, and Andre Silva, 25, on July 3 plunged the football world into mourning, less than two weeks after the striker had got married. An ongoing investigation is examining "the marks left by one of the vehicle's wheels... everything points to a possible excessive speed beyond the road's speed limit", the Civil Guard said. Speed limits on Spanish motorways are generally set at 120 kilometres per hour (75 miles per hour). The site of the accident on the A-52 route in the northwestern province of Zamora was on a stretch of fairly straight road approaching a bend. The Civil Guard had previously said a

tyre had probably blown out while the vehicle was overtaking, causing it to crash and burst into flames. "All the tests conducted so far indicate that the driver of the vehicle was Diogo Jota," the force added on Tuesday. Just hours before the accident, Jota had posted a video of his June 22 wedding to partner Rute Cardoso, with whom he had three children. Portuguese and UK media reported Jota was driving to the northern Spanish port of Santander to take a ferry to England for the start of Liverpool's pre-season training, avoiding a flight on medical advice after a recent lung operation. Political leaders as well as star players from Portugal and Liverpool joined family and friends at the funeral on Saturday in the Porto suburb of Gondomar. A site of remembrance has been set up at Liverpool's Anfield stadium where fans and former play-

ers have laid a sea of flowers, shirts, scarves and pictures. Fan favourite Following spells at Atletico Madrid, Porto and Wolverhampton Wanderers, Jota became a fan favourite at Liverpool after joining the Premier League giants in 2020. He netted 65 times for the Reds in five seasons, lifting the League Cup and FA Cup in 2021/22 and helping them win a record-equalling 20th English league title last season. The striker also earned 49 caps for Portugal and was part of the team that won this year's UEFA Nations League. Younger brother Andre played in midfield for FC Penafiel in Portugal's second tier. Liverpool returned to training on Tuesday for the first time since Jota's death, having postponed the start of their pre-season preparations last week.





## In brief

### ANF arrests five suspects

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting two operations across the country, recovered as many as 20.2 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 2.582 million and arrested five suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Tuesday. He informed that 14.4 kg of hashish and 800 grams of opium were recovered from secret compartments of a bus at the Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza and the suspect was arrested. In another operation, 5 kg of ice was recovered from a vehicle near Mian Plaza Johar Town Lahore and four suspects were arrested. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.

### IRSA releases 416,691 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 416,691 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 436,263 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1521.06 feet which was 119.06 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 287,700 cusecs and 282,100 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1180.90 feet, which was 130.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 21,972 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 331,687, 231,236, 133,273 and 75,270 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 50,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 49,249 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Over 14 kg drugs recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police have arrested four drug dealers and recovered 14-kilogram drugs from their possession. According to police, Naseerabad Police arrested a drug dealer and seized 10.5 kg drugs from his possession. The drug dealer confessed that he was supplying drugs to various educational institutions in the city. In a separate operation, Taxila Police arrested drug supplier and recovered 2.5 kg drugs from his custody. While, Gujjar Khan Police held drug dealer and seized 460 grams of drugs from his possession. Following operation, Chakri Police arrested another drug dealer and seized 540 grams of drugs from his possession. Police have registered separate cases and further investigation was in progress. City Police Officer CPO Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani commended police team and said that strict operations against drug dealers will continue and no one involved in illegal businesses will be spared.

### Police foil bank robbery

RAWALPINDI (APP): A major attempt to rob a bank in the New Town area was foiled due to the timely response of the police. According to police, three armed robbers tried to loot a bank worth millions of rupees. As soon as the incident was reported through the police helpline 15, a heavy contingent of police rushed to the crime scene. One of the robbers was arrested on the spot, while the others managed to flee. A search operation is underway to hold the other accomplices involved in robbery. Initial investigation revealed that the robbers entered the bank with weapons.

## Dilapidated buildings pose life threats, warns MCR

RAWALPINDI (APP): Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi (MCR) while having a survey across the city, has identified 86 buildings as dangerous ones and served notices to owners for immediate evacuation to prevent loss of life.

The buildings have been deemed unsafe due to their deteriorating condition, posing serious risks to residents and surrounding areas, particularly during the ongoing monsoon season.

Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi has issued formal evacuation notices to the owners and residents of these buildings to

evacuate within the next 15 days under the Punjab Local Government Act 2022. The move is part of a broader effort by city administration to identify and mitigate threats posed by aging infrastructure, especially in densely populated urban zones.

These buildings need to be demolished/ rebuilt. Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi will provide full technical and administrative support in these measures to prevent any possible casualties or financial losses.

Chief Officer Imran Ali said that the protection of the lives and property of the citizens is our top pri-

ority, so no negligence or delays will be tolerated.

Likewise, encroachers on the banks of Nullah Lai and other tributaries have also been strictly warned to immediately remove their encroachments and move to safe places. Failure of its compliance will face legal action and the encroachments will be forcibly removed.

Moreover, administration has requested general public to immediately implement these instructions to protect themselves and others and approach the Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi for any information or complaints.

## IESCO installs 884,000 AMI meters so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has installed some 884,000 Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters so far in Rawalpindi City and Cantt Circles.

Project Director of IESCO's AMI Syed Mohsin Raza Gilani IESCO has consistently pioneered the use of cutting-edge and customer-centric technology in the power sector, delivering timely and quality services to its valued consumers.

The AMI meters—designed to ensure 100% accurate and timely meter

readings—represent a revolutionary step in enhancing operational transparency and customer service.

The installation campaign is in full swing, with 97% of connections with a load of 41 kW or more across the IESCO region already equipped with AMI meters.

These smart meters enable automated complaint registration, real-time electricity consumption monitoring, reduction in line losses, detection and elimination of electricity theft, and enhanced recovery of electricity bills. Additionally, they

will help reduce transformer overloading and stabilize the distribution network, he said.

This project is a game-changer for the power sector, Mr. Gilani added. It aims to enhance system efficiency and build a stronger, more transparent relationship between IESCO and its consumers.

Currently focused on Rawalpindi City and Cantt Circles, the AMI rollout will soon expand across the entire IESCO region, establishing a new benchmark in power sector service excellence.



