

PML-N special meeting held
F.P. Report

MURREE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif on Monday held a special meeting in Dunga Gali, where important political and governmental matters were discussed. The PM travelled to Murree via the Expressway under tight security arrangements, proceeded directly to Dunga Gali without stopping in Murree.



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FO: Pakistan responsible nuclear state

Pakistan welcomes court award on Indus Waters Treaty

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan was a responsible nuclear weapon state with an elaborate command and control structure under full civilian control and had always exercised discipline and restraint, while dealing with the issues of such importance, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a statement on Monday.

He was responding to a statement made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Responding to media queries regarding the statement made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on the remarks attributed to Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, the Spokesperson said: "Pakistan strongly rejects the immature remarks made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs earlier today, which is yet another demonstration of their chronic tendency to distorting facts and twisting statements out of context."

"The Indian narrative of an alleged nuclear blackmail is a misleading and self-serving construct. Pakistan remains firmly opposed to the use or threat of use of force. India's sabre rattling and war mongering whenever confronted, invite unfounded allegations bereft of rationality," he added. He said, "Pakistan's sustained and credible counterterrorism efforts are internationally-acknowledged."

"Our security forces remain the bulwark against terrorism. The Indian MEA's spurious insinuations are irresponsible and without a shred of evidence," he noted. He said, "We also note with concern a pointless reference to the third countries, in a bid to exert pressure on Pakistan. This not only reflects India's lack of diplomatic confidence but also constitutes a futile attempt to unnecessarily involve other countries." He said contrary to India's belligerent and jingoistic approach, Pakistan shall continue to act as a responsible member of the comity of nations. "However, any act of Indian aggression or violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity will be met with an immediate and matching response. The onus of any ensuing escalation will rest squarely with the Indian leadership," he added.

Pakistan also welcomed the award rendered by the Court of Arbitration on the

issues of General Interpretation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), announced on August 8, 2025, and publicized on the Court's website on Monday.

In a statement, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, "The Award interprets the designed criteria for the new run-off-river hydropower projects, to be constructed by India on the Western Rivers (Chenab, Jhelum, and Indus)". "In a significant finding, the Court has declared that India shall let flow the waters of the Western Rivers for Pakistan's unrestricted use. In that connection, the specified exceptions for generation of hydro-electric plants must conform strictly to the requirements laid down in the Treaty, rather than to what India might consider an 'ideal' or 'best practices' approach," he added.

He said the Court's findings on low-level outlets, gated spillways, intakes for the turbines, and free-board are in line with Pakistan's interpretation of the relevant provisions of the Treaty. The Award also limits India from maximizing the pondage volume.

Notably, the Court has observed that the Awards of a Court of Arbitration are final and binding on the Parties (India and Pakistan), and have a controlling legal effect on subsequent Courts of Arbitration and Neutral Experts. Recognizing Pakistan's vulnerability as the downstream riparian, the Court has further observed that the object and purpose of the Indus Waters Treaty, as it relates to the Western Rivers, is to de-limit the two states' respective rights and obligations, in conjunction with mutual cooperation and effective dispute resolutions procedures. The Award carries special significance in the wake of India's recent announcement to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, and its earlier decision to boycott the proceedings of the Court of Arbitration. It is an endorsement of Pakistan's historical stance on the aforementioned issues. The Spokesperson said, "Pakistan remains committed to full implementation of the Indus Waters Treaty. It also expects India to immediately resume the normal functioning of the Treaty, and faithfully implement the Award announced by the Court of Arbitration."

Curfew imposed in Bajaur after mly operation

F.P. Report

KHAR: District Administration has imposed curfew in Bajaur after launching of military operation in the area. The curfew was imposed from 11 am to 11 pm on Monday, and residents were advised to stay indoors during this period.

A targeted operation has been launched in Mamond Tehsil, and a curfew has been imposed in 27 areas of the tehsil for three days. The curfew will be in effect from August 11 to August 14. Moreover, Gunship helicopters have been conducting airstrikes in various areas of Mamond Tehsil, targeting militant hideouts.

The district administration and relief organizations are providing assistance to those affected by the operation. The Bajaur Sports Complex has been converted into a relief camp, and 450 tents have been set up to accommodate the displaced persons. A grand jirga was held in Salarzai Tehsil, where it was decided that the area would not provide shelter to militants. The jirga also decided that anyone providing shelter to militants would be expelled from the area.

Furthermore, relief camps have been set up in various locations, including the Bajaur Sports Complex, Technical College, and Commerce College. Medical facilities are also being provided to those affected by the operation.

The district administration is working to provide relief to those affected by the operation. The Deputy Commissioner has directed the Assistant Commissioner and other officials to ensure that the displaced persons are provided with all necessary facilities. The district administration has appealed to the public to cooperate with the authorities and stay indoors during the curfew period. The public has also been assured that the authorities are working to restore peace and stability in the area.

KP curfew rumors are false: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, has strongly rejected the reports regarding the imposition of a province wide curfew, terming them baseless, misleading, and politically motivated. He clarified that life across the province is continuing as normal, with full freedom of movement and uninterrupted commercial activities.

Barrister Dr. Saif stated that curfew restrictions are limited only to certain specific areas of Bajaur and Miranshah, where they have been temporarily enforced for the safety of the public and to maintain law and order. He said that portraying it as an extended curfew is an attempt to create fear among the public and to sabotage the province's development process.

He further said that these rumors are part of an organized campaign aimed at disrupting peace and development in the province. "The rumor-spreading mafia cannot mislead the well-aware people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Our government's focus is on public service and development projects, while the opposition is focused solely on spreading lies and propaganda," he added.

He appealed to the public not to pay attention to such rumors and to rely only on verified information from official sources. Barrister Dr. Saif also made it clear that strict legal action will be taken against those spreading false and misleading information on social media.



KHAR: A view of closed shops as curfew imposed in Bajaur. — F.P. photo

PM hails record business confidence, credits reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed satisfaction over the latest Gallup Business Confidence Index report, which shows that Pakistani businesses' confidence in the national economy has reached its highest level in four years.

The prime minister termed the survey results "highly encouraging," and noted that the economic direction score has improved to -2, the best since the fourth quarter of 2021, compared to the last quarter of 2024, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. "These results reflect the business community's growing trust in the stability of the country's political and economic environment. Thanks to our reform agenda, transparency has increased in the system, and the trading community is experiencing greater ease of doing business," he said.

PM Shehbaz credited institutional reforms, the digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and structural changes in the energy sector for opening new avenues for trade and investment. He highlighted that improving macroeconomic indicators, better international credit ratings for Pakistan, and a decline in corruption and bribery were evidence of the government's sound economic policies. "The benefits of macroeconomic reforms have begun to reach the common man," he added, reaffirming the government's commitment to further enhancing institutional efficiency.

The Prime Minister also pointed to the Pakistan Stock Exchange's recent milestone, where the KSE-100 Index crossed an all-time high

Shehbaz grieved as 6.1 earthquake hits Turkiye's Balikesir province

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed grief after a 6.1 magnitude earthquake hit Balikesir province in western Turkiye late Sunday. "I feel saddened by the earthquake in Turkey's Balikesir province. Our thoughts and sympathies are with the victims, and we pray for the safety and speedy recovery of our Turkish brothers and sisters in this tragedy," the prime minister said in a statement. He conveyed his deepest condolences and sympathies to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on this natural disaster and assured that Pakistan was ready to provide all kinds of assistance to Turkey in this difficult time. According to Turkish Anadolu Agency, the quake was centered in the Sindirgi district of Balikesir province in western Turkiye with a depth of 11 kilometers. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said an 81-year-old citizen died after being rescued from a collapsed building. Twenty-nine others who were wounded have also been rescued, with none in life-threatening conditions. Initial evaluations indicate that 16 buildings in 68 neighborhoods have collapsed as a result of the earthquake and aftershocks.

of 147,000 points. He lauded Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and his economic team for their "commendable efforts" and reiterated that the government is working to expand consultation with the business community to provide more facilities for investors and entrepreneurs.

Equipping younger generation with modern technology, AI, among govt's top priorities: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that equipping the younger generation with comprehensive knowledge of modern technology and artificial intelligence (AI) was among the top priorities of the government, so that they could compete with the global youth on an equal footing.

On International Youth Day, being observed on August 12, he said Pakistan joined the global community in paying tribute to the youth popula-

tion around the world and especially to the youth of Pakistan. "The theme for International Youth Day 2025 is 'Actions for Local Youth in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Pakistan's youth are not only a symbol of determination, courage, and resilience, but they also serve as a driving force in the country's economic development," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

He said the young people were bringing laurels to the nation at the national and international fora and were actively contributing to various sectors of the national economy. The prime minister observed that the skilled youth were playing a key role in economic activities by utilizing their intelligence and energy to ensure the benefits of development reach the general public.

President vows to work for welfare of minorities' rights

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan's minority communities are an essential and respected part of society, and that their rights, freedoms, and safety are fully protected under the Constitution of Pakistan. He praised their valuable contributions to the country's strength and progress, noting their important role in national development. He made it clear that the State stands determined against all forms of discrimination, extremism, and violence, adding that such acts have no place in society and will not be allowed to threaten national unity and integrity.

The President said the State has taken practical measures to promote inclusion and ensure equal opportunities for all. These include separate seats for non-Muslims in the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies, a 5% quota in federal and provincial government jobs, and scholarships for minority students from the primary level to higher and professional education.

Speaking on the occasion of National Minorities Day at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the heads of various minority communities thanked President Asif Ali Zardari for his historic decision in 2009, during his first tenure as President of Pakistan, to declare 11th August as National Minorities Day, to be observed each year. They acknowledged this initiative as a milestone in recognising their contributions and upholding their rights.

He further assured the minority communities that their worship places, if presently under illegal occupation, would be retrieved without delay. He said he would ask the government to take steps to ensure such places are immediately restored to their rightful custodians.

He noted that the National Policy for

Interfaith Harmony has been designed to promote religious tolerance, strengthen social integration, and unite all religious communities as part of a cohesive national fabric.

The President said that our religion, Islam, upholds peace, justice, and human dignity — principles reflected in the Charter of Madina, which granted equal rights to all communities, including non-Muslims. He added that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned a Pakistan where every citizen, regardless of religion, would enjoy equal rights — a vision that continues to guide state policies.

Marking the significance of the day, President Zardari called for a collective resolve to build an inclusive and stronger Pakistan where every citizen enjoys equality, mutual respect, and legal protection, and is empowered to contribute meaningfully to the nation's shared destiny.

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8 volunteers die in Gilgit landslide

F.P. Report

GILGIT: A massive landslide in Gilgit triggered by recent rains killed eight volunteers who were working to restore a water channel. At least 15 volunteers were working on the water channel when they were caught in the landslide and were buried under the debris near Denure Nullah in Gilgit.

Rescuers and residents rushed to the spot and were able to retrieve six bodies while nine injured people were pulled from the debris. Two of them breathed their last later. The rescue teams have shifted the dead and injured to a nearby hospital. According to rescuers, most of the injured were in critical condition. According to Gilgit Baltistan government spokesman Faizullah

Faraq, the incident occurred around midnight last night. GB Baltistan chief minister has expressed sorrow and grief over the tragic incident and directed the authorities to accelerate the relief work. The spokesman said an emergency was declared in all the hospitals in Gilgit following the incident.

President Asif Ali Zardari expressed deep grief over the death of volunteers in a tragic incident of a landslide that took place in Gilgit. The president, in a statement, expressed sympathies and condolences to the families of the deceased volunteers.

He also paid tribute to the volunteers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of humanity. "The entire nation is grieved over the loss of precious lives in the tragedy," the president said and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured volunteers.

Three-quarters of UN members support Palestinian statehood

PARIS (AFP): Three-quarters of UN members have already or soon plan to recognize Palestinian statehood, with Australia on Monday becoming the latest to promise it will at the UN General Assembly in September. The Israel-Hamas war, raging in Gaza since the Palestinian militant group's attack on October 7, 2023, has revived a global push for Palestinians to be given a state of their own.

The action breaks with a long-held view that Palestinians could only gain statehood as part of a negotiated peace with Israel. According to an AFP tally, at least 145 of the 193 UN members now recognize or plan to recognize a Palestinian state, including France, Canada and Britain. Here is a quick recap of the Palestinians' quest for

statehood: On November 15, 1988, during the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising against Israeli rule, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat unilaterally proclaimed an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

He made the announcement in Algiers at a meeting of the exiled Palestinian National Council, which adopted the two-state solution as a goal, with independent Israeli and Palestinian states existing side-by-side. Minutes later, Algeria became the first country to officially recognize an independent Palestinian state. Within a week, dozens of other countries, including much of the Arab world, India, Turkiye, most of Africa and several central and eastern European countries followed suit.

The next wave of recognitions came in late 2010 and early 2011, at a time of crisis for the Middle East peace process. South American countries, including Argentina, Brazil and Chile, answered calls by the Palestinians to endorse their statehood claims. This came in response to Israel's decision to end a temporary ban on Jewish settlement-building in the occupied West Bank. In 2011, with peace talks at a standstill, the Palestinians pushed ahead with a campaign for full UN membership. The quest failed, but in a groundbreaking move on October 31 of that year, the UN cultural agency UNESCO voted to accept the Palestinians as a full member, much to the dismay of Israel and the United States.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah addresses during the assembly session on the occasion of the National Minorities Day, held at Old Sindh Assembly building in Karachi. —PPI Photo

Section 144 imposed in Sindh

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Interior Minister Zia Hassan Lanjar has announced the imposition of Section 144 for two days to prevent firing during Independence Day celebrations, which will prohibit public gatherings and demonstrations. Addressing the media at the Sindh Assembly, Lanjar emphasized the inappropriateness of aerial firing and appealed to citizens to refrain from this dangerous practice. He stressed that Independence Day should be an occasion for joy, not harm.

The minister confirmed the Sindh government's enthusiastic participation in the Independence Day celebrations and highlighted the official and private events taking place across the province. The restrictions under Section 144 are aimed at ensuring public safety and security during these celebrations.

Rang-e-Pakistan exhibition opens at GCU

LAHORE (APP): A four-day "Rang-e-Pakistan" exhibition has opened at the Government College University (GCU) here to celebrate Independence Day, showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage through art. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman formally inaugurated the exhibition at the university's Salam Hall. GCU Lahore Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Umer Chaudhry, GCU Faisalabad Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rauf Azam, faculty members, and students attended the ceremony.

Organized in collaboration with GCU Faisalabad and the Inter-University Consortium, the exhibition features paintings, photography, and other artworks created by students and faculty. The displays highlight Pakistan's culture, the beauty of Lahore, regional landscapes, and contemporary social and environmental challenges.

JI criticizes govt-opposition privilege agreement

KARACHI (PPI): Jamaat-e-Islami Sindh Emir Kashif Saeed Shaikh strongly condemned the decision to increase the salaries of Sindh Assembly members, saying that the government and opposition members are united in their own interests and privileges but have no concern for the problems of the public.

Kashif Saeed Shaikh commended the only Jamaat-e-Islami member in the provincial assembly, Muhammad Farooq Farhan, for voting against the salary increase. He said that due to the government's incompetence, the law and order situation has deteriorated across Sindh, from Karachi to Kashmir. He pointed to the alarming increase in robberies, murders, tribal conflicts, and child abductions, accusing elected representatives of

public apathy and indifference to the issues of their constituencies.

The Jamaat-e-Islami leader expressed disappointment over the consensus between the government and the opposition on self-serving matters while salary increases while public difficulties are ignored. He questioned the justification for such increases when ordinary citizens struggle to afford two meals a day. He insisted that the real solution to public problems lies in dismantling the current system and removing corrupt officials, which Jamaat-e-Islami is constantly striving for.

Kashif Saeed Shaikh's statement came during a meeting with officials of Jamaat-e-Islami Larkana Division, which was attended by district leaders from

Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Kashmore, Kandhkot, Qambar Shahdadkot, Dadu, and Larkana. Other senior Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, including Provincial Deputy Emir Hafiz Nasrullah Chana and General Secretary Muhammad Yousuf, were also present on the occasion.

Shaikh accused the Sindh government of financial mismanagement, citing the alleged faulty repair of Sukkur Barrage gates for 22 billion rupees and alleged corruption in the maintenance of the Tharparkar RO plant. He accused the Pakistan Peoples Party of neglecting the basic needs of the people despite being in power for 17 years. The meeting also discussed organizational matters, including performance reviews, membership drives, and public committees.

Turkish CG calls on Punjab home secretary

LAHORE (APP): Turkish Consul General Mr. Durmus Bastug called on Punjab Home Secretary Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi at the Home Department, Punjab, to discuss bilateral relations, mutual interests, and avenues for future cooperation.

During the meeting, Dr. Qazi briefed the Consul General on the law and order situation in Punjab and highlighted the professional capabilities of the province's security institutions. Mr. Bastug praised the longstanding and exemplary relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye, stating, "A strong Pakistan is synonymous with a strong Türkiye." He expressed pride in Pakistan's development

and reaffirmed Türkiye's unwavering support for its brotherly nation. He also underscored Türkiye's interest in expanding cooperation in key areas such as technology, security, education, and industry.

Dr. Qazi noted that several initiatives in Punjab—such as the Safe Cities Project and the Dolphin Force—have been modeled on successful practices from Türkiye. He added that vocational training programs, inspired by Türkiye's prison reforms, have been introduced in Punjab's prisons to rehabilitate inmates and enable their reintegration into society.

He further shared that civil defense systems in the province are being modernized through the provision

of bomb disposal robots and airlift drones. The use of advanced technology and enhanced training is significantly contributing to public safety efforts.

The Home Secretary also informed the delegation that law enforcement agencies have been equipped with modern tools, and criminal records have been digitized. In line with the Chief Minister's vision for prison reforms, plans are underway to send prison officers to Türkiye for training and capacity-building visits.

The meeting was also attended by Special Secretary Home Fazal-ur-Rehman, Inspector General of Prisons Mian Farooq Nazir, and Additional Secretary Judicial Imran Ranjha.

CM vows full protection, equal rights for minorities

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that Quaid-e-Azam's Pakistan belongs to all its citizens, where people of every faith live in safety and freedom. "We pay tribute to our minority brothers and sisters who have always played an active role in the development and prosperity of our beloved homeland," she remarked.

In her message on National Minorities Day, the CM described minorities as "a symbol of pride for Pakistani society" and said that there would be no compromise on their honour, dignity, protection, and progress. She added that the Punjab government is fully committed to granting minorities their complete rights in education, development, and welfare.

The CM, highlighting recent achievements, said Punjab has introduced the "Minority Card" for the

first time in history, providing quarterly financial assistance of Rs 10,500 to 50,000 beneficiaries, with the number to be increased to 75,000. She noted that Punjab also passed the historic Sikh Marriage Act 2024, granting legal status to 'Anand Karj,' and approved the pending Hindu Marriage Act 2017 in 2025.

The CM said the government is ensuring minorities' access to education, health, and employment. In the current fiscal year, Rs 8 billion have been allocated for development and non-development projects for minority communities. Grants for their religious festivals have been increased from Rs 60 million to Rs 3.66 billion, while funds have been earmarked for the restoration of 40 historic gurdwaras, 25 churches, and five temples. She added that restoration work is underway at the Samadhi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

in Lahore, Shri Krishna Temple in Rawalpindi, and the Church of Pakistan. Scholarship funds worth Rs 60 million have been allocated for minority students.

The CM also shared that live vocational courses have been launched in Youhanabad, with 1,000 students benefiting in the first phase and 10,000 in the second. She noted that for the first time, Punjab officially celebrated Baisakhi, Holi, Diwali, Christmas, and Easter. The minority quota system, she assured, is being implemented in letter and spirit.

"The Punjab government stands as a guardian of minority rights and is committed to ensuring their rightful share in every field of progress," she vowed. "We are building a society where love, tolerance, and brotherhood define our identity. Minorities are the beautiful colours of Pakistan, and we will never let these colours fade."

Over 3,600 minority cases resolved

LAHORE (APP): Over 4,000 cases related to the minority community have been received by the Virtual Center for Minorities since its establishment under the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), out of which more than 3,600 cases have been promptly resolved and over 750 FIRs registered to ensure justice.

In a statement marking National Minorities Day, the spokesperson for PSCA said the centre was launched on the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif with the aim of protecting minority rights and addressing their concerns effectively.

The virtual centre operates through the PSCA's emergency helpline 15. Minority citizens can press 5 after calling 15 to directly connect with the centre, where specially trained Christian officers handle complaints on a priority basis.

"The PSCA remains fully committed to providing a secure and inclusive environment for all minority communities across Punjab," the spokesperson added. Citizens from minority backgrounds have been encouraged to utilise the dedicated service for immediate police assistance and resolution of grievances.

DC reviews cleanliness, municipal services

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza carried out a detailed inspection of cleanliness and municipal services in Tehsil Sadar, here on Monday.

He directed the authorities to take immediate measures to improve sanitation and remove encroachments. Accompanied by the Chief Officer Metropolitan Corporation Lahore, Additional Deputy Commissioner General, and Assistant Commissioner Sadar Sadia Hussain Dogar, the DC reviewed operations on the ground and received a comprehensive briefing from AC Sadar.

During the visit to Bedian Road and surrounding areas, Syed Musa Raza instructed the Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) to enhance sanitation arrangements and ensure round-the-clock monitoring. He also ordered strict action against encroachments to improve public access and maintain city order.

The DC emphasised that no negligence in cleanliness, anti-encroachment efforts, or maintenance of sewerage and drainage systems would be tolerated. He reiterated the administration's commitment to swift resolution of public complaints through coordinated efforts of all departments, aiming to make Lahore cleaner and more accessible for its residents.

One killed in Karachi firing

KARACHI (APP): One person was killed in a firing incident that occurred near Lyari area of Karachi, tv channels quoting Rescue source reported on Monday. According to initial reports, unknown assailants opened fire and killed a person near Lyari area of Karachi. The Rescue team after receiving reports rushed to the site and shifted the dead to hospital. Police team have also reached the spot and started investigation.

Aseefa, Sindh MPs unite for national push on breastfeeding

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho, and parliamentarians from both houses on Monday signed a landmark joint declaration on gender, breastfeeding, and nutrition in Pakistan, pledging coordinated national action to protect child health, empower mothers, and address systemic barriers to optimal breastfeeding practices.

The declaration, endorsed during a Parliamentary Advocacy Forum jointly organized by

UNICEF and the Pakistan Paediatric Association at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) in Islamabad, calls for treating breastfeeding as a national investment in health and development.

It urges the enforcement of laws regulating the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, the integration of breastfeeding into health-care systems, improved workplace protections for mothers, and increased community engagement to shift cultural norms.

Lawmakers committed to advancing gender equality and maternal health

while ensuring sustainable financing and accountability mechanisms to safeguard Pakistan's youngest citizens.

Other notable participants of the event included Representative of UNICEF Pernille Ironside, Deputy Representative Sharmela Rassool, Secretary Women Parliamentary Caucus Shahida Rehmani, Dr. Anteneh Girma Chief Nutrition UNICEF, Fahmida Khan, Gender and Development Specialist UNICEF, Dr. Saba Shuja, ECD Manager UNICEF, and Dr. Mazhar Nutrition Specialist UNICEF.

Lacrosse clinic and training camp held in Islamabad

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A lacrosse clinic and training camp was held under the auspices of the Islamabad Lacrosse Association, in which more than forty players participated, with the aim of promoting this sport in the federal capital.

The special guest of the event was Arif Mahmood, Secretary General of Rawalpindi Islamabad Journalists Association (RISJA), who distributed prizes, shields and certificates among the players and appreciated their interest and hard work in promoting the sport.

Sarmad Shabab, Director Technical and Tahir Zarin, Secretary Pakistan Lacrosse Federation were also present on the occasion, who briefed the players on basic skills such as passing, catching, cradling, shooting, defensive tactics and rules of the game.

Miss Chaman Mushtaq, Coordinator Islamabad Lacrosse Association, and Shafqat Niazi, Sports Officer Punjab Sports Department played an important role in organizing the clinic and training camp. International cricketer Mr. Arshad Bhatti also attended the event and

expressed his support for the promotion of various sports in Pakistan.

Chief guest Arif Mahmood appreciated the efforts of Pakistan Lacrosse Federation and Islamabad Lacrosse Association and said that introducing this fast-paced and exciting game among the youth is a positive step and such grassroots programs should be continued.

The ongoing training camp at Nawaz Sharif Park will continue for a month, in which the players will be provided with regular practice, skill development and match playing opportunities.



Aurangzeb inaugurates digital printing cell

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division Aurangzeb Khan Khichi has said that, on the directives of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, all available resources are being mobilised for the promotion and preservation of national heritage and culture.

Inaugurating the Digital Printing Cell at the Urdu Science Board, here on Monday, the minister said that Urdu is a symbol of Pakistan's civilisation, culture, and national unity, and all institutions of the division must play an active role in its promotion. He made it clear that institutions reflecting national identity will not face "right-sizing" and that the government is fully committed to addressing their issues.

The ceremony was attended by Senior Joint Secretary of the Division Sabeen Sikandar Jalal, Director General National Language Promotion Department Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Director Urdu Science Board Ziaullah Khan Toru, Director Iqbal

Academy Dr. Abdul Raouf Rafiqui, Director Institute of Languages & Literature Punjab University Prof. Dr. Baseera Ambareen, and Director Training TEVTA Ambreen Afzal Chattha among others.

Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said the government is prioritising the protection and development of historical sites, traditional arts, languages, and cultural activities by providing budgets, experts, and modern facilities. These measures, he noted, will help safeguard Pakistan's historical identity while also promoting the national language, tourism, and economic growth.

The cultural minister underscored that strengthening all institutions of the National Heritage and Culture Division will preserve cultural identity and project a positive image of Pakistan globally. Praising the efforts of the Urdu Science Board in promoting the national language, he said all institutions must work collectively to advance Urdu's role in national life.

Briefing the minister, Director Ziaullah Khan Toru said the Urdu Science Board has launched digital printing and established a Digital Printing Cell to handle composition, designing, and printing in-house.

Speakers stress national unity for progress

LAHORE (APP): Speakers at a seminar on Monday stressed the importance of national unity, noting that the people of Pakistan possess the potential to excel in every field of life.

They shared these views while addressing a seminar titled "78th Independence Day: Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities for Sustainable Development" held at the Press Information Department (PID) in Lahore.

The speakers highlighted that Pakistan and its armed forces have once again demonstrated their strength in conventional warfare. They emphasised that the country is also fully capable of strengthening its economy. Senior journalist and columnist Mubeen ur Rehman Shami said that the creation of Pakistan itself was a historic achievement and that the country has immense potential to progress further.

"After the creation of Pakistan, the journey of achievements did not stop," he said. He added that soon after independence, Pakistan developed its national structure, built an industrial base, and, most notably, became a

nuclear power. He observed that Pakistan would have been in a much better position had the nation fully embraced discipline. Shami reiterated the need to uphold the principles of unity, faith, and discipline, as envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

He also stressed the need to focus on the development of educational institutions and training centers. Referring to recent tensions, Shami said that Pakistan gave a befitting response to Indian aggression, and the world witnessed the support extended by China, Türkiye, and other friendly nations during that time.

Senior journalist Irshad Ahmad Arif pointed out that while the country has made many achievements, there is a need to highlight its positive aspects more prominently. He said that Pakistan offers vast employment opportunities and noted that sending skilled and educated individuals abroad contributes positively to the national economy.

Senior journalist Salman Ghani highlighted the importance of policy continuity for sustainable progress. "The selection of

capable leadership can help resolve 50 percent of the country's issues," he remarked. Senior journalist Nasrullah Malik said that human resource development is crucial for building a strong society. He underlined the need to improve the country's education system and called for collective efforts in this regard.

"Human development is the need of the hour," he said, stressing the importance of skill-building among the youth. Educationist Dr. Arsha said that Pakistan has full potential to move forward but faces challenges such as political instability, poverty, and internal threats.

She stressed that meaningful change must begin at the individual level and cautioned against engaging in a blame game, which she said does not solve any problems. Educationist Dr. Ayesha Jami shared that in 2030, only 20 job categories are expected to remain relevant, including big data, fintech engineering, AI/machine learning, software and app development, cybersecurity, data warehousing, autonomous vehicle specialisation, UI/UX design, IoT special-

isation, data analytics, and environmental engineering. She said, "Now is the time to equip our youth with skills in these areas to ensure real development in the country."

Dr. Ayesha also noted that Pakistan had dealt a crushing defeat to India, which changed the strategic landscape in the country's favour. She called for providing maximum growth opportunities to the youth in order to curb brain drain.

Earlier, Director General PID Lahore, Shafqat Abbas Khan, welcomed participants and said it was an honour to open a dialogue on the "78th Independence Day: Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities for Sustainable Development."

He noted that Pakistan has made remarkable achievements over the past 78 years but acknowledged that serious challenges remain, including poverty, climate change, and governance gaps. "We need unity, vision, and consistency to overcome the challenges facing the country," he said. Senior analysts and journalists Muhammad Mehdi, Ifikhar Ahmed, and Noor Ullah also spoke.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah chairing a review meeting on governance related affairs of the province.

Student challenges KMU exam regulations 2017 at PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A fourth year MBBS student named Hoor Dawar, has challenged the constitutionality of Regulation 5 of Khyber Medical University (KMU) examination Regulation 2017, which bars promotion on failure in a single subject before the Peshawar High Court (PHC).

The student filed petition through Nouman Muhib Kakakhel, Advocate at PHC. The counsel pleaded that the petitioner has passed all subjects in her 4th professional MBBS but one subject and she is being asked to waste one whole year till she passed the said exam.

The counsel pleaded that the rule was amended in 2023 and cannot be retrospectively applied to the petitioner as she had taken admission in 2020 prior to the rule being introduced, therefore it is ultra vires to the constitution and the main act.

The counsel pleaded that the rule is discriminatory as all other degrees allow provisional promotions and students are allowed to undertake the field subject exam with the next class but in MBBS it is otherwise and opposite.

The counsel pleaded that the rule is unreasonable and harsh on students, which is bent upon wasting their precious time and the trauma that comes with it.

The lawyer pleaded that as per the regulation a student can take multiple chances to clear a subject but is not allowed a provisional promotion after the impugned amendment.

The petition pleaded that the amendment is violative of doctrine of proportionality as a severe punishment is being given for an issue that can be remedied.

The counsel prayed that as the amendment is violative of fundamental rights and other rights enshrined in the constitution, therefore it is libale to be

shunned down by declaring it to be ultra vires to the constitution and main act, illegal, discriminatory, arbitrary and unreasonable and allow the petitioner and similarly placed students provisional promotion to next professional class without wasting their precious year.

PHC directs newly appointed Admin Officer to appear

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the newly appointed Admin Officer to appear in person and sought responses from other respondents in a petition filed by Shakir Fareed, who was not appointed to the position of Admin Officer at the Pakistan Institute of Prosthetic and Orthotic Sciences, Hayatabad, despite being eligible, on Monday.

The petitioner, Shakir Fareed, had applied for the position of Admin Officer, Grade 17, and had cleared the test and interview, securing the second position in the merit list.

However, despite his position and experience, he was not appointed to the post, and instead, a person named Shoaib ur Rehman was appointed, who allegedly did not meet the eligibility criteria and had no relevant experience.

The counsel Bashir Khan Wazir Advocate, argued that the appointed Admin Officer had completed his BSc in June 2024 and was required to undergo a one-year internship, which raises questions about his experience in hospital administration. He further argued that the certificate submitted by the appointed officer as proof of experience was from a different field and did not meet the requirements of the post.

PHC divisional bench comprising Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Farah Jamshed after hearing the arguments, directed the parties to file their responses and also ordered the appointed Admin Officer to appear in person on the next hearing.

Important meeting to improve sanitation in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held in Peshawar on Monday under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan. The meeting was attended by Secretary Local Government, Saqib Raza Aslam, along with all relevant officials.

During the meeting, it was informed that the province's population data has been obtained from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), and a detailed briefing was given on estimating the per capita production of solid waste. It was stated that the daily per capita waste generation in the province ranges from 0.37 to 0.6 kilograms, and the maximum figure was used in calculations.

Based on this, the need and planning for sanitation vehicles in various TMAs were determined. It was decided to provide additional tractors and front loaders with backhoes to disaster-affected areas. Details regarding the population of all cities, amount of waste, vehicle requirements and availability, and proposed facilities were presented.

On the occasion, Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan said that the sanitation system in the province is being developed on modern lines, and all available resources will be utilized to provide the public with a clean and healthy environment.

Hum Log hosts grand minority Day, Independence Day celebration

PESHAWAR (APP): Hum Log on Monday successfully organized a grand event to commemorate both Minority Day and Independence Day, bringing together leaders from Sikh, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu communities in a vibrant display of interfaith harmony.

Held in collaboration with the KP Culture and Tourism Authority and the Youth Affairs Department, the celebration began with prayers from all religions, followed by the national anthem.

The Peshori Band and Dreamerx Band captivated the audience with soulful patriotic performances, while Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in fields such as teaching and music.

Distinguished guests included Rt. Rev. Bishop Ernest Jacob, Bishop of Pakistan, Baba Gurpal Singh, MPA, Amjad Aziz Malik, Administrator of China Window, Asghar Pervez, MPA, Syed Muhammad Ali, representative of DG KP Culture and Tourism Authority, staff of the ANF Regional Director, representatives of DC Peshawar including Additional AC City Bishrat Hussain and AC Faqirabad, Rev. Ft. Zeeshan Op, Rev. Altaf Gohar, journalist Muhammad Faeem, Rashid Yousaf, Samson Jacob, Anjum, and the CSF team. The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Chairman Hum Log, Augustin Jacob, and ended with a cake-cutting ceremony and the singing of national songs.

Directorate of Youth Affairs KP marks Minority Day with spirit of unity and interfaith harmony

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Directorate of Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Monday organized a befitting ceremony in connection with National Minority Day to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of minority communities and promote interfaith harmony. The event was attended by dignitaries, youth representatives and community members from various walks of life. The proceedings of ceremony commenced with special prayers for the good well and prosperity of the country. Addressing the gathering, Director Youth Affairs, Dr. Nauman Mujahid, underscored the significance of Minority Day and reiterated the Directorate's commitment to safeguarding minority rights. He also highlighted the Department's various youth-centric initiatives and schemes, including those designed to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities for minority youth. A special highlight of the event was the participation of youngsters and children from Landi Kotal, who performed national songs and tableaux, receiving warm applause from the audience. A representative from Akhuwat Islamic Institute briefed participants on the Ehsaas Naujawan Program (interest-free loan scheme), with emphasis on the special quota reserved for minorities.

Independence Day Inter-Club Boxing Championship Champions Club claims trophy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Regional Sports Office Peshawar and the district administration jointly organized the Marka-e-Haq and Independence Day celebrations during which the Inter-Club Boxing Championship concluded at Qayyum Sports Complex Peshawar.

Champions Club athletes delivered an outstanding performance winning two gold, three silver and four bronze medals to secure the trophy. Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance & Planning) Peshawar Asghar Surani, distributed prizes among the winning players. He was accompanied by

Regional Sports Officer Kashif Farhan, Provincial Boxing Association Secretary Hazratullah and other notable personalities.

The competitions concluded with a dignified ceremony where Champions Club was declared the overall winner.

In the end the chief guest distributed medals, trophies and cash prizes among the winners. Gold medalists received Rs. 3,000 each, silver medalists Rs. 2,000, and bronze medalists Rs. 1,000.



Muzzammil directs upgradation of museum, opening of souvenir shop

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the KP Chief Minister on finance and interprovincial coordination Muzzammil Aslam, paid a detailed visit to Peshawar Museum yesterday. On this occasion, Secretary of Tourism and Archaeology, Dr. Abdul Samad, gave a briefing regarding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism and archaeology, stating that the largest and most significant collection of Gandhara art is present in Peshawar Museum, and that chief monks, ambassadors from foreign countries, and followers of Buddhism visit the Peshawar Museum.

While giving a briefing to the Advisor, it was informed that with the support of the World Bank, the showcases for newly arrived artifacts will soon be replaced, and a festival of Gandhara civilization will be organized shortly in Peshawar Museum.

The Secretary of Tourism and Archaeology stated that the Peshawar Museum houses statues of Buddha, figures, meditations stupas, jewelry, and scenes of royal courts.

In response to a question, Secretary of Tourism and Archaeology, Dr. Abdul Samad, said that nearly 1200 hotels in tourist areas were inspected regarding their quality and management, out of which about 500 hotels were fined for poor water tanks and management.

In another statement issued from his office, Advisor on Finance Muzzammil Aslam reacted to the increase in provincial tax revenues, saying that the smaller provinces Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have outperformed the larger provinces.

Muzzammil Aslam said that Balochistan's own tax and non-tax revenue increased by 68% in one year, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tax and non-tax revenue increased by 56%.

Muzzammil Aslam stated that the revenues of larger provinces, Punjab and Sindh, increased by 30% and 26.3% respectively.

He further said that a 56% increase in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's performance is a sign of excellence, despite the fact that the province received 32 billion rupees less than Punjab under Net Hydel Profit (NHP), and that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa received zero payment under the oil and gas windfall levy.

The Advisor said that the federal government's lesser inclination towards Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as compared to other provinces is condemnable, and that Pakistan's development lies in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The federal government should provide maximum resources to these two provinces and place economy above politics.

Shafqat holds meeting with DG S&T for free wifi at public places

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the instructions of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and in line with the vision of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan for a "Digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Science & Technology and implementation of the project.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz stated that in the first phase, as a pilot project, free Wi-Fi service will be launched in Peshawar. He clarified that free Wi-Fi will be made available at all public places across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, such as general bus stands, bazaars, public parks, and other important locations.

In this regard, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz held an important meeting with the Director General Science & Technology to discuss the details and implementation of the project.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz added that the project will not only provide easy access to the internet for citizens but will also contribute to the growth of the digital economy, education, healthcare, and public awareness.