ISLAMABAD: A woman rides a scooty on the way to her destination in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

## CDA, Bulgaria pledge closer cooperation to boost urban development

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan, H.E. Irena Gancheva, met with Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Tuesday to explore avenues for deepening bilateral cooperation, particularly in the areas of urban development, environmental sustainability, and institutional collaboration.

The meeting, held at CDA Headquarters in Islamabad, took place in a cordial atmosphere and centered on strengthening ties between Bulgaria and Pakistan through shared priorities in city planning, beautification, and green

development.

Ambassador Gancheva praised the CDA's ongoing efforts to enhance the capital city's infrastructure and environmental outlook under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

"I appreciate the significant strides Islamabad has made in urban beautification and environmental sustainability," the Bulgarian envoy remarked. "Chairman Randhawa's leadership in these areas is commendable and reflects a strong vision for a modern and green capital."

In response, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa reaffirmed the authority's dedication to transforming Islamabad into a model city.

"We are committed to making Islamabad more developed, beautiful, and environmentally sustainable," Randhawa stated, while expressing appreciation for Bulgaria's interest in fostering closer cooperation.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing readiness to explore joint initiatives and share expertise, particularly in urban planning and environmental conservation.

Randhawa emphasized his country's commitment to deepening diplomatic and institutional ties with Bulgaria, while Ambassador Gancheva assured her government's full support in advancing mutual collaboration.

## ICT admin holds five in F-7 for street begging

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration acted on complaints from residents and launched a crackdown against street begging in Islamabad's F-7 sector and arrested five professional beggars.

The spokesman of ICT administration said, on citizens' request, Assistant Commissioner (AC) City conducted an operation in Sector F-7 of the federal capital. The action was taken in response to multiple reports by residents who had raised concerns about the rising number of beggars in the area. During the operation, five individuals

were found begging in public spaces, including busy intersections and near commercial areas. Authorities said the individuals were taken into custody and shifted to the nearest police station for further legal action.

Officials from the district administration confirmed that the campaign aimed to discourage street begging and ensure public spaces remain accessible and secure for all residents. The operation was part of the city-wide efforts to maintain order in public areas and address complaints from citizens regarding the persistent presence of beggars in residential and commercial zones.

The Assistant

Commissioner City said that such operations would continue in different sectors of Islamabad based on residents' feedback. He added that the district administration was working in coordination with local police to take timely action wherever similar issues were reported.

He further stated that the detained individuals would be dealt with under relevant sections of the law. In some cases, the authorities also involve social welfare departments to determine if any of the detainees require rehabilitation or support services.

## CM Maryam inaugurated Rs.8.77 bn worth projects



RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday inaugurated the Nawaz Sharif Flyover on Adiala Road and the GPO Underpass on The Mall Rawalpindi. The Rs8.77 billion projects aim to ease the city's chronic traffic congestion. Speaking at the ceremony, Maryam commended the

Communication and Works (C&W) Department. "I commend the C&W minister, Sohaib Bhattar, and its Secretary Sohail Ashraf for completing these projects in record time," she said and added "Its almost miraculous how fast this work was done."

She also thanked the Frontier Works Organization for their support. "Nearly 79000 plus vehicles will use Nawaz Sharif Flyover daily, making them game-changers for Rawalpindi," said the chief minister adding that more than 200,000 vehicles will pass through the GPO Underpass. Maryam announced new initiatives to boost Punjab's develop-

ment. "We're launching clean drinking water projects in South Punjab and Potohar with new pipelines," she declared.

"Murree's water supply issues will be fixed soon, and we're preparing to upgrade Nullah Lai to prevent flooding," She added.

The chief minister said that the government would start revamping the project of Nullah Lai. She reaffirmed that the Rawalpindi Ring Road would be completed quickly. She also announced the remodeling of Katchery Road and Mall Road with construction of new underpasses to further ease traffic flow.

The chief minister said that all Rawalpindi schools were being upgraded. In the health sector, the CM highlighted that the government has turned 1,250 health centers across Punjab into mini-hospitals in record time. She further highlighted Punjab's road infrastructure progress, saying, "We've built and repaired over 12,000 kilometers of roads in the past year, including 607 kilome-

ters across 67 projects in Rawalpindi, with 51 already done, she said.

The chief minister said that by year-end, the government would complete 19,000 kilometers of roads in the province. She emphasized the pace of development projects.

"People say it's like Jinns built these roads, as projects pending for 30 years are now complete." In the sanitation sector, she said that the Clean Punjab programme was improving cleanliness across the province, especially noticeable at the Punjab-KP border near Murree.

Maryam also underlined Rawalpindi's beautification efforts, saying, "I'm personally overseeing these projects to enhance the city's look." Talking on recent Muharram arrangements in the city by the District Administration, she said that the public, especially the Shia community has praised government efforts, which lead to remarkable religious harmony this year.

Maryam stressed her focus on public welfare.

"All development projects are for the people's convenience and remain my top priority", she said adding that both the inaugurations are historic for Rawalpindi. "I appreciate all institutions for their efforts in completing these projects", she said.

Federal Railway Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, Federal Parliamentary Secretary Danyal Chaudhry, PML-N Divisional President Malik Abrar Ahmed, Senator Nasir Butt, MPA Raja Hanif Advocate, MNA Tahira Aurangzeb, and MPA Ziaullah Shah and officials from various departments and the District Administration were also present during the inauguration ceremonies which took place separately on the project sites. Upon being greeted by an enthusiastic crowd showering the flower, the chief minister waved back, responding to their chants.

The Punjab Government has already approved Rs.30.0 billion worth 13 new schemes for Rawalpindi which is a part of Rs.150.0 billion worth of overall development projects in Punjab Annual Development Programme (ADP) for Rawalpindi. The core of 13 news schemes include various underpasses to be considered at locations including Race Course Chowk, Charing Cross, Army Graveyard Chowk, COD Range Road, and flyovers including at Ammar Chowk, Jinnah Park and Kachehri Chowk. Punjab Government has also chalked out a plan to start revamping Chakri Road after the successful culmination of new schemes.

## Kanwal Liaqat leads plastic-free campaign

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Forest, Kanwal Liaqat on Tuesday lead a plastic-free campaign and assess progress at key environmental facilities in Rawalpindi and Murree engaging with citizens, shopkeepers, and local authorities to raise awareness about the environmental hazards of single-use plastics and promote sustainable practices.

According to the details, a key focus of the visit was the newly constructed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Complex in Rawalpindi, where she inspected the Environmental Monitoring Center (EMC) established within the facility.

Furthermore, a fuel testing campaign was launched in collaboration with Deputy Director (Lab), Faisal Maqsood, at multiple petrol pumps in Rawalpindi. The initiative aimed to ensure the quality of fuel being sold to the public and to support efforts in reducing vehicular emissions.

Kanwal Liaqat appreciated the proactive efforts of the EPA team and stressed the importance of public awareness, strict enforcement of environmental regulations, and inter-agency cooperation to achieve long-term ecological sustainability.

## Ministry for baseline study to tackle e-waste crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) has launched a critical initiative to develop a national framework to manage country's rapidly growing electronic waste (e-waste) problem, citing serious environmental and public health risks stemming from unsafe disposal and informal recycling practices.

At a high-level consultative meeting held here on Tuesday, senior officials and environmental experts emphasized the urgent need for a baseline study to map the scale and nature of e-waste in Pakistan.

The meeting, chaired by Additional Secretary Zulfikar Younas, also finalized the terms of reference (TORs) for the Ministry's first working group dedicated to formulating a national e-waste management policy.

"There is an urgent need for investment in formal recycling systems, national legislation, and mass awareness regarding environmentally safe e-waste management in the country," said Younas.

"Without reliable baseline data, we cannot address the challenges effectively or plan for sustainable infrastructure." E-waste, which includes

discarded electrical and electronic items such as televisions, computers, refrigerators, and air conditioners, is piling up in Pakistan at an alarming rate.

Experts estimate the country generates over 500,000 tons of e-waste annually — most of which ends up in informal recycling markets or open dump sites.

During the meeting, Director General (Environment & Climate Change) Asif Sahibzada presented a comprehensive overview of the current e-waste landscape, identifying major policy gaps and the lack of formal disposal mechanisms.

"Pakistan's growing appetite for electronic products is outpacing its capacity to manage the resulting waste," said Sahibzada. "Our working group will bring together government, academia, and industry to chart out a roadmap for safe, regulated, and sustainable e-waste management."

The working group has been tasked with developing a comprehensive policy framework, identifying regulatory loopholes, advising on enforcement mechanisms, and recommending steps to integrate the informal sector into a formal recycling network.

Dr. Zaigham Abbas,

Director of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), highlighted Pakistan's obligations under the Basel Convention, an international treaty controlling the movement of hazardous waste across borders.

He said the Ministry is aligning its national strategy with technical guidelines under the convention to better manage end-of-life electronic equipment.

"Most e-waste is currently processed informally, often in unsafe conditions," Abbas noted. "The Basel Convention provides a roadmap for countries like Pakistan to distinguish waste from reusable goods and manage hazardous components responsibly."

Urban areas were flagged as major e-waste hotspots during the meeting. Muhammad Azeem, Director of Urban Affairs at the Ministry, warned that digitalization and consumer trends are rapidly increasing the burden on cities, turning them into unregulated dumping grounds.

"Mobile phones, computers, and TVs are ending up in open landfills, burned, or dismantled with no safety protocols," said Azeem. "We must prioritize the establishment of formal systems in urban areas to curb this dangerous trend."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar chairs the review meeting of the Pakistan Civil Awards 2025 Sub-Committee at the Cabinet Division. —APP Photo



KABUL (Amu TV): Sources said that the Taliban are forcing the residents of Paktika in the southeast of the country to pay higher taxes under the pretext of zakat, despite providing few, if any, basic services in return. Several residents told Amu TV that Taliban officials have been collecting payments across multiple districts, invoking zakat — a form of religious almsgiving in Islam — to legitimize the demands.

*The Frontier Post*

**AFGHANISTAN**

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): The Propagation of Virtue, Prevention of Vice and Complaints Hearing Department say it has prevented forced marriages of four girls in southern Ghazni province. A man from the village wanted to give his teenage daughter in marriage to repay debt, but our Muhtasibeen stopped him from doing so and explained to him its bad consequences, and took a pledge from him that he would strictly refrain from such actions.

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

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has welcomed parts of a recently adopted United Nations General Assembly's resolution concerning the country.

However, the caretaker government expressed concern over the lack of consultation with the IEA, raising questions about the accuracy and applicability of certain aspects of the resolution.

Titled "The Situation in Afghanistan", the resolution was adopted on

Monday with 116 votes in favour, two against (Israel and the United States) and 12 abstentions.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of the caretaker government said it viewed positively the resolution's acknowledgement of the IEA's achievements in maintaining security and combating narcotics, its call for humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, removal of obstacles to economic development and its emphasis on constructive

Monday with 116 votes in favour, two against (Israel and the United States) and 12 abstentions. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of the caretaker government said it viewed positively the resolution's acknowledgement of the IEA's achievements in maintaining security and combating narcotics, its call for humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, removal of obstacles to economic development and its emphasis on constructive

engagement with Afghanistan free from geopolitical competition.

However, the ministry criticised the resolution's reliance on previous UN resolutions, reports and assessments—particularly those concerning security and human rights—describing it as a continuation of a narrative shaped by pressure from certain countries and disconnected from on-the-ground realities.

The statement noted that although the resolution

addresses the situation in Afghanistan and includes calls for cooperation with the Islamic Emirate, the IEA is not consulted during its drafting or adoption.

This, the ministry said, casts doubt on the resolution's credibility and practical relevance.

The statement added that IEA would assess the resolution's recommendations and proposals within the framework of Islamic principles and national interests and identify potential areas for cooperation.

KABUL (TOLNews): The Ministry of Public Works announced the completion of the survey and studies for the Balkh-Herat and Herat-Kandahar railway projects.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works, said preparations are underway to begin practical work on these two key economic routes.

According to Haqshenas, once these two railways are completed, Afghanistan will be con-

KABUL (Pajhwok): Approximately 30 former government officials, who recently returned to the country, were granted safety cards during a gathering in Kabul on Tuesday. Officials at the event called on other Afghans living abroad to return home with confidence and reassurance.