He directed the relevant departments to maintain close coordination for the timely and transparent completion of the project so that, under the vision of Chairman Imran Khan and the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can set a new benchmark in digital development.

Meeting okays KP Housing Authority Horticulture Regulation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Amjad Ali, has said that work is underway at a rapid pace on Bani Gul Township, Bannu, while work is also starting soon on the Warsak 2 housing project in Peshawar.

The establishment of commercial markets in Jaloza Housing Scheme Nowshehra and Mulazai Housing Scheme, Peshawar, will significantly increase socio-economic activities there.

These views were expressed by Special Assistant Dr. Amjad Ali while presiding over the 42nd authority meeting of the Provincial Housing Authority at the Civil Secretariat Peshawar yesterday. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Housing Department, Provincial Director General Housing Authority Horticulture Regulation 2025, the Regulation 2021 on joint venture and land sharing Formula for Hilly Areas, PC-1 on Solarization of High Rise Flats Hayatabad Peshawar Scheme, Special Assistant Dr. Amjad Ali, while welcoming the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Housing Authority Horticulture Regulation 2025, said that in the light of the rules, plot owners will also be committed to planting trees on their owned land.

KPBC observes strike against police violence on lawyer

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) has called for a strike from judicial proceedings across the province in response to the alleged brutal torture of a lawyer by police in Matta, Swat. The boycott resulted in no lawyers appearing in court, affecting court proceedings and causing litigants to return without their cases being heard, on Monday.

According to the Station House Officer (SHO) and Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP). The court also directed that an impartial investigation be conducted into the application filed by the lawyers under Section 22-A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and that legal action be taken against the police officers involved.

The lawyers, including Amin ur Rehman Yousafzai, President of the Peshawar High Court Bar, Qaiser Zaman, President of the District Bar Peshawar, and others, condemned the police's actions and demanded action against the SHO responsible for the torture. They warned that if their demands are not met, the scope of the protest will be expanded.

The judicial boycott affected court proceedings across the province, with no lawyers appearing in court. The boycott also resulted in litigants being forced to return without their cases being heard.

Dr Muhammad Athar Khalily wins international CNS award

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: MBBS, FCPS (Pediatrics), FCPS (Pediatric Neurology), MRCPCH (UK), MRCP (Ireland), MRCPS (Glasgow), DCH (UK) Dr. Muhammad Athar Khalily is an accomplished Pediatric Neurologist with over 14 years of clinical, academic, and research experience in Pakistan, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

He currently serves as Assistant Professor and Consultant Pediatric Neurologist at the Northwest School of Medicine and Northwest General Hospital, Peshawar.

According to a statement, one of the recipients of this award, he would be recognized at the 54th CNS Annual Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina (October 8-11, 2025), where the medic be presented with a celebratory plaque by the chair of the International Affairs Committee, Dr. Mubeen Rafay, during the newly established Kenneth F. Swaiman.

A graduate of Khyber Medical University (KMU), Dr. Khalily holds dual FCPS qualifications in General Pediatrics and Pediatric Neurology, along with prestigious memberships and diplomas from the Royal Colleges of the UK and Ireland.

His expertise spans the diagnosis and management of epilepsy, cerebral palsy, metabolic and genetic disorders, and pediatric neuro-emergencies.

In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Khalily is a dedicated academic and researcher.

He has authored numerous publications in national and international journals and collaborates with global research institutions, including the University of Tubingen, University of Lübeck, and NIH USA, particularly in molecular genetics and rare neurological disorders. Dr. Khalily plays an active leadership role in the medical community as General Secretary of the Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Executive Member of the Child Neurology Association Pakistan. He has organized and chaired major scientific events, including the 16th Pediatric Neurology Conference (2025) at a local hotel, Peshawar.

In recognition of his contributions to pediatric neurology, he was recently honored with the Bernard D'Souza Fellowship Award, a prestigious international accolade highlighting his commitment to advancing child neurology through clinical excellence, education, and research.

A passionate advocate for child health, he continues to mentor postgraduate trainees, contribute to policy discussions, and promote research that advances pediatric neurology in Pakistan and beyond.

Fluent in English, Urdu, and Pashto, Dr. Khalily combines compassionate patient care with academic excellence and international collaboration.



In brief

Another coal miner killed F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Another youth from Shangla has tragically lost his life in a coal mine accident. The victim, identified as Afsar Ali, son of Gulars, was a resident of Sandvi area, Tehsil Puran. According to sources, he was working with Dostan Coal Company when he was critically injured in a "dot fall" accident during operations. He was immediately shifted to Lady Reading Hospital (LRH), Peshawar, where he succumbed to his injuries despite medical efforts. Afsar Ali was scheduled to be married in a few days and had gone to Darra Adam Khel to earn some money for wedding expenses. Fate, however, had other plans. Today, his coffin arrived in his native village, where he was laid to rest amid the tears of hundreds of mourners.

Religious leader killed in Wana F.P. Report

WANA: Unknown assailants opened fire in the Kara Bagh Azam Warsak area of Tehsil Birmal, South Waziristan, killing a prayer leader and religious scholar, Maulana Sanaullah, on the spot. According to local sources, Maulana Sanaullah was serving as the imam of Jamia Masjid Niaz Wali in Laman Kot. The deceased hailed from Tehsil Shakai. It is pertinent to mention that in the past year alone, several scholars affiliated with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) have been martyred in Lower South Waziristan by unidentified gunmen. Despite repeated incidents, authorities have so far failed to apprehend a single culprit, fueling public concern over the worsening law and order situation in the region.

15 arrested, arms recovered F.P. Report

SARGODHA: The police arrested 15 accused during a crackdown in the district on Monday. A spokesman said officials of different police stations raided and arrested Khalid, Khaleel, Asghar, Nouman, Naveed, Nasrullah, Muhammad Ashfaq, Muhammad Aslam, Tariq, Waqas, Waleed and others. The police also recovered 2-kg hashish, 2-kg opium, 231 litres of liquor, nine pistols, nine guns. Meanwhile, the district administration impounded five vehicles over illegal installation of gas cylinders. Assistant Commissioner and Secretary RTA Muhammad Tahir conducted a crackdown at the city's main bus terminal with the police. The authorities also raided a gas refilling shop but the shopkeeper managed to escape. He emphasized that no compromises would be made on public safety and vowed to continue the crackdown against violators.

Two suspects arrested F.P. Report

D I KHAN: On the directives of District Police Officer Dera, Sajad Ahmad Sabzdada, the Kulachi Circle Police, led by SDPO Kulachi Inamullah Khan Gandapur, along with SHO Inspector Aslam Khan and Investigation Incharge Inayatullah, conducted a search and strike operation to maintain law and order and apprehend criminal elements. During the operations, several houses, vehicles and bus stands were checked. The police arrested proclaimed offender Haqnawaz, son of Rabnawaz, resident of Mohallah Usman Khel, Kulachi, and Rozi Khan Noni, son of Muhammad Ishaq, resident of Kulachi, who was wanted in a murder case.

Kundi inaugurates Azadi Pakistan Solar Expo in Mardan

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday visited Mardan district and inaugurated the Azadi

The event was attended by chamber officials, business representatives, and traders from the solar energy sector.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Kundi high-

praised the Mardan Chamber of Commerce for organizing the exhibition and acknowledged its services for the business community.

Criticizing electricity load-shedding and high tariffs, the Governor pointed out that despite being a major producer of electricity, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's people remain deprived of this facility. He lauded engineers and entrepreneurs for their role in promoting affordable energy solutions and assured that he remains in contact with various federal ministries and institutions to improve the province's situation.

On the security front, Governor Kundi warned that elements trying to destabilize peace are engaged in false propaganda against security institutions. He reiterated that the people of the province stand firmly with their institutions to bring peace spoilers to justice and will continue to do so.



Pakistan Solar Expo as the chief guest. Upon arrival, he was received by Mardan Mayor Himayatullah Mayar, former Mardan Chamber President Zahir Shah, and Acting President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce Nauman Saraf.

The Governor inspected stalls set up by solar panel manufacturers and other solar product companies, with over 50 national and international firms participating in the exhibition.

lighted the growing importance of solar energy in the wake of the current electricity crisis, saying that both residential buildings and industrial units in the province are increasingly shifting to renewable energy sources.

He said that 70 per cent of marble factories in Mardan have already switched to solar power, calling the promotion of alternative energy sources a commendable effort. He

attended as the Chief Guest. He formally inaugurated the campaign by planting a guava sapling, symbolizing the start of the plantation drive.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Kohat Hamid Iqbal, along with the notables and local sportsmen, also participated actively by planting various fruit saplings. A total of 30 fruit plants were planted within the designated plantation area while an additional 20 fruit plants were distributed among the participants, sports clubs, and community representatives for plantation at their respective locations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner Kohat emphasized the need

for collective efforts in tree plantation to counter environmental challenges, reduce pollution and ensure a sustainable future for coming generations. He appreciated the role of the Forest Department and other stakeholders in promoting greenery and contributing to the preservation of natural resources.

The participants reiterated their commitment to actively take part in plantation drives and safeguard the environment. The campaign will continue during the monsoon season, targeting large-scale plantation across different areas of Kohat District in collaboration with the government departments, civil society, and local communities.

Monsoon plantation drive inaugurated

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In line with the special directions of the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Rahimullah Mehsud, the Kohat Forest Division has organized a Monsoon Plantation Drive under the ongoing celebrations of "Marka-e-Haq & Independence Week-Planting Campaign 2025." The event was aimed to promote the environmental protection, enhance greenery and create public awareness regarding the importance of plantation for climate resilience.

The ceremony was held today at Kohat Sports Complex, where the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Rahimullah Mehsud,

attended as the Chief Guest. He formally inaugurated the campaign by planting a guava sapling, symbolizing the start of the plantation drive.

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Domestic worker killed due to alleged torture

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A domestic worker in Hafizabad's Akhtar Town allegedly died due to severe torture, sparking outrage after his body was buried without a post-mortem examination.

According to reports, 23-year-old Waseem Riaz, a resident of the rural village Rahgo Sayedan, was employed at the house of Syed Najam-ul-Hassan Shirazi in Akhtar Town. Waseem's condition deteriorated after alleged brutal torture, and he died on the way to a Lahore hospital.

In his dying declaration, Waseem claimed he had been mercilessly beaten and thrown onto the roof. His final words requested care for his parents and sisters. His body was brought to the DHQ Hospital Hafizabad for a post-mortem, but despite hours in an ambulance and protests from family members, the examination was not conducted. The body was buried overnight without autopsy.

The incident drew the attention of Punjab's Inspector General of Police, who sought a report from the RPO Gujranwala.

District Police Officer Hafizabad Atif Nazir ordered an inquiry under DSP Sadar Rana Jamil Qaiser, directing that the investigation be completed within 24 hours. The DPO stated that strict legal action would be taken against those found responsible, without discrimination.

Social and civil society circles have expressed deep concern over the failure to conduct a post-mortem despite the victim's dying statement, terming it gross negligence that could hinder the determination of the actual cause of death.

FDA hosts Jashn-e-Azadi and Ma'arka-e-Haq Mushaira

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) hosted a "Jashn-e-Azadi and Ma'arka-e-Haq" Mushaira as part of the Independence Day and Ma'arka-e-Haq celebrations. The event was held in the conference room of the FDA Complex.

Acting Director General

FDA, Qaisar Abbas Rind, was the chief guest, while renowned poet Nusrat Siddiqui presided over the event. Local poet Shahzad Baig was stage secretary and commencing the event with his own beautiful verses. Acting Director General Rind welcomed the poets and highlighted the significant role that literary figures played in the Pakistan

Movement.

He stated that their passionate poetry, writings, and articles breathed new life into the Muslims of the subcontinent, fueling their desire for independence. He noted that this year's Independence Day is being celebrated as a victory in the Ma'arka-e-Haq, and the entire Pakistani nation stands united with the armed forces.

Vertical living: A modern solution to Pakistan's housing crisis

Malaika Fatima

THE Housing Challenge: Pakistan is facing a serious housing crisis. Millions of people do not have a safe, affordable place to live, and the country is short by around 10-12 million homes. Every year, this gap grows by another 300,000, especially for low-income families. As more people move to cities for work, many end up in overcrowded settlements, or katchi abadis, without clean water, toilets, or secure ownership.

In some poor areas, as many as 8 to 11 people live in a single room. Even new low-cost housing often gives each person only about 123 square feet of space, which is far from comfortable. High property prices, limited access to housing loans, poor planning, and corruption make it nearly impossible for most people to own a home. Many

houses are also built with weak materials, leaving them unsafe during floods, earthquakes, or extreme heat. This crisis impacts health, children's education, and overall quality of life, while widening the gap between rich and poor.

What is Vertical Living? One promising solution is vertical living-building upward instead of outward. This means people live in apartment blocks or high-rise towers instead of single-story houses spread out over large plots of land. It's a common approach in places like the UAE or USA, and now it is starting to appear in Pakistan's big cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. Vertical living is becoming more important as urban populations grow, land prices rise, and the demand for housing in city areas continues to increase.

Why Vertical Living Works Vertical living offers many

advantages, especially in big cities where land is expensive. By stacking homes in tall buildings, many families can live in the same space that a few houses would normally occupy. This makes it easier and cheaper to provide infrastructure like roads, water supply, and electricity. Instead of building separate utilities for every house, one building can share the same systems for hundreds of residents. Services like garbage collection, sewage management, and security are also simpler to handle in high-rise buildings. Another benefit is location-vertical living keeps people close to schools, hospitals, markets, parks, and public transport. This reduces travel time, saves fuel, cuts down traffic, and lowers air pollution.

Protecting Farmland and the Environment: For Pakistan, vertical living could also help protect fertile farmland from being

lost to urban sprawl. By housing hundreds of families in a small footprint, more agricultural land can be preserved to grow food for the country's growing population. Some of the saved land could be used for green belts and parks to clean the air and cool cities, while other areas could be turned into renewable energy hubs like solar or wind farms. Within cities, freed-up land could be used for urban farms and community gardens, which would provide fresh food locally and improve air quality.

Government's Role: To make vertical living work, the government has an important role to play. It can update city planning rules to allow taller buildings where suitable, give tax breaks or cheap loans to developers building affordable apartments, and stop approving housing schemes that take over farmland. Empty government land or abandoned industrial sites could

be repurposed for high-rise projects. The government also needs to ensure reliable utilities and public transport in these areas, while enforcing strict safety rules to protect residents in case of earthquakes or fires.

Community's Role: Communities, too, must adapt to the idea of apartment living. Shared green spaces, rooftop gardens, and vertical farms can make high-rise life healthier and more enjoyable. Builders and residents can work together to add eco-friendly features like solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and recycling systems.

A Smarter Future: If Pakistan embraces vertical living as a national priority, it can meet the urgent housing demand without destroying farmland or green areas. Families could live closer to work, schools, and healthcare, while cities become more efficient and environmentally



friendly. With smart planning, community support, and a shift in mindset toward building upward, Pakistan can create modern, livable cities that protect natural resources for future generations.



QUETTA: Unemployed labors sitting at roadside as they are waiting for their employment during hot weather of summer season.

Tribesmen disapprove demolishing of mosque F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The local tribal of Landi Kotal categorically condemned the demolition of the Mosque (Madani Masjid) in Islamabad in a protest rally held at Takia point, Sultan Khel on Monday and demanded stern action against those found guilty in heinous crime.

It is to be stated here that last night Capital Development Authority (CDA) demolished Madani Masjid and replaced the site with planting trees in it. Number of residents carried black flags and placards inscribed with slogans against bulldozing of Masjid at Murree Road, Islamabad and blocked the Pak-Afghan highway for all kinds of traffic movement.

They said that the incumbent government was issuing licenses to legitimate alcohol businesses but declared construction of the decades old Mosque illegal. The protestors maintained that Pakistan came into being in the name of Islam and no one will be allowed to carry out such unIslamic practices.

They urged the ulemas and religious scholars to shun their differences and come forward to save their religious places. Later on, they resumed the highway for traffic. According to the CDA, they initiated an advanced operation in the metropolis against all structures, violating construction regulations.

Three shot dead in Lakki F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Three people, including one woman and a girl, were shot dead, and three women became seriously injured during a firing incident inside a house in Lakki Marwat due to a domestic dispute on Monday.

The firing incident took place in the Kotla Zafaranabad area of Norrang. The deceased were identified as Nauman, his mother, and an infant girl, while Nauman's two daughters and Khalil's wife became critically injured. Police filed a first information report (FIR) on behalf of the Luqman against Khalil and three unknown persons.

Minister inspects ongoing work on underpass

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Aftab Alam Advocate inspected the ongoing construction work on the Dhodha-Kheramatoo Chowk underpass at Indus Highway in Kohat and directed the concerned authorities to ensure the timely and high-quality completion of the project.

It is worth mentioning that a few days earlier, the Law Minister, along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat, National Highway Authority officials and other concerned authorities,

had paid a detailed visit to the Dhodha-Kheramatoo Chowk. During that visit, in view of strong public demand, he had directed the NHA to expedite work on the construction of an underpass at this location. Acting promptly on these directives, formal work on the project has now been commenced.

On the occasion, Aftab Alam Advocate said that the construction of the Dhodha Chowk underpass will not only significantly improve traffic flow in the area but will also reduce the travel difficulties faced by citizens in their daily commute. He stressed that the

project must be completed to the highest standards within the stipulated time-frame so that the public can benefit from it at the earliest.

Furthermore, the Law Minister also reviewed the ongoing construction and rehabilitation work at Kheramatoo Chowk and instructed the concerned authorities to give top priority to quality and transparency in all development schemes. He added that the provincial government is taking every possible measure to facilitate the public and accelerate the pace of development.

Commissioner chairs jirga for holding of Chehlum

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In order to ensure the peaceful and organized observance of Chehlum of Imam Hussain (RA) 2025, a divisional-level Grand Jirga was convened under the chairmanship of the Commissioner Kohat Division, Syed Motasim Billah Shah at Commissioner House Kohat on Monday.

The meeting beside others, was also attended by the prominent Ulama and elders of both Sunni and Shia communities from the districts of Kohat, Orakzai, and Hangu. Deputy Commissioner Kohat Rahimullah Mehsud, Additional Deputy Commissioner Kohat Hamid Iqbal, officers from the police and civil administration, as well as representatives from various schools of thought and walks of life.

At the outset, the Commissioner explained the purpose of the Jirga, stating that in the peaceful

holding of the recent Muharram-ul-Haram was made possible through exemplary cooperation among the civil administration, police, Pakistan Army, other security agencies, religious scholars of both Sunni and Shia sects, the business community, transport unions, lawyers, and civil society. As a result, no untoward incident occurred. He extended his congratulations to all institutions and communities for their role in successfully maintaining peace.

The Commissioner remarked that the treacherous enemy, India, having failed to confront us in conventional warfare where our brave forces humbled them within just three days which is unable to digest this humiliating defeat. Consequently, it seeks to sow discord and create division among our people. Therefore, it is essential that we remain vigilant and united at all times, thwarting the nefarious designs of the enemy.