Among those receiving safety cards were former Minister of Energy and Water Mohammad Arif Noorzai, former military secretary to ex-president Hamid Karzai, Gen. Mohammad Karim Kohistani, and former head of the Ministry of Defence's DIAG committee, Ghulam Farooq Parwani.

for a better life. No one should feel insulted by it." Delawar, who is also chief of the Commission for Contact with Afghanistan Personalities, added that individuals could return through the commission or independently, and the Islamic Emirate was committed to ensuring their safety.

He continued: "Ustad Sayyaf is a leader, a Sheikh-ul-Quran, a Hadith. Sometimes I wonder — are you waiting to die in India or Turkey? Come back to your homeland. I say the same to Ustad Mohaqqueq, Ustad Khalili, Alta Mohammad Noor, and others. When we were in Qatar, they would

prevented numerous issues, including revenge attacks, bloodshed, personal enmities, and lawlessness.

Speaking on behalf of the returnees, Mohammad Arif Noorzai said: "Our homeland has a right over us. We are all brothers under one roof, here to serve the people and the nation of Afghanistan."

Gen. Mohammad Karim Kohistani shared an emotional reflection: "My parents passed away in 1968. I have felt the pain of being an orphan, but I had never experienced the pain of being without a homeland. Statelessness brings humiliation, despair, and hopelessness. I have no words

Head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar said all Afghans were brothers who shared one another's joys and sorrows.

He urged Afghans abroad to return to their homeland, stating: "Some people say why should we be pardoned? We've done nothing wrong.' That may be true — but come back, live in your country. This pardon is not a punishment; it is a gesture of reassurance, dignity, and an opportunity

with us. Sayyid was in there, but Qanooni and the others came and spoke of peace. Now there is peace — what more do you want? Another war? The people will not tolerate that. If we wanted war, no one would allow it now.”

Commission spokesperson Ahmadullah Wasiq said the safety card symbolised trust and assured that its holders would not face any threats or difficulties.

He added that the general amnesty announced by the Islamic Emirate had

only gratitude to the commission and its members.” Ghulam Farooq Parwani added: “Life in a foreign land was painful. From the moment I left Iran, I felt deep emotion — as though I had been born again. When I returned to Afghanistan, I wept and kissed the soil of my homeland.” According to officials from the Commission for Contact with Afghan Personalities, since its establishment, a total of 1,143 former officials who had left the country have returned home.

PANJSHIR (TOLONews): Local officials in Panjshir say that the budget for constructing the Panjshir-Takhar road has been approved by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate, and practical work on the project will begin soon.

The road, which will be 28 kilometers long and 5 meters wide, will connect Khawak and Paryan districts in Panjshir to Warsaj district in Takhar. According to local officials, construction will soon commence under their supervision.

The project is estimated to cost 270 million Afghanis, a budget that has been approved by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate.

Mohammad Agha Hakim, the Governor of Panjshir, told TOLONews: "This road will be highly beneficial. For example, people from Nuristan and Badakhshan currently travel two to three days to reach Kabul. Once this road is

connected, they will be able to reach Kabul in one day or even half a day and solve their problems more efficiently."

Faizulbari Bahar, Head of the Panjshir Economy Department, stated: "The road is expected to be implemented by the Ministry of Public Works. A total of 270 million Afghanis has been allocated for the project to connect Panjshir to Takhar."

Mohammad Qasim Mowahhed, Head of Public Works in Panjshir, added: "This budget was allocated following a proposal submitted by Panjshir's provincial leadership to the Prime Minister's Office. This road will connect the Warsaj road in Takhar to the Panjshir road through the Khawak pass."

Local authorities further stated that once this project is implemented, the distance between the district and the northeastern provinces

of Takhar, Badakhshan, and Kunduz will be significantly shortened. It will also create new employment opportunities for residents of Panjshir.

Abdullah, a local resident of Panjshir, commented on the project's value: "Once this road is built, three or four provinces will benefit from it. We live in a remote area and are very happy about this project. In our region, we don't even have a proper clinic."

Abdul Ali, another Panjshir resident, said: "With this road's construction, Panjshir's provincial revenue will increase, and people's economic conditions will improve, as local markets will emerge due to increased movement and trade."

Work on the Panjshir-Badakhshan road had also begun a year ago by a special Panjshir military unit, and as of now, 80% of that project has been completed.

**PANJSHIR (TOLOnews):** Local officials in Panjshir say that the budget for constructing the Panjshir-Takhar road has been approved by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate, and practical work on the project will begin soon.

The road, which will be 28 kilometers long and 5 meters wide, will connect Khawak and Paryan districts in Panjshir to Warsaj district in Takhar. According to local officials, construction will soon commence under their supervision.

The project is estimated to cost 270 million Afghanistan, a budget that has been approved by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate.

Mohammad Agha Hakim, the Governor of Panjshir, told TOLOnews: "This road will be highly beneficial. For example, people from Nuristan and Badakhshan currently travel two to three days to reach Kabul. Once this road is

connected, they will be able to reach Kabul in one day or even half a day and solve their problems more efficiently.”

Faizulbair Bahar, Head of the Panjshir Economy Department, stated: “The road is expected to be implemented by the Ministry of Public Works. A total of 270 million Afghanis has been allocated for the project to connect Panjshir to Takhar.”

Mohammad Qasim Mowahhed, Head of Public Works in Panjshir, added: “This budget was allocated following a proposal submitted by Panjshir’s provincial leadership to the Prime Minister’s Office. This road will connect the Warsaj road in Takhar to the Khashw road through the Khawak pass.”

Local authorities further stated that once this project is implemented, the distance between Kabul and the northeastern provinces

Kunduz, Badakhshan, and Takhud will be significantly shortened. It will also create new employment opportunities for residents of Panjshir.

Abdulhai, a local resident of Panjshir, commented on the project's value: "Once this road is built, three or four provinces will benefit from it. We live in a remote area and are very happy about this project. In our region, we don't even have a proper clinic."

Abdul Ali, another Panjshir resident, said: "With this road's construction, Panjshir's provincial revenue will increase, and people's economic conditions will improve, as local markets will emerge due to increased movement and trade."