Expressing confidence, he said that, just as Muharram-ul-Haram passed peacefully, Chehlum of Imam Hussain (RA) will also be observed in an atmosphere of peace and safety, with all stakeholders continuing to demonstrate unity and solidarity.

The Commissioner issued special directives to the district administration to ensure all possible facilities for mourners, including cleanliness along procession routes, adequate lighting, medical facilities, security arrangements, provision of drinking water, and other basic necessities at Imam Bargahs and on the routes of processions.

At the end, all the participants reaffirmed their commitment to continue extending full cooperation for the maintenance of peace and promotion of sectarian harmony in the region. Special Dua was also offered the integrity and solidarity of the area and peace in the region.

National Minority day observed

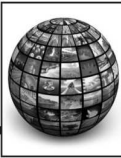
F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Christian Fr Bonnie Mendes, has emphasised the importance of equality and education for all Pakistani citizens. Speaking to the activists of Society for human development on minority day on Monday he said "Every Pakistani citizen deserves equal rights, respect, and access to quality education

without any discrimination," Fr Mendes stated.

"We must strive for a society where every individual, regardless of their background, faith, or identity, is treated with dignity and fairness. Education is the key to unlocking opportunities and promoting social mobility. It's essential that we ensure equal access to education for all, particularly for marginalized and minority communi-

ties, he stated. Fr Simon Khursheed highlighted the need for inclusivity, tolerance, and social cohesion in Pakistan, aligning with the country's constitutional values and international human rights commitments. "By promoting equality and education, we can build a more just and prosperous society where every individual can thrive and reach their full potential."



Israel’s Gaza plan risks another calamity: UN official

NEW YORK (AFP): A UN official warned the Security Council that Israel's plans to control Gaza City risked "another calamity" with far-reaching consequences, as Benjamin Netanyahu insisted his goal was not to occupy the territory. The United Nations Security Council held a rare emergency weekend meeting after Israel said its military would "take control" of Gaza City in a plan approved by Prime Minister Netanyahu's security cabinet that sparked a wave of global criticism.

"If these plans are implemented, they will likely trigger another calamity in Gaza, reverberating across the region and causing further forced displacement, killings, and destruction," UN Assistant Secretary General Miroslav Jenca told the Security Council. The UN's humanitarian office OCHA said 98 children had died from acute malnutrition since the start of the conflict in October 2023, with 37 of those deaths since July, according to Gaza's authorities. "This is no longer a looming hunger crisis -- this is starvation, pure and simple," said OCHA's coordination director Ramesh

Rajasingham. Palestinian Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour said "over two million victims are enduring unbearable agony," calling Israel's plans for Gaza City "illegal and immoral," and for foreign journalists to be allowed into Gaza. Netanyahu announced a plan to allow more foreign journalists to report inside Gaza -- accompanied by the Israeli military.

Britain, a close ally of Israel which nonetheless pushed for an emergency meeting on the crisis, warned the Israeli plan risked prolonging the conflict. "It will only deepen the suffering of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. This is not a path to resolution. It is a path to more bloodshed," said British deputy ambassador to the UN James Kariuki. World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus echoed that sentiment, calling the Israeli plan "deeply worrying, given the already dire humanitarian and health situation across the Strip." But Netanyahu said his country was "talking in terms of a fairly short timetable because we want to bring the war to an end," as he insisted Israel did not

want to occupy Gaza.

Outside the meeting at UN headquarters in New York, a small but noisy protest calling for an end to the conflict was met by a large police presence. The United States, a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council, accused those nations who supported meeting of "actively prolonging the war by spreading lies about Israel." "Israel has a right to decide what is necessary for its security and what measure measures are appropriate to end the threat posed by Hamas," said US envoy to the UN Dorothy Shea. Israel's deputy ambassador to the UN Jonathan Miller said "pressure should not be placed on Israel, who suffered the most horrific attack against the Jewish people since the Holocaust, but on Hamas." Algeria's Ambassador Amar Bendjama called for sanctions on Israel in response to its Gaza City plan.

"The hour has come to impose sanctions on the enemy of humanity," he said. "If it was another country, you would have been imposing sanctions a long time ago," the Palestinian envoy Mansour said.

South Korea and Vietnam leaders pledge deeper ties

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea and Vietnam pledged deeper economic and strategic cooperation as their leaders held a summit on Monday, with the countries seeking to leverage their business ties to navigate a challenging global trading environment.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung is hosting Vietnamese leader To Lam as his first state guest since taking office on June 4 and discussed promoting trade and investment in the Southeast Asian country, Lee's office said. Lam, who is the Vietnamese Communist Party general secretary, leads a delegation of industry, trade, foreign and technology ministers and senior party and parliament members on the four-day state visit.

"Our countries agreed that about 10,000 Korean companies operating in Vietnam contribute to Vietnam's economic development and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries," Lee said in a televised address. "I asked for a continued interest in the stable economic activities of our companies in Vietnam." Lam said the countries agreed to further open up their markets and expand trade to \$150 billion by 2030, adding Vietnam welcomed an increase in investment by South Korean businesses along with greater technological cooperation. The countries are due to sign at least 10 memoranda of understanding at the summit meeting, pledging cooperation in areas including nuclear and renewable energy, monetary and financial policies, and science and technology, Lee's office said. Other agreements covered cooperation in infrastructure, including high-speed rail, Lee's office said. The rare visit by the Vietnamese leader is expected to contribute to a favourable condition for South Korean businesses to invest in major infrastructure and nuclear energy projects planned in Vietnam, it said.



TOKYO: A road flooded follwoing a heavy rain in Nagasu town, Kumamoto prefecture, southern Japan.

Footage shows men in military garb killing medical worker

DAMASCUS (AP): Footage from security cameras at a hospital in the city of Sweida in southern Syria published showed what appears to be the killing of a medical worker by men in military garb. The video published by activist media collective Suwayda 24 was dated July 16, during intense clashes between militias of the Druze minority community and armed tribal groups and government forces.

In the video, which was also widely shared on social media, a large group of people in scrubs can be seen kneeling on the floor in front of a group of armed men. The armed men grab a man and hit him on the head as if they are going to apprehend him. The man tries to resist by wrestling with one of the gunmen, before he is shot once with an assault rifle and then a second time by another person with a pistol. A man in a dark jumpsuit with "Internal Security Forces" written on it appears to be guiding the men in camouflage into the hospital. Another security camera shows a tank stationed outside the facility.

Activist media groups say the gunmen were from the Syrian military and security forces. A Syrian government official said they could not immediately identify the attackers in the video, and are investigating the incident to try to figure out if they are government-affiliated personnel or gunmen from tribal groups. He spoke

on condition of anonymity because he was not immediately cleared to speak to the media on the matter. Syria's Interior Ministry, in a statement posted by state-run news agency SANA, said Deputy Minister of Interior for Security Affairs Maj. Gen. Abdul Qader Al-Tahhan was assigned to oversee the investigation "to ensure that the perpetrators are identified and arrested as quickly as possible." "We condemn and denounce this act in the strongest terms, and we affirm that the perpetrators will be held accountable and brought to justice to receive their just punishment, regardless of their affiliations," the statement said.

The government last month set up a committee tasked with investigating attacks on civilians during the sectarian violence in the country's south, which is supposed to issue a report within three months. The incident at the Sweida National Hospital further exacerbates tensions between the Druze minority community and the Syrian government, after clashes in July between Druze and armed Bedouin groups sparked targeted sectarian attacks against them. The violence has worsened ties between them and Syria's Islamist-led interim government under President Ahmad al-Sharaa, who hopes to assert full government control and disarm Druze factions. Though the fighting

has largely calmed down, government forces have surrounded the southern city and the Druze have said that little aid is going into the battered city, calling it a siege.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent, which has organized aid convoys into Sweida, said in a statement that one of those convoys that was carrying aid in the day before "came under direct fire," and some of its vehicles were damaged. It did not specify which group attacked the convoy. The UN Security Council adopted a statement expressing "deep concern" at the violence in southern Syria and condemning violence against civilians in Sweida. It called for the government to "ensure credible, swift, transparent, impartial, and comprehensive investigations." The statement also reiterated "obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect all medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transportation and equipment, as well as hospitals and medical facilities." It expressed concern about "foreign terrorist fighters" in Syria, while calling on "all states to refrain from any action or interference that may further destabilize the country," an apparent message to Israel, which intervened in last month's conflict on the side of the Druze, launching airstrikes on Syrian government forces.

Firefighters bring huge blaze in France under control

PARIS (AFP): Firefighters have contained a massive wildfire in southern France but still face a "complicated" struggle, but officials warned that scorching heat and dry winds could reignite the blaze. The fire, which has ravaged a vast area of France's southern Aude department, killing one person and injuring several others, comes as parts of the Mediterranean region face a heatwave.

The fire is now under control. This still requires continued mobilisation. We must hold on and not weaken," Amelie Trioux, chief of staff of the Aude prefect, told a press briefing. Authorities said that hot, dry winds -- similar to those on the day the blaze began -- and a heatwave would make the work of firefighters more difficult. Some 1,300 firefighters were drafted in to stop the

blaze from flaring up amid fears that winds blowing around 50 kilometres (30 miles) per hour could fan lingering hot spots. The blaze -- the largest in at least 50 years -- tore through 16,000 hectares of vegetation, disaster officials said. Temperatures in the coming days are expected to hit 42C in some areas, according to national weather service Météo France.

In Saint-Laurent-de-la-Cabrerisse, a 65-year-old woman was found dead in her home, which was devastated by flames. Authorities said one resident suffered serious burns and four others were lightly injured, while 19 firefighters were hurt, including one with a head injury. Thirty-six houses were destroyed, others damaged, and more than 20 agricultural sheds burned. For

livestock farmers in Fontjoncouse, the fire has ravaged grazing land and wiped out much of their flocks, fuelling outrage among those who said they did not have time to evacuate their animals. Emmanuelle Bernier said she was "extremely angry" when she returned to a devastating scene, finding the pen that had housed her herd of goats in ruins, with 17 animals -- some close to giving birth -- lost in the fire. "I will definitely change jobs. This will change my whole life," she said. Bernier's property now holds only a few geese and two sick goats after she entrusted her surviving sheep to a local winegrower, as the farm was too damaged for them to stay. But as she surveyed the scorched landscape, Bernier voiced some hope for the future.

"There's still a little life left," she said. Experts warn that European countries are becoming ever more vulnerable to such disasters due to intensifying summer heatwaves linked to global warming. Residents of southern France said the high temperatures are becoming unbearable, especially for the most vulnerable, including the elderly or children. "I've never experienced a heatwave as hard to bear as this year, said Monique Beluy, 81, in the southern city of Marseille, who worries about living alone. "I'm feeling less and less calm given my age and my health. I know I'm more vulnerable," she said. The heatwave is forecast to peak, but high temperatures are likely to persist through the end of the week, according to Météo France.

Prominent Chinese diplomat Liu Jianchao taken for questioning

BEIJING (Reuters): Senior Chinese diplomat Liu Jianchao, widely seen as a potential foreign minister, was taken away by authorities for questioning in early August, five people familiar with the matter said. Liu, 61, was detained after returning from a work trip to Singapore, South Africa and Algeria, which ended on July 30, according to the sources. His house was searched by authorities in early August, two of the people said.

The people did not know why the authorities questioned Liu. They could not be named for safety reasons. Liu's detention was first reported by the Wall Street Journal. Liu's detention marks the highest-level disappearance of a diplomat since China ousted its former foreign minister and President Xi Jinping's protégé, Qin Gang, in 2023 following an unexpected public absence. Since 2022, Oxford-educated Liu has led the International Department

of the Communist Party, the body in charge of managing ties with foreign political parties. His profile remains on the department's website. He was widely viewed by diplomats in Beijing and analysts as a likely candidate to succeed veteran Wang Yi as foreign minister but was not promoted to the role at a recent annual government reshuffle.

"If true, Liu Jianchao's downfall will lead to further power vacuum at the top of China's foreign affairs portfolio," said Wen-Ti Sung, a fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub. "It removes a frontrunner to succeed Wang Yi and deprives China of a potential next steward of China's foreign policy." China's State Council Information Office, which handles media queries for the Chinese government, and the Chinese Communist Party International Department did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment. At

an annual forum at Beijing's Tsinghua University in early July, Liu said he was optimistic about the future of US-China relations and that it was "unimaginable that China and the US will ever go to war". Liu was known for the unusual frequency and intensity of his overseas travel unlike his more low-profile predecessors. Foreign diplomats in Beijing praised his confident and relaxed manner, fluent English and ability to engage spontaneously without pre-prepared talking points.

"He knows how to shape Chinese narratives in a way that's engaging and appealing to foreigners," said one who met him in late 2023. Another diplomat who met his aides around that time said they were very confident that he would soon be promoted to foreign minister. During a high-profile 2024 trip to the United States, which was widely viewed by analysts as a foreign minister trial run, he met a wide range of counter-

ABUJA (AFP): Mali has arrested dozens of soldiers suspected of plotting to overthrow the junta, which itself took power in the west African country in a coup, sources told AFP. Since seizing the reins in Mali through back-to-back coups in 2020 and 2021, the west African country's junta has ramped up repression of its critics in the face of widespread jihadist unrest.

"Since three days ago, there have been arrests linked to an attempt to destabilise the institutions. There have been at least around 20 arrests," a Malian security source told AFP. A separate source within the army confirmed an "attempt at destabilisation", adding: "We have gone ahead with the necessary arrests". Among those arrested was General Abass Dembele, a former governor of the central Mopti region and a respected military officer. "Soldiers came to arrest General Abass Dembele in Kati," on

the outskirts of the capital Bamako, a figure close to the officer said. "They have not told him why he was arrested." A member of the National Transition Council, the junta-backed parliament, spoke of "around 50 arrests". "All are soldiers. Their objective was to overthrow the junta," the lawmaker said. Since 2012 Mali has been wracked with crises on various fronts, with militants linked to the Al-Qaeda or Islamic State groups carrying out violent attacks across the Sahel nation. Criminal and sectarian violence are likewise rife, while the economy is in dire straits.

After the coups, the junta turned its back on France, arguing that the country should be free of its former colonial ruler, as have its fellow military-run allies in Niger and Burkina Faso. It has forged ties with new allies, notably Russia, whose mercenaries from the paramilitary Wagner group and its successor

Africa Corps have helped the military fight jihadists and other internal adversaries. Yet, like Niger and Burkina Faso, Mali has continued to struggle to contain the jihadist threat, while the regular army and its Russian allies are frequently accused of committing atrocities against civilians. For Malian sociologist Oumar Maiga, this latest purge was "proof that the officers are struggling to control the situation. There are grumblings within the army's ranks". "Some soldiers are not happy with the treatment given to the Russian mercenaries at the expense of Malian soldiers," Maiga added. In July, a bill passed by the military-appointed legislative body granted Mali's junta chief General Assimi Goita a five-year presidential mandate, renewable "as many times as necessary" and without elections. The military government had initially pledged to return to civilian rule in March 2024.

Japanese prosecutor fight for justice

TOKYO (AFP): Very few women in Japan speak out about rape, and Hikari, too, kept quiet for years about her alleged assault by her boss, Osaka's former chief prosecutor.

However, Hikari (not her real name) finally dared to take the step, which came at great cost to her career -- she is also a prosecutor -- and her personal life. She does not regret it. "My life has stopped since the assault," Hikari told AFP in an emotional interview.

"My husband was crying the other day, in a voice that I have never heard in my life, punching the wall and saying he cannot take it anymore," she said, Hikari alleges that Kentaro Kitagawa, then head of the Osaka District Public Prosecutor's Office, raped her following an after-work party in 2018. Kitagawa was not arrested until June 2024, later charged and his name made public.

He told an initial hearing in October that he had "no intention of fighting the case" and apologised for "causing serious and severe harm to the victim". However, he changed his tune in December when his lawyer told reporters that Kitagawa "did not recognise that (Hikari) was unable to resist... and believed that she had consented". Kitagawa, according to one media report, changed his mind after Hikari held a news conference and alleged that the prosecution had leaked information from the investigation. Hikari says she was not used to drinking

strong alcohol and lost her memory halfway through the office gathering. Colleagues told prosecutors that she got into a taxi to go home and that Kitagawa forced himself into the vehicle. The next thing she knew, she said, she was in Kitagawa's home and was being raped. "It was like I was having a terrible nightmare," Hikari told AFP. "I couldn't resist because I was terrified that I could be killed."

Hikari said she kept quiet after it happened. Kitagawa had pleaded with her not to go public, saying that it would be a damaging scandal for the prosecutor's office, she said, and even threatened suicide. He retired about a year after the incident but Hikari felt he still had influence over some officials and could hurt her career. "He was a very influential and powerful man, so I was afraid that no one would listen to me if I complained about the assault," she said. The trauma still gnawed away at her. Finally, after being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and taking time off work, she filed her case in 2024. "In order to live, to get back to a peaceful life with my family, and to get back to my job as a prosecutor, I felt that (Kitagawa) needed to be brought to justice," she said. "I just want to work in a safe environment... I want to save victims through work," she said.

She returned to work in September, only to find that malicious rumours were

circulating. These included identifying her as the victim -- her name had not been made public -- and that she had been attracted to Kitagawa, consented to sex and was not drunk. Hikari believes the rumours were spread by people close to Kitagawa. She has been on leave ever since. She said her husband, with whom she has a child, is her biggest supporter but that he "is struggling with how to save me". Kitagawa's lawyer has not responded to an AFP request for comment sent on June 30. Hikari hasn't revealed her name and has held news conferences and interviews on the condition that her face won't be shown.

A handful of other victims of similar crimes have gone further. These include journalist Shiori Ito, who won a landmark civil case against a prominent TV reporter she accused of raping her. In 2021, Rina Gonoï accused fellow soldiers of sexual assault and three of them were later given suspended sentences. Both women were praised for their bravery in coming forward but also received a barrage of online hate. The latest government figures show that 8.1 per cent of Japanese women, or one in 12.5, have had non-consensual sex. Just 1.5 percent contacted police and 55.4 percent stayed silent. However, Seisen University Professor Kaori Okamoto said that now "the idea that it's okay to talk about sexual violence is spreading".

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Gaza ‘takeover’ will ignite another horrific chapter for the Middle East

THE only way to stop the immense human suffering in the Gaza Strip is for Israel to immediately cease military operations and fully comply with international law, especially international humanitarian law. It must fully restore humanitarian access and support humanitarian agencies, such as those of the United Nations, in delivering aid.

There needs to be an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages, as well as rapid, safe, unimpeded and large-scale delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian enclave.

Instead, Tel Aviv has indicated it will proceed with what it calls the "liberation" of the region from a "terror regime". In a plan, approved by the Israeli Security Cabinet on Thursday, its focus is on taking full control of Gaza City, relocating its estimated 1 million residents further south, and taking control of the refugee camps in central Gaza and areas where hostages are thought to be held.

Given the track record of Israel, which has occupied the Golan Heights of Syria and large areas of the Palestinian territories since the Six-Day War of 1967, this is anything but "liberation".