Work on the Panjshir-Badakhshan road had also begun a year ago by a special Panjshir military unit, and as of now, 80% of that project has been completed.

**KABUL (TOLOnews):** Amid increasing power outages in Kabul, several factory owners in industrial parks have expressed concern over the inconsistent distribution of electricity.

They say that the lack of power and the absence of a clear schedule for electricity supply have led to a decline in their production capacity.

Najibullah, the manager of one factory, said: "We have enough raw materials at our disposal. If we had

uninterrupted, 24-hour electricity, we could produce up to 20 tons a day. But currently, we're only producing about 4 to 5 tons. The lack of power is a very serious problem for us."

At the same time, some factory workers in Kabul report that these outages are even threatening their job security.

Hashmatullah, one of the workers, said: "My concern is that I have a family of eight and I'm the sole breadwinner. If our prob-

uninterrupted, 24-hour electricity, we could produce up to 20 tons a day. But currently, we're only producing about 4 to 5 tons. The lack of power is a very serious problem for us."

At the same time, some factory workers in Kabul report that these outages are even threatening their job security.

Hashmatullah, one of the workers, said: "My concern is that I have a family of eight and I'm the sole breadwinner. If our prob-

lems are not addressed and I lose my job, where will I go for work?" Abdul Karim, another employee, said: "This electricity issue has forced some of us to come from far away in the middle of the night and work non-stop from two nights to two days."

Despite repeated attempts, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) has not responded to the issue.

Meanwhile, the Kabul Industrialists Association warns that if the Islamic

Emirate does not support factory owners, the country will face industrial stagnation and rising unemployment. Officials from this association emphasize the critical role of electricity in the production process and call for the regular and stable supply of electricity to factories in order to support national economic growth.

Najibullah Siddiqi, Deputy Head of the Kabul Industrialists Association, said: "Priority must be given to Afghanistan's industry. If

we don't have electricity in our homes, we can still find ways to cope; but if there's no bread on our table, there's no solution. Factories must be made operational so the people of Afghanistan, our workers, and our brothers can come and find jobs there."

Although Afghanistan has vast resources of hydro, solar, and wind energy, the lack of fundamental investment has forced the country to rely heavily on imported electricity.

KABUL (Pajhwok): More than 182,000 individuals have graduated from technical, vocational and professional trainings across the country over the past four years, according to government statistics.

Officials consider these programmes a key step towards overcoming unemployment.

However, analysts stress that education alone is not sufficient and sustainable job opportunities must also be created for graduates.

A reporter from Pajhwok Afghan News visited a vocational training centre run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) in the Khair Khana area of Kabul, where he spoke with several students.

These young people said they attend the centre to learn a trade and skill and earn a lawful livelihood for their families in the future.

In one of the classrooms, around 30 young men were seated at sewing machines.

Hope and a vision for a brighter future could be seen on their faces.

This was not merely one

classroom, but symbolic of thousands of young Afghans who have enrolled in and graduated from the government's vocational training programmes over the past four years.

Hikmatullah, a tailoring student at one of the vocational centres in the capital run by MoLSA, said: "Previously, I was unemployed. Now I'm happy that I have been given the opportunity to learn tailoring. Through this profession, I will be able to earn a lawful livelihood for my family."

He added that once he graduates, he plans to open a tailoring shop in Kabul and start his own business.

Meanwhile, Faisal, who was previously a refugee in Iran and recently returned to Afghanistan, has been learning metalwork at a vocational centre in Kabul for the past month.

He expressed his satisfaction at being given the opportunity to learn a skill.

He said: "When I graduate from here, I want to open a small workshop and earn a living for myself and my family in my home-

classroom, but symbolic of thousands of young Afghans who have enrolled in and graduated from the government's vocational training programmes over the past four years.

Hikmatullah, a tailoring student at one of the vocational centres in the capital run by MoLSA, said: "Previously, I was unemployed. Now I'm happy that I have been given the opportunity to learn tailoring. Through this profession, I will be able to earn a lawful livelihood for my family."

He added that once he graduates, he plans to open a tailoring shop in Kabul and start his own business.

Meanwhile, Faisal, who was previously a refugee in Iran and recently returned to Afghanistan, has been learning metalwork at a vocational centre in Kabul for the past month.

He expressed his satisfaction at being given the opportunity to learn a skill.

He said: "When I graduate from here, I want to open a small workshop and earn a living for myself and my family in my home-

**But the story doesn't end with education**

Experts view these initiatives as a positive step in improving skills.

However, they insist that individuals who complete vocational, technical and professional training must be provided with permanent employment opportunities in their respective fields.

Mohammad Liaquat Adil, head of the National Union of Workers and Labourers of Afghanistan, described the provision of vocational, technical and professional education as a commendable move.

He added: "In vocational training, the labour market is a critical factor that must be taken into account. Often, skilled individuals abandon their professions because there is no demand. For example, we may train carpenters when the market actually needs tailors, or we may train drivers when electricians are in short supply."

He emphasised that vocational graduates must be kept engaged in their

He further stated: "We see many people with vocational training who are still unemployed. If the vocational and technical training process continues in a structured and consistent manner, it could significantly help in reducing unemployment across the country."

According to him, the unemployment rate in Afghanistan was high and required serious attention and investment.

On a similar note, the economic analyst Abdul Nasir Rashtya said that technical workers play a vital role in national economic development.

He stated: "It is essential to take vocational training seriously so we can prepare skilled professionals for the job market. Unfortunately, there is currently a shortage of such individuals in Afghanistan, and many foreigners are working in technical fields here."

He added that if vocational and technical professionals were trained consistently, they will inevitably replace foreign workers in

various sectors.

Rashtya also pointed out that skilled professionals could be employed not only within the country but also abroad.

**Over 182,000 received various vocational, technical, professional fields in nearly four years**

Samiullah Ibrahim, spokesperson for MoLSA, said that considering the country's high unemployment rate, most of the jobless population consists of uneducated individuals lacking professional skills.

To address this issue, he said, the ministry has established more than five vocational and technical training centres across the country, where thousands of citizens—particularly youth—were currently receiving training.

These young people are being trained in 70 different skills, selected based on labour market demand.