The Israeli delegate to the United Nations denied Tel Aviv's intention is to permanently occupy Gaza at a UN Security Council meeting on the takeover plan on Sunday, but few parties really buy that claim.

European Council President Antonio Costa strongly urged the Israeli government to reconsider the plan, stating that the takeover, along with large-scale destruction in Gaza, continued settlement expansion in the West Bank, the blockade on aid, and the weaponizing of hunger undermine fundamental principles of international law and universal values.

The Benjamin Netanyahu government's plan was adopted by the country's security Cabinet despite the fierce objection and grave warnings of some in Israel's military that the action could both deepen the humanitarian crisis and endanger the remaining hostages in Gaza.

Reports indicate that the Israel Defense Forces would surround Gaza for three months. This would then reportedly be followed by an additional two months to seize control of Gaza City and the central refugee camps and clear the entire area of Palestinian armed groups.

The thousands of protesters that gathered in Tel Aviv and cities across Israel on the weekend to call for a ceasefire and the implementation of the hostage release deal clearly show the hypocrisy of the Israeli government's "liberation" claims as well as the Israeli people's awareness that it is part of the Israeli prime minister's domestic political maneuvering.

But although UN officials have warned Israel that it will be "igniting another horrific chapter" in the conflict if it presses ahead with its decision to take over the whole of Gaza, Tel Aviv has shown no signs that it will drop its plan.

More than 61,000 people have been killed in Gaza, including over 18,000 children, and 151,000 have been injured, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health, while dozens of hostages are believed to remain in Gaza. Were it not for the grave humanitarian crisis Israel has caused in the Palestinian enclave over the past months, it is unlikely there would have been so many voices condemning Israel's latest plan and calling for the implementation of the "two-state solution".

"The suffering endured by Palestinians and Israelis over the past 22 months has been nothing short of soul-searing," said Ramesh Rajasingham, head and representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva.

To end the cycle of violence, it is necessary to fully implement the "two-state solution" and establish an independent state of Palestine based on the 1967 borders.

The international community should redouble its efforts to advance the political process for the "two-state solution" and jointly counter any unilateral move that sabotages its foundation.

There will be no sustainable solution to the crisis without an end to Israel's unlawful occupation of Palestinian territories and the realization of the "two-state solution". Gaza is, and must remain, an integral part of a Palestinian State.

As Chinese Ambassador to the UN Fu Cong reiterated at the UN Security Council meeting on the weekend, China stands ready to work alongside the international community to advance an end to the war in Gaza, alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe, and implement the "two-state solution", ultimately achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Palestine question.

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Savage capitalism Thriving economy or fractured society?

Dr. Turki Faisal Al-Rasheed

IN an era of polarized debates, two influential recent Washington Post articles shed light on America's economic and social challenges.

Fareed Zakaria's piece, "Don't believe the MAGA dooms on trade," staunchly defends free trade as a pillar of the US' success. He posits that America has flourished under open markets and warns against upending global systems with misinformation.

Conversely, Shadi Hamid's "Men are struggling to find love. Here's why" delves into the romantic hardships faced by men, citing factors such as educational disparities, the pitfalls of dating apps and deepening gender divides.

While both authors provide compelling analyses, they arguably underemphasize a pervasive force: "savage capitalism," a hyper-competitive system that enriches a minority while fostering inequality, debt and social disconnection. That said, capitalism's dynamism has undeniably spurred innovation, growth and opportunity. A balanced perspective requires weighing these benefits against the systemic costs to chart a path toward equitable progress.

Zakaria's argument for free trade is rooted in historical evidence and economic data. Post-Second World War, the US-led Bretton Woods system established the dollar as the global reserve currency, facilitating unprecedented trade expansion. Zakaria highlights how agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement and World Trade Organization membership have elevated America's gross domestic product, with exports reaching \$2.5 trillion annually. Manufacturing output also remains at an all-time high, in contrast to protectionist claims of decline.

He debunks "exaggerations" by noting that job losses from offshoring are offset by gains in the services and tech sectors. Protectionism, as seen in President Donald Trump's tariffs on steel and aluminum, has led to retaliatory measures from China and Europe, inflating costs for American consumers by an average of \$1,200 per house-

hold, according to studies from the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Globally, free trade has lifted more than a billion people out of poverty, stabilized alliances and reduced conflict risks in a multipolar world.

However, this narrative overlooks how savage capitalism twists free trade into a tool for elite enrichment. Ray Dalio's framework in "How Countries Go Bankrupt" illustrates the debt-credit cycle: booms driven by easy credit lead to asset bubbles, followed by busts that disproportionately harm the working class.

In the US, income inequality has soared — the top 1 percent captures 20 percent of national income, per Federal Reserve data, while median wages have stagnated since the 1970s despite productivity gains. Free trade's "winners" are multinational corporations that exploit cheap labor abroad, decimating communities in places like the Midwest. Consider the opioid crisis in deindustrialized towns linked to economic despair or rising homelessness amid corporate tax cuts.

Geopolitically, American commitments exacerbate imbalances. Annual military aid to Israel exceeds \$3 billion, defended as vital for Middle East security against threats like Hamas, yet criticized by groups like Amnesty International for enabling Tel Aviv's actions in Gaza and the West Bank that fuel humanitarian concerns. This spending diverts resources from domestic priorities, such as Arizona's school voucher programs, which expand choice but have shuttered public schools due to funding shortfalls, underscoring misaligned investments in education amid technological disruptions that automate jobs.

A vivid personal story underscores these realities. At a lavish Napa Valley party attended by individuals earning over a million dollars annually, I posed a provocative hypothesis to my American friend, who made \$100,000 working in Saudi Arabia: "You are richer than everyone here." The

room erupted in heated debate.

Once calm returned, I explained. Most "wealthy" attendees owned less than 5 percent of their assets outright, the rest was leveraged through loans from financial institutions. Challenging them to produce \$25,000 from savings in a year elicited silence; even \$5,000 seemed unattainable for many, as they are trapped in cycles of high-interest debt. Vacation time? A month was impossible; a week was a stretch. This revealed savage capitalism's trap: a paradigm in which income barely covers interest payments, leaving even high earners in perpetual liability. My debt-free friend, with disposable income and flexibility, embodied true financial freedom. The group fell into thoughtful silence, confronting how the system prioritizes institutional profits over personal security.

Turning to social dimensions, Hamid's exploration of men's romantic struggles is timely and nuanced. He outlines a "crisis of connection" — men face higher unemployment and lower college enrollment rates, with women outpacing them in degrees by between 10 percent and 15 percent. Dating apps amplify this, creating a winner-takes-all dynamic in which the top profiles receive disproportionate attention. Studies show 80 percent of women message the top 20 percent of men.

Cultural shifts, like #MeToo's emphasis on consent, have made approaches riskier, while political polarization widens rifts: young men lean conservative, women liberal, shrinking compatibility pools. Hamid, drawing from his Muslim background, notes the erosion of traditional structures like arranged marriages or community matchmaking, leaving individuals adrift.

However, Hamid glosses over savage capitalism's role in amplifying these woes. Corporate-driven inequality breeds precarious gig economy jobs that offer no stability, deterring family formation. Debt burdens — from student loans averaging \$30,000 to housing costs —

heighten anxiety, making vulnerability in relationships unappealing.

Individualism, a capitalist hallmark, celebrates autonomy but dismantles communal ties: family sizes shrink, religious affiliation drops (Pew research shows 29 percent of Americans to be unaffiliated) and social isolation rises, with one in three men reporting no close friends. Women, empowered by career advances, seek partners who match their ambitions, but systemic barriers leave many men economically sidelined.

On the flip side, capitalism's opportunities foster personal growth: women's progress enhances societal equity and tech such as apps have facilitated millions of marriages. Globally, not all cultures succumb — parts of Asia or Europe with stronger social safety nets report higher relationship satisfaction.

America's strength lies in free trade and individualism, which drive innovation in artificial intelligence, biotech and renewable energy, positioning it as a global leader. But unchecked savage capitalism risks collapse: debt-fueled volatility, as Dalio warns, could trigger inflation or austerity, while social fragmentation breeds extremism, evident in rising populism. Balanced solutions are imperative: reform trade deals with labor and environmental safeguards, redirect foreign aid toward diplomacy over militarism, and bolster domestic investments in universal healthcare, affordable education and infrastructure via bills like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Culturally, promote policies that rebuild communities, such as paid family leave, mental health support and incentives for civic engagement. Embracing multipolarity, with partners like the EU and emerging economies, can distribute burdens.

As Zakaria and Hamid illustrate, dismissing critiques as "lies" or surface issues ignores root causes; addressing them fosters resilience. True greatness demands equity for wallets and hearts, ensuring prosperity benefits all, not just the elite.

US guarantees key to disarming Hezbollah

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

THE Lebanese government on Thursday made a landmark decision, committing to the disarmament of Hezbollah by the end of the year. It approved the "goals" of US envoy Tom Barrack's paper on "strengthening" the ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel. The government stated that the army will present an action plan by the end of August.

Hezbollah was appalled by the decision. Mohammed Raad, a Hezbollah member of parliament, said that the group would rather die than surrender its arms. He added that the group's arms are its honor. Hezbollah sent protesters to the streets in an attempt to put pressure on the government. However, they were quickly dispersed by the army.

Lebanon is required to abide by international law and by UN Security Council Resolution 1701. The US is pressuring Lebanon to do so. And it should abide by international law, there is no question about it. However, when it comes to the Israeli side of the equation, Barrack's paper only promises that the US will "facilitate" mediation with Israel over its withdrawal from the "five points" inside Lebanon and ceasing hostilities. Barrack was very clear when the Lebanese asked him whether Israel would withdraw and stop its raids on Lebanon if Hezbollah were to disarm: he said that there are no guarantees. Basically, Lebanon should abide by international law, while Israel can go by the law of the jungle.

Israel constantly emphasizes its right to "self-defense," which is

Israel constantly emphasizes its right to "self-defense," which is a very elastic concept. Any aggression can be justified as self-defense or a preemptive strike. The Lebanese army has a very difficult task. The Americans are making it even harder. It is an open secret that the US is biased toward Israel for many reasons. However, if the US really wants the Lebanese state and the Lebanese army to succeed in disarming Hezbollah, it should empower them. It should at least show that it is being an honest broker. It should show that it can pressure Israel. It should show that both parties must abide by international law. Israel has been living by the law of the jungle since its inception. It has been able to do so because of US and Western complicity. According to advocacy group If Americans Knew, Israel is the target of at least 78 UN resolutions. But Israel violates international law every day under the guise of self-defense and anyone who points a finger at its misdeeds is immediately labeled as antisemitic. The question is: until when? The Lebanese case is only one small example of how Israel receives preferential treatment in international affairs. This preferential treatment is secured by the world's major superpower, the US. However, it reduces the credibility of the US as an honest broker. Maybe the Americans do not care because the world needs them and they can impose their will on whoever they want. However, this attitude creates problems. What if the Lebanese army uses coercion and disarms Hezbollah, which will probably result in internal unrest, and Israel does not withdraw?

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What if the Lebanese army uses coercion and disarms Hezbollah, which will probably result in internal unrest, and Israel does not withdraw? This would reinforce the group's narrative and give it a new boost. This would revive the idea of resistance. If this idea is revived, then the movement will be revived. However, Israel has the luxury of only looking at its own side of the story because it has the US to back it up whenever needed.

The US could make the task of the Lebanese state and army much easier by giving guarantees that Israel would withdraw and cease hostilities. The hostilities are mainly targeting Hezbollah operatives and officials. As long as the US does not give such guarantees, Hezbollah will not feel secure enough to willingly disarm.

Hezbollah is convincing its audience that this is an existential issue. This is why Raad said that they would rather die than surrender their arms. The state may have taken the decision to disarm Hezbollah, but this does not mean the implementation will be easy or seamless. The protests that followed the decision could be renewed and could become violent. But all this could be avoided if the US showed that both parties must abide by international

law, while guaranteeing that Israel will withdraw and cease hostilities.

If not treated carefully, this could lead to a clash between Hezbollah and the army. Of course, Hezbollah is weak now but it still — along with the Amal Movement — represents the majority of the country's Shiite population. Hence, the group cannot be discounted. Of course, a state cannot thrive with the existence of an armed militia. This is a fact. The aim is for Hezbollah to surrender its arms and become a political party. However, for this to happen, the US cannot apply the double standard of Lebanon having to abide by international law while Israel ignores it. This will only boost Hezbollah's narrative and increase the sense of insecurity among the Shiite community. It could lead to clashes between the group and the army, as well as the Shiites and the rest of the Lebanese. Hence, for the sake of peace and stability, the US should act wisely and offer the Lebanese the guarantee that, if Hezbollah disarms, Israel will withdraw and stop targeting Lebanon.

Trump has been on a roll for the ages — but blowback could be looming

NEARLY seven months into his second term, President Donald Trump is riding high on far-reaching policy wins and unchallenged personal power plays, bargaining into every corner of American life to impose his will and worldview.

But his presidency may be about to enter a new phase, as the policy and political consequences of his relentless pace begin to unfold and the lives of Americans and millions overseas feel the impact of his relentless ambition.

He's done everything, quickly, and all at once. He's obsessed with slaying his biggest dragons — like global free trade — and more home-spun goals that most presidents might not bother with — like reinstating a Presidential Fitness Test in schools or putting his architectural stamp on the White House.

His trade push is classic Trump. He imposed the most punitive tariffs on imports since the Great Depression — based on a lifelong personal obsession with an economic theory mocked by experts. He says he's reviving manufacturing — but the sector lost a combined net 14,000 jobs in May and June, according to federal data.

And the tariffs — a tax on everyone who buys goods — could spike inflation.

The president has been as good as his word and secured the southern border, honoring a promise that helped him win back the White House.

But will Americans now recoil at his draconian deportation methods as federal agents in masks sweep their neighbors off the streets and the administration builds armed camps to hold undocumented migrants?

Trump scored a legislative triumph by passing his “big, beautiful bill” and extending his first-term tax cuts. The White House insists the measure will unleash roaring economic growth and job creation. But how will this giveaway to the rich look if it shuts down rural hospitals and thousands of people lose Medicaid?

Trump's Health and Human Services secretary, Robert Kennedy Jr., is vowing to “Make America Healthy Again.” But the risks are enormous, especially if Kennedy's cancellation of a half-billion dollars in funding on inoculations like the ones that ended

the Covid-19 pandemic expose the US to a new public health crisis that could cost thousands of lives.

Trump is meanwhile poised for his most consequential foreign policy move yet, as he hosts Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska on Friday to try to repair his failed bid to end the Ukraine war. A breakthrough could save thousands of lives and might even deliver his longed-for Nobel Prize. But if he caves to Putin's demands, Trump could make a historic error that paves the way to future Russian expansionism and shatters his White House-conjured image as “the president of peace.”

There's a common thread running through most of Trump's actions — whether it's browbeating political enemies and weaponizing the legal system or forcing trade concessions out of small and vulnerable nations. He's always assessing his leverage over an adversary and seeking to impose his personal will.

But while showcasing American might can be effective, Trump is also alienating allies who were force multipliers of US global power. What happens the next time America wants help from its friends — for instance after a 9/11-style attack? Will disaffected populations allow leaders he bullied to rush to America's defense? Trump meanwhile may also be pushing angry allies into the arms of a new superpower — China. And his failure so far to wring trade concessions out of a Beijing that keeps dealing its rare-earth metals trump card may render his broader trade agenda hollow.

Trump's gambles are huge and risky. Perhaps many will pay off. But history is full of presidents who misread their mandate and overreached.

If some of Trump's most ambitious policies trigger adverse results, the coming months could show whether political gravity will assert itself.

The president is already underwater in polls. His approval rating is in the mid-to-low 40s in most surveys. And the administration's failure to quell the scandal over its refusal to release the Jeffrey Epstein files has meanwhile exposed a split in Trump's base for the first time.

A perilous national moment could arrive if

Stephen Collinson

public opinion turns sharply against Trump and Republicans seem about to pay the price in next year's midterm elections. This, after all, is a president who believes he has almost unlimited power and tried to steal an election he lost in 2020.

Trump's growing authoritarian streak shines through his unlocking of vast executive powers through dubious national emergencies. His assaults on the judiciary, the media, universities and officials in previ-

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ous administrations already threaten the principles of republican government. This comes a year before he presides over the 250th anniversary of the American revolution, which shook off the unaccountable whims of kings — whom Trump increasingly resembles.

The president is already hedging against a political backlash.

Some of his recent moves, including the firing of the government official who presides over unemployment data and his attempt to craft five new US House seats from an unprecedented mid-cycle gerrymander in Texas, look like attempts to subvert reality and to avoid paying the political price if the economy goes sour.

Tariffs are the most stunning example of Trump's success in changing political and economic convention. America spent decades building a global free trade system. Trump has destroyed it in a matter of weeks.

“We're taking in trillions of dollars,” Trump said in an interview with CNBC last week, speaking of revenues flowing into the government from import duties. But while Trump never admits it, the ultimate price for tariffs will be paid by

American consumers who are already tired of the higher cost of groceries and housing.

The administration says the global economy will adjust to tariff rates starting at 10% and rising much higher for some countries — and that every American will be better off. So far, Trump has escaped the worst consequences of reforms opposed by almost every economist.

“Right now, the tariffs are not necessarily creating the kind of economic chaos that I think was forecast,” Kristen Soltis Anderson, a Republican

incentive to find non-American markets.

Another perilous area for Trump is over immigration — his signature issue that twice helped him win the presidency but led to extreme enforcement efforts that alienated moderates in his first term. The approach has been even more punitive in his second. Flights of undocumented migrants have left for El Salvador and an oppressive prison. The due process rights of some migrants have been infringed. And the administration plans more migrant camps like the already notorious “Alligator Alcatraz” in Florida. This has been accompanied by performative toughness to appeal to Trump's most hardline voters.

But Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, a border-state Democrat, warned Sunday that Trump had gone too far. “The border security issue under President Biden was not working. And I pushed the administration on that,” Kelly said on CBS’ “Face the Nation.” “But we have now swung drastically in another direction. And I don't think this is what the American people want either.”

In a CNN poll last month, 55% of respondents said the president had gone too far when it comes to deporting immigrants living in the US illegally. That number has climbed 10 points since February. Majorities also oppose the construction of big detention centers to hold arrested migrants and the billions of dollars in spending that was included in Trump's big policy bill.

Passing that bill was Trump's greatest legislative achievement of his two terms. It was more impressive given the GOP's tiny House majority. But it's also one of the most unpopular things Trump has ever done. Roughly 6 in 10 Americans oppose the bill and a majority expects it will hurt the economy.

Trump is a singular politician, and he's been helped by a Republican Party that marches to his tune and a Democratic Party that doesn't have one.

But unless Trump shattered political logic while he was breaking the mold of the presidency, a reckoning could be looming.

What happens next will define how history remembers his second term.

Great opportunities mark 50th anniversary

Miguel Sebastián

ing Portugal and Greece, the EU should not view the BRI with suspicion.

As for the Global Gateway, it is the EU's strategy to mobilize infrastructure investments worldwide, in order to promote smart, clean and secure connections in the digital, energy and transport industries, while strengthening the health, education and research sectors.

Although the Global Gateway strategy seeks to compete with the BRI, offering an alternative of public and private investment that is expected to mobilize up to 300 billion (\$351.56 billion) between 2021 and 2027, it should be considered a complementary channel. As a matter of fact, the creation of a joint EU-China working group to enhance the complementarity of the two initiatives could be a highlight of the China-EU Summit that began on Thursday.

Beyond trade, the two sides have multiple areas of cooperation in investment. The EU-China Comprehensive

Agreement on Investment, though currently frozen, has the potential to boost economic ties between the two sides. And there are at least three regions where Sino-EU cooperation could be particularly productive: East Asia and Australia, where China holds a clear leadership role; Latin America, where China is filling the void left by the US and where European countries such as Spain have a significant presence in the services sector; and Africa, which despite its geographical and historical ties to Europe, is witnessing Chinese presence in critical infrastructure.

In particular, since Africa is the continent of the future, the EU and China should work together with African countries to help build a promising future for the continent, especially because a quarter of BRI investments are focused on Africa, and the inaugural milestone of the Global Gateway was the “Africa-Europe Investment Package”.

As for green development, Europe aims to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, while China seeks to peak its carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

These goals demand shared innovation in clean energy, electric vehicles (EVs), and sustainable agriculture.

China leads in solar panel and EV battery production, whereas the EU excels in green architecture. Together, they can accelerate the global energy transition, and create millions of green jobs. Examples of such collaboration already exist in Envision's investments in wind energy in Spain and battery plants in Germany, with potential for more projects in Spain.

Moreover, China boasts a highly dynamic fintech ecosystem and is a global leader in AI and e-commerce, while the EU contributes robust data protection frameworks, industrial automation, and scientific research, which is suitable for the two sides to collaborate in smart manufacturing and Industry 4.0; artificial intelligence and ethical tech development; digital infrastructure in underserved regions; chip design, precision machinery and automation; and e-commerce, mobile payments, cloud computing, and research and development of AI.

China and the EU should also work together to strengthen logistics networks, including ports, railways, industrial parks and 5G infrastructure, while securing strategic supplies in semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and critical raw materials. Such a partnership is equally vital in the auto sector, covering batteries, charging infrastructure, autonomous driving, sensors, and related technologies.

Apart from pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, medical devices and biotech start-ups, significant opportunities also exist in agricultural technology, food processing and food supply chain logistics, as shown by Chinese investments in dairy and meat processing facilities across Central and Eastern Europe.

Despite their geopolitical differences, the EU and China, in the 50th year of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, have a unique opportunity to redefine their economic and trade partnership by jointly responding to challenges such as US tariffs and protectionist policies, and work together to build a new framework for governing regional and global trade and investment relations.

May the China-EU Summit lay the groundwork for a new era of cooperation — one that is as transformative as the partnership that began half a century ago.

Gaza, world’s most attention-demanding theatre of war

ISRAELI Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's plan to seize Gaza City and the southern enclave is primarily personal. His timing is significant. He made this announcement ahead of the August 15th two-decade anniversary of the launch of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza of settlers and soldiers ordered by his predecessor Ariel Sharon. As Netanyahu opposed the evacuation of Gaza, his motive is at least in part delayed revenge against Sharon.

Netanyahu also seeks revenge against Hamas which he favoured over many years by allowing funds to flow into his (its) coffers. His aim was to foster a counterweight to Fatah and promote the split between Gaza and the West Bank, dividing the Palestinian resistance front.

Hamas paid him back by mounting its October 7th, 2023, raid into Israel, killing 1,139 and abducting 251. This amounted to tragedy for Israel and humiliation for Netanyahu.

He wants to wreak revenge on the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza by driving them from homes he destroyed or damaged and imposing a months-long starvation blockade.

He blames Gazans for tolerating Hamas which seized control of the strip from Fatah in 2007.

He does not take into

account that many Gazans have turned against Hamas for both starting a war it could not end and failing to protect Palestinian civilians.

Netanyahu is also taking revenge against Israelis who have opposed his unending Gaza campaign which has carried on for 22

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Israeli and international rights organisations are also in line for punishment as they have dubbed Netanyahu's war on Palestinians in Gaza "genocide" and have filed a case charging Israel with "genocide" at the International Court of Justice. The International Criminal Court has issued warrants charging Netanyahu and ex-Defence Minister Yoav Gallant with war crimes, potentially limiting their travel to countries that are not signatories of the court's statute. Netanyahu is ready to punish senior army officers who have opposed prolonging the war and, especially, waging an offensive to occupy the final 25 per cent, including Gaza City, not yet held by Israel. Hundreds of active officers and reservists have written a letter to US President Donald Trump — who has backed Netanyahu — to ask him to exert pressure on Netanyahu to stop the war. They argue this not only endangers the lives of the hostages but also has put constant strain on the military which is used to fighting limited campaigns lasting a few days, a week, or two. This is Israel's longest war. The army command proposed an alternative plan involving bombing and besieging Gaza City but not moving in and occupying the largest urban centre with a population of 660,000 plus tens of thousands of displaced people. Netanyahu is said to be giving Gaza City residents until October 7th, the second anniversary of the Hamas attack, to evacuate. This could also give him time to change his mind. Netanyahu is determined to defy Israel's traditional Western allies by prosecuting his war for as long as he likes. Unfortunately for him, his war has been waged not only in the air and on the ground of Gaza but also on the airwaves of the world via live coverage on satellite television channels. Wounded and starving Gazan children are pictured daily on television screens everywhere and anywhere, giving little respite from Israel's deadly devastation of Gaza. As a result, Israel has lost "victimhood," being seen as a victim of aggression, a precious public relations tool which has previously preserved Israel from criticism and condemnation. Tiny Gaza has become the globe's most attention-demanding theatre of war. This has stirred protests across the world and sharp criticism of Trump and other European leaders who have taken no action to end Netanyahu's war. Despite sensitivities over the World War II Holocaust which killed six million Jews, Germany has finally responded by halting deliveries of weapons currently in use in Gaza. Germany is the second largest provider of arms imports for Israel; the US is the first. Trump would not dare follow Berlin's example due to opposition by Israel, its US Israel lobby, and the military-industrial complex which benefits from weapons sales. Finally, Netanyahu seeks to postpone the reckoning which will come once the war ends.
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months although Israel has seriously weakened Hamas and could have reached a deal to end the war late last year and in March 2025 and freed the hostages when the latest ceasefire expired.

Most Israelis call for an immediate halt to hostilities.

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Finally, Netanyahu seeks to postpone the reckoning which will come once the war ends. Many blame him for the failure of Israel's military and civil intelligence to act on reports of Hamas' preparations for war and pre-empt and prevent October 7th. These reports were sent to commanders by young women soldiers, known as "watchers," who were posted along

the Israel-Gaza border. Their reports were not taken seriously by their male officers or commanders — perhaps because they were women.

Furthermore, ground troops and pilots took their time to respond to Hamas' attack early that morning.

Lives could have been saved and hostages rescued before entering Gaza if the Israeli army response had been prompt.

While complaisance in the military was responsible for this failure, Netanyahu was also to blame as he has served as prime minister for nearly 30 years.

During this time, he has overseen wars on Gaza in 2008-2009, 2021, and from 2022 until now.

Netanyahu been investigated for fraud, bribery, and breach of trust and was in 2019 indicted by the Jerusalem District Court. While his trial began in May 2020 his testimony was repeatedly postponed by the war until July 2024, when the judges no longer accepted that he could not appear because he was too busy running the war. He faces fines and possible jail time if convicted. On June 26th of this year, Trump called for the immediate cancellation of Netanyahu's trial, but the court rejected Trump's illicit interference in Israel's judicial processes.



SCCI stresses enhancing Pak-US bilateral trade and economic ties

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Consul General of United States in Peshawar Shante Moore reaffirmed his country's commitment toward strengthening bilateral trade, economic and commercial relations with Pakistan.

He was speaking during a farewell luncheon hosted in his honour by Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the chamber house on Monday.

Fazal Moqeem Khan, president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry underscored the need for further improvement in Pak-US bilateral trade and economic relations.

According to a statement issued here, the farewell meeting was chaired by the chamber president Fazal Moqeem Khan, which attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, Businessman Forum leader and former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, former presidents Malik Niaz Ahmad, Fuad Ishaq, Zahid Shinwari, Faiz Mohammad Faizi, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Riaz Arshad and Official from US Consulate

Peshawar Office Shahid Islam, SCCI Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan.

The participants highly appreciated the role outgoing Consul General Peshawar Shante Moore had played commendably, who set an excellent example of diplomacy for improving the mutual Pak-US trade and economic relations and hoped his successor will continue collaboration with the business community.

Business community commended the current US administration policy shift, which is keenly prioritized doing trade with Pakistan rather than Aid.

SCCI leadership said that Pakistan and US have enjoyed close diplomatic, economic and trade relations for the last several decades, and now the level of collaboration and friendship between the countries have entered a new era under the current US administration, which is highly welcoming.

Business community presented a number of proposals to enhance export of Pakistani manufacturing products to the US market, mainly related to share of advanced technology for development of mines and

mineral sectors, efficiently tapping available potentials, exchange of business delegations and interactive sessions, removal of hurdles in bilateral trade, etc.

Fazal Moqeem Khan underscored the need for further improvement in Pak-US bilateral trade and economic relations.

He lauded the outgoing Consul General Peshawar Shante Moore for remarkable role, contribution and proactive engagement with the business community that had helped to bring the relationship between the two countries to new heights. We truly believe that the foundation of the relationship laid by Mr Shante Moore with us will go a long way and help to bring the business community of the two countries closer to each other and they will play a role in improving bilateral trade and economic ties.

Shante Moore highlighted the importance of Pak-US diplomatic and economic relations.

US Consul General, especially mentioned the major achievements toward boosting the trade and commercial relations between the two countries during his tenure in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He, particularly, said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a matter for the United States and repelled the misperceptions about this region.

We are serious and fully committed to enhance mutual economic and commercial ties.

The US diplomat appreciated the hospitality, culture and brotherliness of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and said that people of this region are very kind, generous and friendly.

Shante Moore acknowledged that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has immense potential to strengthen relations with US and sought assistance of SCCI to pursue US Companies to invest in available investment opportunities in K-P.

US CG noted the KP has adversely affected by menace of terrorism and stated his country wants to assist Pakistan to cope with security and other challenges and effectively combat with terrorism. He hoped his successor will continue working with SCCI and would play a role in further strengthening bilateral trade, economic and commercial relations between the two friendly countries.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqeem Khan presenting a traditional gift to Consul General of United States in Peshawar Shante Moore.

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.45 against the previous day's closing Rs 282.46.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 284.1 and Rs 285.6, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 54 paise to close at Rs 328.83 against the last day's closing of Rs 329.37, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.91, whereas an increase of Rs 0.21 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 380.07 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 379.86.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal also remained stagnant and closed at Rs 76.90 and Rs 75.26, respectively.

Stock markets mostly up

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Equity markets mostly rose Monday as investors eyed a week dominated by speculation about US inflation data and a prolonged pause for Washington's tariffs on China.

Observers expect Trump to announce an extension of a trade war truce reached with China last month, ahead of a 90-day deadline set for Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a key US consumer price index report is set up for Tuesday and could shape future policy decisions by the Federal Reserve, which has come under increasing pressure from the president to cut rates.

Investors have ramped up their bets on the central bank lowering borrowing costs at its next meeting in September following a series of reports -- particularly on jobs -- indicating the world's number one economy was slowing.

Also in view is a high-stakes summit between Trump and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Friday in Alaska, which could pave the way for a deal to resolve the Ukraine war that involves an easing of tough sanctions on Moscow.

The prospect of a breakthrough at the meeting added to downward pressure on oil prices, which was already falling on the back of economy worries and a bump in output from OPEC and other key producers.

Stocks in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Wellington, Taipei, Mumbai and Jakarta rose, though there were losses in Seoul, Tokyo and Manila. Singapore was closed for a public holiday.

London advanced in the morning but Paris and Frankfurt edged down.

With Tuesday's US-China tariff truce deadline looming, investors are bullish about the prospects of another extension.

"The market has fully subscribed to the high probability of the tariff truce being rolled over for another 90 days," said Chris Weston of Pepperstone.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 1,547 to record high

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index continued with bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,547.05 more points, a positive of 1.06 percent, closing recorded high at 146,929.84 points against 145,382.80 points last trading day.

A total of 611,205,197 shares were traded during the day as compared to 548,050,956 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 44.004 billion against Rs 45.488 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 479 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 242 of them recorded gains and 209 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 28 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Lotte Chemical with 73,285,719

shares at Rs 21.80 per share, Siddiqsons Tin with 21,157,191 shares at Rs7.55 per share and Invest Bank with 19,982,714 shares at Rs 8.68 per share.

Mari Energies Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 47.52 per share price, closing at Rs 666.05, whereas the runner-up was Thal Limited with Rs45.53 rise in its per share price to Rs 500.78.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs906.49 per share closing at Rs 32,100.01 followed by PIA Holding Company Limited with Rs536.51 decline in its share price to close at Rs28,843.15.

Meanwhile, in the future market, as many as 326 companies traded shares in the market out of which 221 witnessed gain, 101 loss where the prices of 4 companies remained unchanged.

Gold prices dip by Rs3,600 to Rs358,800 per tola: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs3,600 on Monday and was sold at Rs358,800 against its sale at Rs362,400 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs 3,086 to Rs.307,613 from Rs 310,699 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat went down by 2,829 to Rs 281,988 from Rs 284,817.

The rates of per tola and ten gram silver decreased by Rs51 and Rs44 and was traded at Rs.4,013 and Rs 3,440 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$36 to \$3,361 from \$3,397 whereas silver decreased \$0.51 to \$37.80 against \$38.31, the Association reported.

SBP accused of overlooking SME farmers

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Union of Small and Medium Enterprises (UNISAME) is addressing a critical oversight in the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) agricultural finance policy, which appears to exclude small and medium farmers from financial inclusion initiatives.

An SBP officer's statement within the Agri Finance Pakistan group highlighted the issue, indicating the term "SME farmers" lacks official recognition. This effectively excludes agriculturalists from the financial benefits afforded to other small and medium enterprises

(SMEs). UNISAME, the founding body of SME Farmers Association (SMEFA), consulted international experts to address the problem. A key recommendation involves renaming the association to the Small and Medium Agri-Farming Businesses Association (SMAFA). This change frames farmers as agribusiness owners, aligning them with the broader SME sector.

This reclassification is crucial for these agricultural producers to access financial aid under Pakistan's National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS).

UNISAME President Zulfikar Thaver stressed the importance of this change.

To expedite the process, UNISAME has contacted Haroon Akhtar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. They have requested him to advocate for the matter with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA).

The ultimate aim is to persuade the SBP to revise its NFIS policies, recognizing small and medium-sized agriculturalists as vital participants in Pakistan's agrarian economy.

GSMA Digital Nation Summit:

Huawei deputy CEO joins industry leaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): The GSMA Digital Nation Summit 2025 brought together senior leaders from government, telecom, fintech, and global development agencies to chart a roadmap for a secure, inclusive, and innovation-driven digital Pakistan.

A key highlight of the summit was the participation of Ahmed Bilal Masud, Deputy CEO of Huawei Pakistan, in a high-level panel discussion focused on Unlocking Investment – Creating a Sustainable and Competitive Telecom Environment. Exploring the impact of taxation, spectrum policy, and regulatory reforms on digital investment and sustainability.

The session also highlighted how emerging technologies such as 5G, AI, and cloud infrastructure can unlock new investment opportunities, drive efficiencies, and improve digital service delivery across sectors. His insights reflected Huawei's global expertise in building secure, scalable networks and its commitment to supporting Pakistan's digital transformation.

"Pakistan's digital future depends on resilient infrastructure, secure platforms, and inclusive innovation," said Ahmed Bilal Masud. "Huawei is proud to contribute to this journey by sharing global best practices and enabling local capacity building through strategic partnerships."

The summit addressed critical themes including, the rollout of 5G and LEO satellite internet, expansion of AI and FinTech across Pakistan's economy, reforming telecom taxation and spectrum pricing and bridging the mobile internet usage gap, especially among women and rural communities.

Ahmed Bilal Masud's participation underscored Huawei's role as a strategic partner in Pakistan's digital ecosystem. With decades of experience in telecom leadership, he has spearheaded multiple nationwide digitalization initiatives and played a pivotal role in establishing Huawei's Global Service Center in Pakistan.

The event also featured the launch of GSMA's Pakistan Spotlight Report, offering new data on mobile usage, infrastructure gaps, and investment potential. Industry leaders including CEO from Huawei Pakistan Ethan

Sun, CEO Jazz Aamir Ibrahim, CEO Telenor Khurram Ashfaq, Easypaisa, and senior official for IT and Telecom Ministry joined the summit to share their vision for a connected and resilient Pakistan.

Banks to remain closed on Thursday

F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan, on Monday, announced that the central bank as well as all banking and financial institutions will remain closed on Thursday, August 14, 2025.

"The State Bank of Pakistan will remain closed on Thursday, August 14, 2025 being a public holiday on the occasion of 'Independence Day' as declared by the Government of Pakistan", said a statement issued here.

Subsequently, all banks, Micro Finance Banks, Development Finance Institutions and other financial institutions will remain closed on August 14 in observance of Independence day.

Pakistan sets up new customs port in Angoor Adda — to boost trade with Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has set up a new customs port at the National Logistic Corporation (NLC) Border Terminal in Angoor Adda to boost trade with Afghanistan.

As per a notification, the FBR exercised its authority to formally designate the NLC Border Terminal at Angoor Adda as a customs port. Angoor Adda is a town located on the border between Pakistan's South Waziristan district and Paktika province.

The decision is part of a broader effort by the Pakistani government to modernize border infrastructure, streamline cus-

toms procedures, and enhance cross-border trade.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by clauses (a) and (c) of section 9, and clauses (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Customs Act, 1969 (IV of 1969), the Federal Board of Revenue is pleased to declare M/s NLC Border Terminal, Angoor Adda, measuring 194.5 kanals of land, to be a customs port for the purposes of loading, unloading, and clearance of goods," the notification read.

The NLC Border Terminal covers 194.5 kanals and will now serve as a key gateway for goods crossing the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The move

is expected to significantly cut customs clearance delays, improve logistical operations, and boost revenue collection.

With this development, traders and importers can expect a smoother process for the loading, unloading, and clearance of goods, thereby increasing the volume of legitimate trade through the border.

Speaking to WealthPK, a senior FBR official said the new terminal is set to play a crucial role in strengthening border security and regulating trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan. "With the establishment of the new customs port, we are not

only facilitating cross-border trade but also creating opportunities for more structured revenue generation. This will help Pakistan strengthen its economic position while ensuring greater accountability and efficiency in customs operations," he said.

The terminal's strategic location is essential for expediting the processing of goods between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This border area has long been a hub for trade, and the new customs port is expected to smooth the flow of goods, curb smuggling, and generate vital revenue for the national exchequer.