According to him, since the return of the Islamic Emirate, 150,000 people have received vocational and technical training nationwide, and many of them have also been pro-

vided with the tools and equipment necessary to start working.

Ibrahimi added that special vocational centres have also been set up in Kabul, Herat, and Kandahar to serve individuals recovering from drug addiction.

He said most of the graduates from these centres have already secured employment.

Depending on the curriculum, the training duration ranges from four to nine months, he noted.

Meanwhile, Mullah Nisar Ahmad Ilyas, spokes-



more than 85,000 students were currently enrolled in technical and vocational education, including girls studying from Grades 1 to 6.

Due to years of prolonged conflict and economic challenges, the unemployment rate in Afghanistan remains high.

Although the government has expanded its vocational, technical, and professional training programmes, analysts insist that in addition to education, market-based planning and sustainable job creation must be prioritised.



# Naqvi calls on Chief of Naval Staff

## Chinese defence team calls on Air Chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visited Naval Headquarters, Islamabad and called-on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

During the meeting, Pakistan Navy's strategy to ensure robust maritime defense during the recent Pakistan-India conflict, and its operational readiness were discussed.

The minister commended Pakistan Navy's high level of operational preparedness during MARKA-E-HAQ and felicitated it on successfully defending the maritime frontiers of the motherland against Indian aggression.

Meanwhile, a high level defence delegation led by Lieutenant General Wang Gang, Chief of Staff of People's Liberation Army Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters Islamabad. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest,

regional security dynamics and avenues of enhanced bilateral cooperation, particularly in the domain of airpower and operational synergy were discussed.

The Air Chief extended a gracious welcome to the distinguished guests, reiterating that Pakistan and China enjoy historic and time-tested ties rooted in mutual trust, strategic convergence and shared aspirations for regional peace & stability.

Lieutenant General Wang Gang was given a comprehensive briefing on PAF's modern force structure, strategic initiatives and the evolution of its operational doctrine. Chief of the Air Staff also reaffirmed the strong bond of friendship between the two Air Forces and reiterated Pakistan Air Force's commitment to expanding cooperation in training, technology and operational domains.

General Wang Gang expressed deep appreciation for the high state of operational readiness and the cutting-edge capabilities of Pakistan Air Force.

He was particularly impressed by PAF's seamless integration of Multi-Domain Operations,

terming it a hallmark of modern air warfare and conveyed PLAAF's keen interest in learning from PAF's battle-proven experience in Multi Domain Operations. Lauding the professional acumen and strategic foresight of PAF's leadership, the visiting dignitary paid rich tribute to the exemplary performance of Pakistan Air Force during the recent conflict with India. He praised the decisive and measured response delivered by PAF pilots under the resolute leadership of the Air Chief, describing it as a textbook example of precision, discipline and courage in the face of unprovoked aggression.

The meeting stands as a testament to the shared resolve of Pakistan and China to advance their time-tested strategic partnership through deepened cooperation and innovation-driven collaboration.

## Court rules in favour of Asfandy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant legal development, a local court here Tuesday directed senior PTI leader and former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa minister Shaukat Yousafzai to pay Rs. 1 million in damages to Asfandiyar Wali Khan, head of the Awami National Party (ANP), for making defamatory remarks.

The court's written verdict comes nearly six years after Yousafzai made controversial statements during a press conference on July 26, 2019, accusing Wali of having "sold the heads of the Pashtuns." In response, Wali filed a defamation suit demanding Rs. 1 billion in damages, claiming the statement badly hit his image and credibility.

During the trial, Yousafzai argued that his remarks were based on previous claims by late ANP leader Azam Hoti, but the court found the statements to be defamatory and lacking justification. The judgment concluded that the allegations had caused serious harm to Wali's political reputation.

The verdict, issued by the Peshawar Sessions Court, marks the conclusion of a high-profile case and reinforces legal accountability for public statements made by political figures.

## 25 children, driver hurt in mishap

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: At least 25 schoolchildren and a driver sustained injuries after a van fell into a gorge near Chikar hill station in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) Neelum Valley.

The AJK police said that the injured children and van driver were shifted to the hospital. According to the Superintendent Police (SP) Mirza Zahid, the van driver and two children are in critical condition.

The affected children were taken to the DHQ Hospital Hattian Bala and Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital Chikar. Road accidents are common in the country's mountainous regions, largely due to poor driving skills, lack of safety measures, challenging terrain, and derelict road infrastructure.

Buses and trucks are normally filled beyond their capacities with passengers which also cause vehicles to overturn. The incident took place in Lasdana, a tourist destination in AJK's Bagh district, in which five cops lost their lives. Policemen Fahim, SHO Naveed and Inspector Yasir Kiani were also among the deceased, according to Bagh deputy commissioner.

## Bilawal shocked over losses of heavy rains

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed profound sorrow and heartfelt condolences over the loss of precious lives and widespread damage to property caused by rain-related incidents in various parts of the country, including Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the families who lost their loved ones in rain-related accidents.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

# KP govt launches digital identity system ‘Khyber Pass’

## — decides to launch special sanitation program

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa officially launched a revolutionary digital identity system named ‘Khyber Pass’ on Tuesday.

A formal ceremony marking the inauguration of the system was held at the Chief Minister's House on Tuesday, where Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally launched the Khyber Pass digital platform. The ceremony was attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Information Technology Shafqat Ayaz, members of the provincial cabinet, members of the provincial assembly, and senior government officials.

Khyber Pass is the first-of-its-kind digital identity system in Pakistan based on a QR code mechanism. It will be integrated with NADRA and other government databases, enabling citizens to access all their identity-related information online. With this system, citizens will no longer need to repeatedly provide personal information to avail government services.

Through a single Khyber Pass digital account, residents will be able to access all public services offered by the provincial government. The unified QR code will serve as a gateway to services such as health, education, taxation, licensing, property records, and more—eliminating the need for multiple registrations or form submissions. Citizens will no longer have to visit different offices or wait in long queues, as services will be accessible online through a single digital ID. Addressing the ceremony, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur congratulated the entire team of the KP Information Technology Board for launching this modern digital system.

He termed it a revolutionary step toward ensuring easy access to government services and said that initially, three services are being provided under the Khyber Pass platform. In the near future, all provincial services, including the Sehat Card (health card), will be integrated into the system. The Chief Minister emphasized the importance of digitizing government systems to ensure transparency, merit, and enhanced service delivery,

in line with the vision of Chairman Imran Khan. “We are implementing the vision of Digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by making governance more accessible and efficient for both the government and the citizens,” he remarked.

He noted that the provincial government has already digitized several sectors and is witnessing promising results. Citing an example, he said the digitization of challans alone has saved the government nearly Rs. 3 billion. Similarly, by initiating strict monitoring of the Sehat Card after coming into power, the government managed to reduce healthcare costs by Rs. 13 billion despite an increase in service usage.

The Chief Minister further highlighted that the provincial treasury, which was nearly empty at the time his government assumed office, now holds Rs. 190 billion. “We are strengthening the IT department and accelerating the digital transformation journey, and I am confident we will achieve our targets soon,” he added. Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur reaffirmed the government's commitment to transparency and merit through the effective use of information technology, which he said would help restore public trust. He stressed that the government's vision is to deliver services at citizens' doorsteps, and Khyber Pass will play a pivotal role in realizing this goal.

Meanwhile, a high-level meeting of the Local Government Department held here with the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair, has decided to launch a special sanitation program at the village level across the province. The meeting was attended by relevant provincial cabinet members, the Chief Secretary, administrative secretaries of concerned departments, and officials from the Local Government Department.

The Chief Minister termed the initiative a significant step towards improving sanitation services to ensure cleanliness across village councils at rural areas of the province. In the first phase, the program will be implemented in 2,061 rural union councils with an initial estimated cost of Rs. 5.5 billion.

During the briefing, it was informed that under the program, a sanitation workforce of four individuals per union council will be hired on a daily wage basis through a transparent recruitment process. This workforce will be responsible for door-to-door collection of solid waste and its transportation to the designated collection points managed by Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs). Each union council will initially be provided with one loader vehicle and other necessary equipment for waste collection and sanitation.

The program's implementation will be supervised by the respective Assistant Commissioner, Tehsil Municipal Officer, and Assistant Director of Local Government. The participation of elected local government representatives and relevant committees will also be ensured to enhance the program's success. Additionally, an effective monitoring mechanism will be established to oversee its execution. The meeting was informed that the program will be formally launched immediately after approval in the upcoming provincial cabinet meeting. In the second phase, the program will be extended to union councils in the hilly regions of the province.

Speaking on the significance of the initiative, the Chief Minister stated that this is a signature program of the current provincial government. For the first time in the history of the province, sanitation services are being introduced in rural areas. He expressed hope that the program would be formally launched by August 14, this year.

Ali Amin Gandapur added that the initiative will not only ensure cleanliness in rural areas but also provide employment opportunities to thousands of people. He directed concerned authorities to take all necessary steps for timely implementation of the program in accordance with the defined timelines. The Chief Minister emphasized that transparency and strict adherence to rules and regulations must be ensured in the recruitment of sanitation workers. Furthermore, he instructed that a realistic and sustainable strategy be devised to ensure the long-term continuity of the program.

# Gaza civil defence says 29 killed in Israeli strikes

GAZA CITY (AFP): Gaza's civil defence agency on Tuesday said that 29 people were killed in Israeli strikes across the Palestinian territory devastated by 21 months of war. Among those were nine people killed in a drone strike on a camp for displaced people near Khan Yunis, in southern Gaza, according to civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal.

Shaimaa Al-Shaar, 30, a resident of the Al-Sanabel camp, told AFP: “I was in front of my tent preparing breakfast for my four children — beans and a bit of dry bread. Suddenly, there was an explosion. “Smoke and dust filled the area. Debris and stones flew in all directions and hit our tent,” she added.

“Four children who were playing in front of the neighbouring tent were injured. I saw people carrying martyrs. We don't know where death comes from, the bombings continue,” Bassal said that 20 other people, including at least three children and two women, were killed in six other strikes on Tuesday across the Gaza Strip. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military when contacted by AFP.

The military earlier announced that five of its soldiers were killed in northern Gaza and two others were severely wounded. Due to restrictions

imposed on media in the Gaza Strip and difficulties accessing the area, AFP is unable to independently verify the death tolls and details shared by the parties involved.

The war was triggered by Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas's unprecedented attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023. The attack resulted in 1,219 deaths on the Israeli side, mostly civilians, according to an AFP count based on official data. Of the 251 people abducted that day, 49 are still hostages in Gaza, including 27 declared dead by the Israeli army. At least 57,523 Gazans, most of them civilians, have been killed in Israel's retaliatory campaign, according to data from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The figures are deemed reliable by the UN.

**Qatar says ‘we will need time’ for Gaza ceasefire:** Qatar said Tuesday more time was needed for negotiations for a Gaza ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, after US President Donald Trump voiced optimism about a possible breakthrough.

“I don't think that I can give any timeline at the moment, but I can say right now that we will need time for this,” Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said as

indirect negotiations continued into a third day in Doha. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in Washington, meanwhile, on his third visit to the White House since Trump returned to power.

Trump, who is pushing for a ceasefire, expressed confidence a deal could be reached, saying: “I don't think there is a hold-up. I think things are going along very well.” Qatar, a mediator along with the United States and Egypt, said the meetings in Doha were focused on a framework for the talks, while a Palestinian official close to the negotiations said no breakthrough had been achieved so far.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff was set to join the talks in Doha this week. On the ground, five Israeli soldiers were killed in combat in northern Gaza — one of the deadliest days this year for Israeli forces in the Palestinian territory. Gaza's civil defense meanwhile reported 29 killed in Israeli strikes on Tuesday.

Israel and Hamas began the latest round of negotiations on Sunday, with representatives seated in separate rooms within the same building. At the White House, sitting across from Netanyahu, Trump said Hamas was willing to end the Gaza conflict, now in its 22nd month.

# Tarar lauds role of sports journalism

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday sports journalism has played key role in highlighting activities in sports arena and promoting healthy competition.

Addressing an event organized on the occasion of “World Sports Journalists Day”, he said today was an important day for sports journalism. Appreciating the role of sports journalism, he said it has created hope and courage among the youth all over the world.