Pakistan Airports Authority marks first anniversary

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) marked the completion of its first year with celebratory events at its Karachi Headquarters and other airports across the country. The main ceremony was attended by Deputy Director General (Works & Development) Sumair Saeed, directors, officers, and a large number of staff members.

In his address, Saeed said that while the organization is on the right track, the road ahead is long and requires sustained effort. "Aviation demands constant improvement and innovation, and we are committed to aligning Pakistan's airports with global standards," he noted.

Over the past year, PAA operationalized the Greenfield Gwadar International Airport, advanced the expansion of the terminal building at Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore, and made significant progress on the runway upgradation



at Jinnah International Airport Karachi, Rehabilitation of Turbat Airport and widening of the runway at D. G. Khan Airport are also underway.

Future projects include completion of Lahore terminal expansion, finalization of Karachi runway upgradation, construction of a new control tower at Karachi Airport, a new Air

Traffic Control tower and fire station at Skardu Airport, feasibility studies for modern RNP-AR navigation systems at Chitral, Gilgit, and Skardu airports, feasibility studies for new airports at Dera Ismail Khan, Sukkur, and Mirpur, and upgrading D. G. Khan Airport for larger aircraft.

Additionally, automated e-Gates, sustainable energy

systems, smart building automation systems, electric vehicles, and charging stations will be introduced at major airports.

PAA leadership reaffirms commitment to make Pakistan's airports safer, environmentally sustainable, and equipped with state-of-the-art facilities in line with international standards.

Pakistan businesses' confidence rises to a four-year high: Gallup survey

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The confidence of Pakistan's private businesses has surged in the country's direction to its highest level in nearly four years, according to Gallup Pakistan's latest survey.

Also, an increasing number of businessmen have started thinking that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government is managing Pakistan's economy better than the previous government of his counterpart Imran Khan.

The improvement comes

despite inflation, high utility costs, and electricity load-shedding continue to hinder business operations.

The Gallup's business confidence survey for Q2 2025 was conducted between July 23 and 27 and captured the views of 524 businesses of Pakistan across manufacturing, services, and trade sectors. The standout finding from this quarter is a significant rebound in perceptions of the country's overall direction. Gallup's "Direction of the Country Score" now stands at -2 percent, a dra-

matic improvement from the far more pessimistic readings of late 2024.

While the score remains marginally negative, it marks the highest level of confidence in national direction since Q4 2021. "This uptick suggests a moderate easing of political and economic uncertainty from the perspective of the business community," the survey said.

The number of businesses holding a good perception about Sharif government's ability to manage the country's economy has

significantly improved over the past year. According to Gallup, 46 percent of businessmen rated the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government's management of the economy as better than its predecessor, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, compared to just 24 percent a year ago.

Commenting on the survey, Gallup Pakistan Executive Director Bilal Ijaz Gilani said the survey's latest edition was pointing to a "cautiously improving mood" among Pakistani businesses.



In brief

Sara appointed as Director NDD PTF

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) has appointed Ms. Sara Mansoor as the National Development Director (NDD-PTF). Sara was appointed on the seat with respect to August 1, this year, said a press release. President PTF, Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, and Secretary General, Col. (R) Zia-ud-din Tufail, have extended their best wishes to Ms. Sara Mansoor in her new role. They expressed the confidence that her appointment will greatly benefit the growth and development of tennis in Pakistan.

Zakria Dad bag Amateur titles

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zakria Dad won the Amateur titles of Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship here at Leisure City Bowling Club, Safa Gold, F-7 Markaz. Meanwhile, Owais Ali and Syed Saad obtained 2nd and 3rd position respectively in the amateurs category. President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz Ur Rehman and a large number of enthusiasts were present on the occasion. Zakria Dad won the Amateur titles with 160 points, Owais Ali got 2nd position with 156 points and Syed Saad obtained 3rd position with 148 points. Players from all over the country are taking part in the Championship being played under the auspices of Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation. The Championship will continue till August 14.

Grealish to join Everton

LONDON (AFP): Manchester City winger Jack Grealish has agreed to join Everton on loan for the 2025-26 season, according to reports on Monday. Grealish fell out of favour with City boss Pep Guardiola last season and made just seven starts in the Premier League. The 29-year-old was left out of City's squad for the Club World Cup in the United States amid speculation that he was set to leave the Etihad Stadium. Everton have now agreed a deal for Grealish, who earns a reported £300,000 (\$402,000) per week, ahead of the new Premier League campaign, which starts for the Toffees at Leeds on August 18. The England international joined City from Aston Villa in 2021 for a then British record fee of £100 million. Grealish has won three Premier League titles, the Champions League and the FA Cup with City, but his form had dipped significantly since he played a key role in the 2022-23 treble-winning campaign. He was left out of England's Euro 2024 squad, an omission that left him "heartbroken". Guardiola rarely picked Grealish last season despite City's struggles and he was left on the bench for the shock FA Cup final defeat against Crystal Palace. If Grealish passes a medical and completes his move to Everton, the winger will have a chance to revive his spluttering career and potentially earn a recall to the England squad ahead of next year's World Cup. Everton recently left Goodison Park to move into their new Hill Dickinson stadium ahead of the season, with Grealish set to take centre stage in the plush arena. He will rank as Everton's biggest signing since the end of last season after a quiet summer in the transfer market for boss David Moyes.

West Indies level series with 5-wicket win over Pakistan

TAROUBA (AP): Roston Chase and Justin Greaves led West Indies to a five-wicket victory over Pakistan with 10 balls to spare in the rain-reduced second one-day cricket international on Sunday, leveling the three-match series at 1-1. Chase's 49 not out off 47 balls included two sixes and the winning boundary as West Indies scored 184-5 in 33.2 overs. The hosts were chasing a revised target of 181 runs in 35 overs under the DLS method after multiple rain interruptions saw Pakistan's innings end at 171-7 in 37 overs. Right-arm fast bowler Jayden

Seales took 3-23 in seven overs. West Indies stumbled from 101-3 after 18 overs at Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago, to 111-5 off 24 overs, including the wicket of Sherfane Rutherford, who hit a 33-ball 45 with three sixes and four fours. Chase and Greaves (26 off 31) shared a 77-run unbroken partnership for the sixth wicket. West Indies earlier chose to bowl first and Hasan Nawaz again played a key role for Pakistan with 36 not out off 30 deliveries, after his unbeaten 63 in the ODI opener. Hasan's knock on

Sunday included three sixes — two of them in what turned out to be the last over of Pakistan's innings after more rain. Hussain Talat got 31 off 32 balls but most Pakistan batters were much slower, including captain Mohammad Rizwan who was trapped lbw by Gudakesh Motie for a 38-ball 16. Pakistan beat West Indies in the first one-day international on Friday, also by five wickets. The third and final match in the ODI series is scheduled for Tuesday at the same stadium. Pakistan won the preceding Twenty20 series 2-1 played in Florida.



HYDERABAD: A student athlete competes in a squash match during the indoor sports festival, organized to mark the 'Maarka-e-Haq' at LUMHS Jamshoro.

Liverpool spend big to hold off Arsenal, City in Premier League title fight

LIVERPOOL (AFP): Liverpool have splashed out to defend their Premier League title as champions but face stiff competition from an Arsenal side desperate to shake off their tag as nearly men and a rejuvenated Manchester City. After storming to a record-equalling 20th English top-flight title in Arne Slot's first season in charge, Liverpool have looked to build from a position of strength during a summer marked by tragedy. Portuguese forward Diogo Jota was killed in a car accident alongside his brother last month, plunging the club into mourning. Tributes to Jota will continue throughout the season with "Forever 20" -- his shirt number, which the club have now retired -- printed on Liverpool's jerseys. The Reds have already spent £260 million (\$350 million) on Florian Wirtz, Hugo Ekitike, Milos Kerkez and Jeremie Frimpong. However, after the departures of Luis Diaz and Darwin Nunez, they are not yet done in strengthening their forward line and are expected to launch a fresh bid for Alexander Isak, with Newcastle demanding a British transfer record fee for the Swedish striker.

Liverpool's rivals will hope Wirtz and Ekitike take time to adapt to the rigours of the Premier League after shining in Germany's Bundesliga, while there are defensive doubts for Slot's men to answer. The Dutch coach said his side need to defend better after leaky performances in pre-season were followed by defeat in the Community Shield to Crystal Palace on Sunday after twice blowing the lead. Can Gyokeres fire? After finishing second for the past three seasons, Arsenal are longing for their first title in 22 years and have backed Mikel Arteta with another near £200 million investment in the transfer market. Spanish international Martin Zubimendi will be the new anchor of the midfield, while the signings of Christian Norgaard, Cristhian Mosquera, Noni Madueke and Kepa Arrizabalaga add depth to the squad. But Arsenal's season is likely to be defined by whether Viktor Gyokeres proves to be the answer to their need for a prolific striker. The Swede struck 97 times in 102 games during two years at Sporting Lisbon, but the 27-year-old

failed to make a breakthrough in the Premier League during his previous experience in England. After coming up short at Brighton, Gyokeres scored 41 goals in 121 games in England's second tier with Coventry and Swansea. "He's a player that, when you leave him with the space one against one, he's going to destroy you," said Arteta of his new striker. City were dethroned last season after an unprecedented run of four consecutive titles as the wheels came off for Pep Guardiola's men without Ballon d'Or winner Rodri. The Spaniard has been ruled out till September due to a setback in his return from a serious knee injury, but City have refreshed their squad with the additions of Rayan Ait-Nouri, Tijjani Reijnders and Rayan Cherki. After a first trophy-less season since 2016/17, City expect to be back in the fight for the title. World champions Chelsea Chelsea were the last side other than City and Liverpool to lift the title back in 2017 and showed they are a coming force once more by winning the Club World Cup in the US last month.

Noor Zaman advances to plate event finals at World Games

CHENGDU (APP): Pakistan's rising squash star Noor Zaman has secured a spot in the plate event finals at the World Games 2025 in Chengdu, China after a thrilling 3-1 victory over Japan's Ryosei Tsukue in the semifinals on Monday. Nasir showcased nerves of steel in a gripping encounter, overcoming Tsukue with scores of 11-7, 7-11, 11-7, 12-10. After splitting the first two games, Noor dug deep in a tense fourth game, saving multiple game points before clinching the match in dramatic fashion. "Noor showed incredible composure under pressure today," said Pakistan's national coach Fahim Gul. His ability to bounce back after losing the second game and then close out the match in such a tight fourth game proves his mental toughness. He's ready for the final, he added. Earlier in the tournament, he pushed World No. 21 Miguel Rodriguez to five games in the main draw. The young sensation will now compete for gold in Tuesday's final. A victory would cap off a remarkable tournament for Pakistan's squash future. "I'm grateful for the support and ready to give my all in the final," said an elated Zaman after the match. Meanwhile, Nasir Iqbal went down 3-1 (15-13, 13-15, 11-4, 11-5) fighting hard against Palomino Gaeano Ronald of Colombia in another plate event semifinal.

Asif survives German challenge in World Games billiards battle

CHENGDU (APP): Pakistan's billiards maestro Muhammad Asif staged a dramatic comeback to defeat Germany's Alexander Widau 2-1 in a pulsating Group B clash at the World Games 2025 in Chengdu, China on Monday. The high-stakes encounter at the Civil Aviation Flight University's Tianfu Campus Gymnasium had fans gripping their seats as momentum swung wildly between the two cue masters. The German challenger drew first blood, dominating the opening frame 43-29 with clinical precision. Undeterred, Asif responded with a masterclass in the second, firing a spectacular 116-09 reply — the tournament's highest break so far to level the contest. The decisive frame became a tactical chess match, with both players trading safety shots before Asif pounced on a critical error by Widau to seal a dramatic 67-32 victory and book his quarterfinal berth. "This was pure test of nerve," an elated Asif told APP. "When Widau took that first frame, I knew I had to dig into my deepest reserves. That century break was crucial. It broke his rhythm and gave me the psychological edge." The victory marks Asif's second consecutive win in Chengdu, following his straight-sets demolition of China's Liang Xiaolong. He has made it to the knockout stage now.



FAISALABAD: A hockey match between the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and Government College University Faisalabad, held at the GCUF hockey ground. —APP Photo

PMYP–Qalandars talent hunt trials draw record turnout

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), in collaboration with Lahore Qalandars, witnessed a historic turnout at the open cricket trials held in Lahore, with more than 18,000 aspiring cricketers, both male and female, showcasing their talent over two days. The trials were overseen by Lahore Qalandars' renowned professional scouting team, known for discovering and nurturing some of Pakistan's most exciting cricketing prospects. Boys and girls were put through a rigorous selection process, giving them a rare chance to perform in front of experienced evaluators from one of the Pakistan Super League's most successful franchises, said a press release. The overwhelming participation not only

reflected Lahore's "cricket fever" but also reinforced the importance of coordinated efforts between the government, sports organizations, and the private sector in unearthing raw talent and creating clear pathways to professional cricket. Speaking after the conclusion of the trials, Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana extended heartfelt thanks to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for their all-out support in making this landmark initiative a reality. "This is not just about finding cricket talent; it's about giving our youth a platform to dream big and achieve big. I am deeply grateful to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood

Ahmad Khan, and HEC for backing this vision. And to the cricket-loving people of Lahore, thank you for coming in such huge numbers. Your passion made this event a grand success," said Atif Rana. Selected male and female players expressed immense gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana for launching what they called a "life-changing" programme. "This platform has given us hope and belief that we can represent Pakistan at the highest level. The professionalism of Lahore Qalandars' talent hunt and the support from the government make us confident that our dreams can become reality," one of the selected players shared.

Battle for Freedom Boxing C'ship concludes

PESHAWAR (APP): The much-anticipated "Battle for Pakistan's Freedom" Boxing Championship concluded in the provincial capital with electrifying bouts and remarkable performances, as Champion Boxing Club emerged victorious, securing the coveted title. The event showcased the grit, skill, and unwavering determination of talented boxers, who delivered thrilling moments in the ring. Zalmi Boxing Academy and Eagle Boxing Academy claimed joint second place after a series of hard-fought matches, while Warriors Taekwondo & Kickboxing Academy took third position with impressive displays of technique and resilience. Each fight was marked by lightning-fast movements, precision punches, and solid defensive strate-

gies, keeping spectators on the edge of their seats. The closing ceremony was graced by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance) Asghar Surani and Youth Minister of the Youth Assembly Talha Jan, who presented trophies and medals to outstanding performers. Addressing the athletes, the guests praised the young boxers' talent, calling them a valuable asset for the province and the nation, and pledged full support for their development. Those present were included Secretary Provincial Boxing Association, Khizarullah and Peshawar Division Boxing Association Secretary Muhammad Ajmal. They lauded the players' performances and described the championship as a milestone for the promotion of boxing

in the region. Organized under the banner of the Provincial Boxing Association and Peshawar Division Boxing Association, with support from the Regional Sports Officer Peshawar, the event brought together around 110 registered boxers from 17 clubs across the division. Competitors impressed with their technical skills, offensive and defensive tactics, speed, and tactical awareness, leaving a lasting impact on the crowd. Beyond the punches and footwork, the championship reflected the passion and dedication of young boxers whose drive could lead them to future success at national and international levels. Roaring applause, energetic chants, and a charged atmosphere turned the tournament into an unforgettable experience for boxing fans.

India look to break 'final barrier' in Women's WC

MUMBAI (AFP): India captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Monday said the team was determined to break the "final barrier" and lift their first Women's World Cup cricket title this year after missing out twice previously. The 13th edition of the women's showpiece 50-over tournament will begin on September 30, with co-hosts India set to face Sri Lanka in the opener in Bengaluru. The Indian women made it to two ODI World Cup finals but lost on both occasions -- going down to England by nine runs the last time around in 2017 at Lord's. Kaur, who made a valiant 51 runs in the final, will be leading India for the first time in the marquee tournament. "Playing in front of a

home crowd is always special, and hopefully, this time we will give our 100 percent and finally break that barrier that all Indian fans are waiting for," Kaur said. "World Cups are always special, and we always want to do something special" for the country, she said at an International Cricket Council event in Mumbai. Kaur's India are fresh from a series win in England, where they beat the hosts 3-2 in T20 matches and 2-1 in three 50-overs games. "(The confidence is) very high. The kind of cricket we've played over the last couple of years, gives us a lot of confidence," said the top-order batter. India opener Smriti Mandhana said the

women's team has witnessed a change in mindset over the years. "There's a calmness with which I want to go about on the field," said Mandhana at the event, which marked the 50-day countdown to the tournament. "Our whole team is heading in that direction. We know where we want to work hard. And when we enter the field, we know we've just got to implement." Pakistan will play all their matches in Colombo as part of a compromise deal that allows both India and Pakistan to play at neutral venues in multi-nation tournaments. The final will be played on November 2 either in Bengaluru or Colombo, depending on whether Pakistan reach the title clash.

Shelton, Zverev race into Cincinnati third round

CINCINNATI (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz fought through a second-set slump to post a "rollercoaster" 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 victory over Damir Dzumhur in his opening match Sunday at the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Open. The Spaniard, playing his first tournament since losing to Jannik Sinner in the Wimbledon final, raced through the first set but completely lost his way in the second, dropping his serve twice against the 33-year-old Bosnian. Alcaraz regained his intensity and cut down his errors in the third as a seventh ace took him to a match point that was converted when Dzumhur fired wide. "It was just a rollercoaster," said the second seed, who was winning his 12th straight match at the Masters 1000 level after taking the titles in Monte Carlo and Rome. "Lots of good feelings, bad feelings, back to the good ones. I am happy to

get the win at the end. I know that I have chances to do better." Alcaraz committed 44 unforced errors and said conditions in Cincinnati, where he was runner-up in 2023, were always tricky. "The ball flies a lot, goes super fast," he said. "You have to be ready to be in a good position for each shot and that is really difficult to do." Third seed Alexander Zverev found things more straightforward, winning 6-3, 6-3 against US wild card Nishesh Basavareddy in the night session. Zverev needed just 66 minutes to get past Basavareddy, a 20-year-old ranked 109th in the world. The German put 41 of his 50 first serves in play and didn't face a break point. Basavareddy saved one match point with a blistering service return but Zverev secured the win with his 12th ace. American Ben Shelton, coming off his first

Masters 1000 title in Toronto, eased through 6-3, 3-1 when Camilo Ugo Carabelli retired with a knee injury. Shelton's early night was a boon after a draining Toronto tournament which only ended on Thursday night. "It's not easy to play a couple of days after winning any title," Shelton said. "I feel for Camilo and it's obviously not the way that you want to go through. I hope that he has a quick recovery." Asked about the tape on his own right thigh, Shelton said he has "a few muscle things" going on. "The legs take a lot of force," he said. Sixth seed Alex de Minaur of Australia, the Washington champion, lost to American Reilly Opelka 7-6 (8/6), 6-4. But another Australian, Adam Walton, secured a first top-50 win of his career with a 6-7 (0/7), 6-4, 6-1 upset of former world number one and

2019 Cincy champion Daniil Medvedev of Russia. Gauff battles through In the women's draw, French Open champion Coco Gauff battled through a tough first set to beat China's Wang Xinyu 6-3, 6-2. Gauff, who lifted the trophy in Cincinnati in 2023 and went on to claim her first Grand Slam title at the US Open that year, had to grind her way through the first set. But the number two seed steadied in the second to run out the winner in 71 minutes. "It was a rough start," Gauff said. "But it was about just trusting myself and the work we've done in practice." Third seed Jessica Pegula, runner-up last year to Aryna Sabalenka, defeated Kimberly Birrell 6-4, 6-3. Seventh seed Jasmine Paolini, finalist last season at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, also advanced, beating Maria Sakkari of Greece 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/5).