"Sports journalism plays an important role in fostering an atmosphere of competition," Attaullah Tarar remarked. The minister said that sports journalism has always played a prominent role in adding glamour and hype of various sports competitions besides promoting sportsmanship. Sports journalism also plays a big role in highlighting the current talent from the grassroots level.

"Sports journalists project talents from far flung areas who get recognition and earn fame courtesy media," he maintained. He said Pakistan's sports histo-

ry was replete with success stories highlighted by media. He said the government had the policy of not only promoting sports but also sports journalism.

He assured that the government and especially Ministry of Information and Broadcasting would always take steps for facilitation of sports media. He congratulated the newly elected office bearers of Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association. He urged the media houses to launch new sports which would help highlight and promote sports talent from grassroot level.

# Iran says it has not requested US talks

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran said on Tuesday it has not made any request for talks with the United States, after President Donald Trump said Tehran was seeking negotiations following last month's war with Israel.

“No request for a meeting has been made on our side to the American side,” said Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei, according to Tasnim news agency. Trump said on Monday that Iran was seeking talks with the US and that they had been scheduled, without specifying the time or the location. “We have scheduled Iran talks. They want to talk,” Trump told reporters in the White House, where he was meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“They want to meet. They want to work something out. They're very different now than they were two weeks ago,” Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also reiterated Tehran's position, rejecting talks at this stage. “Although Iran has in recent days received messages indicating that the US may be ready to return to negotiations, how can we trust further engagement?” the Iranian top diplomat said in a piece he wrote for the Financial Times.

On June 13, Israel launched an unprecedented bombing campaign on

Iran that targeted military and nuclear sites as well as residential areas, and killed senior military commanders, nuclear scientists and civilians. The attacks began days before a planned meeting between Tehran and Washington aimed at reviving nuclear negotiations. The talks have since stalled.

The US, which had been in talks with Iran since April 12, joined Israel in carrying out its own strikes on June 22, targeting Iranian nuclear sites at Fordow, Isfahan and Natanz. Iranian authorities say the Israeli strikes killed at least 1,060 people. Israel, in turn, was hit by waves of retaliatory drone and missile fire, which authorities said left at least 28 people dead. A ceasefire between Iran and Israel has been in place since June 24.

“After agreeing to new negotiations in good faith, we have seen our goodwill reciprocated with an attack by two nuclear-armed militaries,” Araghchi, who was also Iran's top negotiator during the talks with the US, said in the Financial Times piece. “Iran remains interested in diplomacy, but we have good reason to have doubts about further dialogue.” On Tuesday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian came under fire domestically after voicing support for renewed talks with the

US, with critics accusing him of being “too soft” in the wake of last month's attacks on the country.

The backlash followed the release of an interview with US media personality Tucker Carlson, in which Pezeshkian said Iran had “no problem” resuming talks so long as trust could be rebuilt between the two sides.

## 3 dead in Israel strike on Lebanon

JERUSALEM (AFP): Lebanon said three people were killed Tuesday in a strike near Tripoli that the Israeli military said targeted a Hamas militant, the first on the north since a November ceasefire with Hezbollah.

The strike came amid ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas in Qatar and as five Israeli soldiers were killed in combat in the Gaza Strip, one of the deadliest days for Israeli forces in the Palestinian territory this year. Israel has kept up its strikes on Lebanon despite the November truce, mainly hitting what it says are Hezbollah targets but also occasionally targeting Hamas. “A short while ago, the (Israeli military) struck a key Hamas terrorist in the area of Tripoli in Lebanon,” the Israeli army said in a statement, without providing further details.

Archaeology and Museums, has now been appointed as Secretary Information and Public Relations. Mr. Shah Mehmood, a BS-20 officer of the Pakistan Audit and Accounts Service awaiting posting, has been placed as Secretary Food Department. Mr. Saqib Raza Aslam has been posted as Secretary Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Department and Mr. Atta-ur-Rehman Secretary of the Agriculture Departments has been directed to report to the Establishment Department. Muhammad Khalid, previously heading the Information and Public Relations Department, has been posted as Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education. To manage the additional burden in the wake of this reshuffle, Mr. Abdul Samad, Director of Archaeology and

Museums, has been assigned additional charge of Secretary Culture, Tourism, Archaeology and Museums.

In a parallel development, the second notification outlines the transfer and posting of fourteen officers in the field administration, including Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners. Mr. Muhammad Ali Shah, Commissioner Bannu Division, has been asked to report to the Establishment Department, and in his place, Captain (Retd) Khalid Mehmood, former Chairman of the Higher Education Regulatory Authority, has been appointed as the new Commissioner. Mr. Wasif Rehman has been transferred from the Chief Secretary's office to take charge as Deputy Commissioner Mardan, while Mr. Fahad Wazir has been appointed Deputy Commissioner Chitral Upper.

Significant changes have also taken place in several key districts. Mr. Qaiser Khan, previously DC Charsadda, has been posted as Additional Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs. Mr. Asif Ali from Battagram has been moved to the secretariat as Additional Secretary for Climate Change and Environment. Mr. Noor-ul-Amin has been assigned as DC Kolai Palas, while Mr. Khalid Iqbal, earlier serving in Mansehra, has been placed at the disposal of the Planning and Development Department. Dr. Azmatullah Wazir has been transferred from Mardan to Charsadda, and Dr. Adnan Khan Behtani has been appointed as Additional Secretary (Staff) to the Chief Secretary. Mr. Haseeb-ur-Rehman, who was DC Chitral Upper, has been directed to report to the Establishment Department.

The reshuffle also includes the posting of Mr. Waseem Ahmad as DC

Haripur against a vacant position, and Mr. Mian Behzad Adil as the new DC Mansehra in place of Mr. Khalid Iqbal. According to official sources, the reshuffle was made keeping in view administrative requirements, performance reviews, and the strategic objectives of the government under its good governance framework.

The move is being seen as part of a broader strategy by the provincial government to revamp the administrative structure, inject fresh energy into key posts, and ensure improved governance outcomes at both the provincial and district levels. With several experienced officers brought into new roles, the changes are expected to pave the way for better coordination, timely decision-making, and enhanced service delivery across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.