In brief

Section 144 imposed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi has imposed Section 144 on Mall Road and G P O Chowk in order to ensure public safety and law & order in the hilly station on the occasion of Independence Day. Only families would be allowed to enter the places on August 12, 13 and 14. The decision to the effect was taken on the recommendations of the July 30 meeting of the District Intelligence Committee that Mall Road and GPO Chowk should be reserved for families only to avoid unnecessary crowding and any kind of disturbance during the Independence Day celebrations. The Deputy Commissioner Murree imposed the restrictions under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code 1898 (Punjab Amendment Act 2024), which would remain in place for three days (August 12 to 14), warning that any violation would be subject to legal action under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code. The DC, in his order, observed that the step was indispensable to ensure the public safety and a pleasant atmosphere on the occasion of Independence Day in Murree.

RWMC conducts cleanliness drive

RAWALPINDI (APP): The communication teams of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) carried out a cleanliness awareness campaign in the area of Union Council-8 Fauji Colony here on Monday. According to the RWMC spokesman, the teams asked the shopkeepers and residents of the area to play their part in educating the people about the importance of cleanliness as well as the hazards of dengue. The teams also distributed waste bags and leaflets among the people to educate them about the proper disposal of garbage at waste containers placed in every union council of the city. The spokesman called upon the residents to leave no place wet or with stagnant water, as the present spell of rains had increased the threat of dengue larvae breeding. Furthermore, he appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the sanitation staff to keep the city clean and throw garbage in waste containers and avoid dumping it on roads, drains and open plots. In addition, they were asked to keep an eye on junkyards, schools, under-construction buildings, and other sites that might contribute to spreading dengue larvae. In case of any cleanliness-related complaint, the citizens were advised to contact the helpline number 1139.

09 held for violating renting laws

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested nine individuals for violating renting laws in the jurisdiction of Sadiqabad police station here in Monday. According to police spokesman during the targeted operation, tenants without proper registration of their details were taken into custody, and cases have been lodged against them. SP Rawal Saad Arshad commended the efforts of Sadiqabad police station and stated that the purpose of such search operations is to keep a close watch on criminal and law-breaking elements and bring them before the court. He urged citizens to ensure the registration of tenancy details in compliance with the law. SP made it clear that it is prime duty of police to protect the lives and properties of people.



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Farah Naz Akbar leading a rally in connection with Marka-e-Haq and at Lok Virsa. —APP Photo

Pakistan stands tall on Int'l stage with renewed honor: Aleem

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) was held under the Chairmanship of Central President Abdul Aleem Khan where the prevailing national and political situation as well as party affairs, were reviewed in detail.

Addressing the meeting, Federal Minister & President IPP Abdul Aleem Khan said due to the leadership of Chief of Army Staff Gen. Hafiz Syed Asim Munir and Pakistan Army, the country has earned remarkable recognition and globally boom at the international level, said a press release issued on Monday. He added the Pakistan Army inflicted a decisive defeat upon the enemy in a short span of conflict. He urged party leaders to stand with the families of martyrs who sacrifice their loved ones for the nation's security and well-being. He

emphasized that the Battle of "Baniyan al-Marsous" had completely transformed Pakistan's image and today the world regards our beloved country with respect and esteem.

Highlighting the party's progress, Abdul Aleem Khan noted that winning 8 electoral seats in the Assemblies during its first elections was a significant achievement. "Politics is ever-changing, and we stand together through thick and thin, Insha'Allah, we will strengthen the party collectively," he stated.

Abdul Aleem Khan praised the party's successful public gatherings and stressed that our elected representatives and party leaders must visit flood-affected areas personally to extend sympathy to the victims, there. IPP President expressed satisfaction over the Intra-Party Elections and its endorsement by the Election Commission, congratulating party leaders on

the achievement. All Members of the Central Executive Committee congratulated Abdul Aleem Khan on his re-election as Party President, pledging their full support and confidence in his leadership.

The meeting also deliberated on the early appointment of IPP's Central and Provincial office bearers. Concerns were expressed over certain matters related to the Punjab Government alongside a demand for introducing farmer-friendly policies. It was decided that the IPP would participate through mutual consultation in the upcoming by-elections in Lahore and other districts. The proposal to hold the next Marka-e-Haq Convention in Faisalabad was unanimously agreed upon. Furthermore, the party resolved to actively contest the upcoming elections in Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan for which Abdul Aleem Khan announced the

formation of a five-Member Kashmir Committee.

Those present at the meeting included Minister of State Aun Chaudhry, IPP Punjab President Rana Nazir Ahmad Khan, Central General Secretary Mian Khalid Mehmood, Secretary Information Syed Samsam Ali Bukhari, Chaudhry Norez Shakoor, Chaudhry Abdul Rauf, Tahseen Gardezi, Syed Umar Gilani, IPP Lahore President Malik Zaman Naseeb, Mamoon Jaffar Tarar, Haroon Imran Gill, Chaudhry Ikhtlaq, Raja Yawar Kamal, Yasir Arafat, Farrukh Maneka, Tahir Hindli, Malik Nouman Langrial, Chaudhry Zahiruddin, Ajmal Cheema, Chaudhry Ali Akhtar, Brig (R) Qaiser Mahey and others. Punjab Assembly Members Sarah Ahmad and Syeda Sumeera Ahmad also attended while MNAs Munaza Hassan and Gul Asghar Baghur participated via video link.

ISSI roundtable examines India's ambitions on global stage

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Experts recommend that Pakistan must assert its rights under international law in response to India's actions related to the Indus Waters Treaty.

To evaluate the BJP government's performance during the first year of its third term, with a particular focus on how 'Modi 3.0' fared on domestic socio-political, economic, military, and foreign policy fronts, the India Study Centre (ISC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Round Table today, titled: "One Year of Modi 3.0 – India's Foreign Policy Ambitions and Domestic Governance."

The Round Table was attended by senior diplomats, practitioners, academics, think-tank experts, and area specialists. Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood delivered welcome remarks. Of the panellist, Dr. Raashid Wali Janjua spoke on the internal dynamics of Modi 3.0, while Ambassador Riffat Masood covered the foreign policy arena. The distinguished participants included former Foreign Minister Ambassador Inam ul Haque.

During the course of discussion, it was highlighted that since the beginning of 2025, the BJP has incurred losses in the internal political space, while India lost considerable ground in its international standing and image. There is deepening polarization in Indian society on political, social, economic, ethnic, linguistic and regional lines. The Waqf bill, migration laws, and revision of voter lists in states like Bihar indicated further shrinking space for the Muslims. 'Saffronisation' of key state institutions -- including the Planning Commission, Election Commission, High Judiciary, and the Armed forces -- has been the hallmark of the Modi era.

Experts also noted an ostensible rift between the RSS and BJP on a range of issues from appointment of BJP party President, to PM



Modi approaching the age of 75 years, to some BJP segments' clamour for a course independent from Nagpur. In the aftermath India-Pakistan conflict of May 2025, PM Modi's popularity has declined, but he could probably manage the mounting challenges. Internally, India is coping with issues like poverty, income inequality, and growing unemployment. In today's India, is witnessing creeping authoritarianism and majoritarianism. Pluralism is increasingly losing ground. It was highlighted that in order to understand Indian policies, particularly towards Pakistan, the Indian "mindset" needs to be understood first. Experts pointed out that India never accepted the creation of Pakistan and the current BJP leadership believed in the RSS fantasy of Akhand Bharat. Mr. Modi's disdain for Pakistan and his expansionist designs are reflective of this mindset. Across the world, election campaigns mostly focus on internal issues, but in the case of India, election campaigns are more about Pakistan-bashing to stoke nationalism and garner votes.

It was underscored that despite ongoing tensions between India and the U.S., the relationship between the two countries would likely remain intact as it is institutionalised and both countries are strategically important to each other. Notably, as compared to the Biden Administration, which was tilted towards India, President Trump has decided

to maintain a balance between India and Pakistan. Participants were of the view that both Congress and the BJP are two sides of the same coin. No matter who holds power, India's antagonistic posture towards Pakistan will remain the same. Indian arrogance has given way to resentment in South Asian countries, but for smaller states in the region it will be difficult to go against India.

Participant held the view that since, according to Indian side, "Operation Sindoor is still continuing", Pakistan must remain vigilant and prepared to effectively respond to new risks and challenges likely to arise in India-Pakistan relations or regionally. Pakistan must be ready for any eventuality, including further false flag operations. Furthermore, fallacious thinking exists in India that there is space for conventional war under the nuclear threshold. Pakistan must take steps to disabuse India of this false, irresponsible and dangerous notion. The paramount importance for Pakistan to ensure economic strength and robust defence and deterrent capability was also underscored.

Participants cautioned that under Modi, Kashmir's religious and cultural identity is at risk. Pakistan must continue to raise the Jammu and Kashmir dispute proactively at all available forums. On Kashmir, as well as India's decision of holding the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) in abeyance, Pakistan must explore more diplomatic and legal options.

IRSA releases 343,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 343,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 358,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1546.00 feet which was 144.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 243,900 cusecs and 243,500 cusecs, respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1206.20 feet, which was 156.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 21,900 cusecs and 7,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 229,100, 214,800, 164,000 and 87,300 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 29,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 32,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Pakistan reaffirms commitment to minorities' rights: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, on Minorities' National Day reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to protecting the rights, freedoms, and dignity of its minority communities, calling them "equal heirs of the state" and an "integral part of national development."

Speaking on the occasion, Naqvi said Pakistan was founded on the golden principles of Islam — justice, equality, and tolerance — and would always remain steadfast on these foundations. He emphasized that protecting the life, property, faith, and freedom of worship of minorities was not only a constitutional obligation but also part of Pakistan's national identity.

"Every citizen, regardless of religion, is an equal Pakistani," he said, adding

that Islam rejects coercion, promotes freedom of belief, and upholds respect for humanity — values that form the basis of minorities' protection in the country.

Citing Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's landmark address of August 11, 1947, Naqvi noted that the country's founder had clearly stated that all citizens enjoy equal status. "The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the fundamental rights of minorities, and we are committed to ensuring their full implementation," he said.

He praised the contributions of minorities in education, health, defense, politics, and other sectors, describing their role as a "shining chapter in Pakistan's national heritage." Naqvi stressed that patriotism, service, and character — not religion

— define national identity in Pakistan.

Highlighting state efforts, he said the government gives top priority to protecting minority lives, property, and sacred places. "Whether it's the renovation of places of worship or ensuring security for religious events, the state always fulfills its responsibility," Naqvi stated.

He also pointed to the Kartarpur Corridor and Nankana Sahib being kept open and secure even during wartime as proof of Pakistan's commitment to peace, love, and interfaith harmony.

"Minorities are equal partners in the state, and there will be no compromise on their protection, freedom, and participation," the minister affirmed. "On Minorities' National Day, we renew our resolve to safeguard their fundamental rights."

Ban imposed on Mishi walk due to security reasons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Engineer Amir Khattak, while presiding over the Divisional Coordination Committee (DCC) meeting on Monday, said that in view of security concerns, the government had imposed a ban on the Mishi Walk.

He directed the police and administration to ensure the implementation of the ban on Arbaeen Walk in all the five districts of the Rawalpindi Division.

The meeting held here at the Commissioner's Office was attended by Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hassan Waqar Cheema, Additional Commissioner Coordination Syed Nazarat Ali and heads of other relevant departments. The deputy commissioners of Chakwal, Jhelum, Murree and Attock participated through video link.

The meeting reviewed the preparations, security arrangements, and law and order situation on the occasion of Chehlum Imam Hussain (AS). The Commissioner directed that steps be taken to prevent the holding of Mishi Walk by keeping close contact with the peace committees of all districts, religious scholars and stakeholders.

He said 98 percent stakeholders in Attock, 93 percent in Rawalpindi, and 70 to 80 percent in Murree and other areas had supported the decision. It was also decided in the meeting that instead of walking, transport facilities would be provided to the faithful wishing to attend the Chehlum gatherings and processions, and the Rawalpindi administration demanded 15 to 20 buses for the purpose.

Commissioner Khattak made it clear that if an attempt was made to organize a Mishi Walk at any place, strict legal action would be taken against those responsible, whose names would be included in the Fourth Schedule.

He directed the police and civil administration to strictly implement the security plan and ensure effective surveillance on the internal and external routes.

On the occasion, the Commissioner also reviewed the preparations for Independence Day across the Division and directed that grand and peaceful celebrations be held on August 14. "The joy of Independence Day has doubled this time due to the victory in Marka-e-Haq so we have to celebrate it with full enthusiasm," he remarked.

Spillways opened at Rawal Dam as water level rises

ISLAMABAD (APP): The spillways of Rawal Dam were opened following a rise in the water level to 1,751 feet. The step was taken to manage water flow and prevent any potential overflow risks in downstream areas, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration here.

In this regard, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Nilore was present at the dam to oversee the process of opening the spillways. Officials said the presence of senior administration ensured real-time monitoring of water discharge and coordination with relevant departments.

Meanwhile, Rescue 1122, police personnel, and ambulance teams were stationed at various bridges and sensitive points near the riverbanks. Their deployment aimed to respond promptly to any emergencies and guide the public to safer areas if required.

According to the district administration, all relevant departments have been instructed to take precautionary measures. The directives include maintaining constant communication between field teams, keeping rescue equipment ready, and ensuring clear passage for emergency vehicles.

Officials also emphasized the importance of public cooperation during such situations. People have been asked to follow instructions issued by the administration and avoid crossing flooded paths or approaching restricted zones.

The administration said it would continue to monitor the water level at Rawal Dam and adjust spillway operations accordingly. Continuous updates will be provided to keep the public informed of any changes in the situation.

In recent days, heavy rainfall in the catchment areas increased the water inflow into the dam, pushing the level closer to its maximum capacity. The spillway opening is part of routine safety protocols to regulate the reservoir's storage and maintain its structural integrity.

With the current monsoon forecast indicating the possibility of more rain in the coming days, authorities have reiterated their preparedness to deal with any developments. All field units remain on standby, and coordination between civil administration, law enforcement, and rescue services has been strengthened to ensure timely response.

The district administration has assured that every step is being taken to manage the water release in a controlled manner while safeguarding nearby communities.

27 professional beggars arrested in Capital crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has intensified its campaign against professional begging in the Federal Capital, arresting 27 individuals during an operation across the city's main roads and markets.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the authority, in coordination with police, conducted an extensive operation targeting professional beggars operating in different parts of Islamabad. The crackdown covered major commercial areas, markets, and busy intersections. According to officials, the campaign is part of ongoing efforts to address the growing presence of professional beggars in public spaces. The administration has increased monitoring in key locations where begging is frequently reported, including major shopping areas and traffic signals.

During the latest operation, 27 individuals identified as professional beggars were taken into custody. They were later shifted to police stations for further legal action under relevant laws. Authorities stated that

the detainees were found repeatedly engaging in begging despite previous warnings and actions.

Meanwhile, the ICT administration has set up special teams to carry out regular operations across the federal capital. These teams are tasked with patrolling public places, identifying repeat offenders, and preventing the use of children or individuals with disabilities for begging purposes. Officials stressed that such activities are being monitored closely to ensure public spaces remain accessible for residents and visitors.

The administration also urged citizens to cooperate by avoiding giving money to beggars, pointing out that such acts often encourage organized networks that exploit vulnerable individuals. Instead, residents are advised to contribute to registered charitable organizations or welfare institutions.

This campaign follows multiple similar operations conducted in recent months, during which dozens of professional beggars were arrested and legal proceedings initiated. Officials said the drive will continue without

interruption, with a focus on dismantling the networks that manage and profit from begging in the capital.

The ICT administration has reiterated its commitment to maintaining law and order in public spaces and ensuring that Islamabad's markets, roads, and recreational areas remain free from organized begging activities.

In addition to enforcement measures, the administration has called for public awareness campaigns to highlight the negative impact of professional begging and the exploitation involved.

The authorities have warned that anyone found running or supporting organized begging operations will face strict legal action. Surveillance in public places has been increased, and coordination with police stations has been enhanced to ensure quick response during operations.

The ICT administration has confirmed that similar operations will be carried out in the coming weeks in different sectors of the city, particularly in areas where complaints about professional begging are frequent.

Uplift projects launched

KANDAHAR (BNA): The Kandahar Municipality has begun work on a series of development projects in various districts of the city, with a total budget of 14 million Afghanis. Municipal spokesperson Saifullah Asim said the projects include the construction of retaining walls, canals, drainage systems, and water channels in multiple neighborhoods. He added that the work has created employment opportunities for dozens of local residents.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Safar 17, 1447 — Tuesday, August 12, 2025

300,000t of coal extracted

BAGHLAN (BNA): Officials from the Northern Coal State Company in Baghlan province of Afghanistan said that between 200,000 and 300,000 tonnes of coal are extracted every month from both state-owned and privately-operated mines across northern Afghanistan. According to Abdullah Hamid, head of the company, there are 61 registered state mines and 1,028 private mines in the northern provinces under its oversight.

Deported Afghan migrants face hardship

KABUL (TOLOnews): With the continued deportation of Afghan migrants from neighboring countries, Kabul's migrant camp has become one of the temporary reception centers for them.

Among them, a number of deportees from Iran are facing serious problems such as lack of shelter, unemployment, and uncertainty, and they are calling on the caretaker government to urgently address their situation.

Abdul Razaq, one of the recently returned migrants from Iran who spent nine years in that country, has a different account of the difficult path of migration. He says that they were arrested

and deported by Iranian police without consideration for their situation.

Abdul Razaq, who has now been in the Kabul camp for two days and nights, is concerned about the future of himself and his family.

He said: "It has been two days and nights that we are in the camp. We only brought the clothes we were wearing and nothing else. They didn't even give us time to collect our belongings. They said 'Go.' I asked, is this what Islam teaches?"

Several other deportees from Iran in the camp shared similar accounts.

Abdul Qudus, a deportee from Iran, said: "I am think-

ing that we have been forced to pitch a tent somewhere and make ourselves a shelter. I call on the Islamic Emirate to help those who are forced and in need."

Abdul Saboor, another deportee from Iran, added: "Three of us came. We had been there for four years, and all our possessions remained there."

Earlier, the International Organization for Migration had warned that Afghanistan is facing one of the largest waves of forced deportations of migrants from neighboring countries, and that in the current calendar year alone, 1.5 million people have been deported and returned to the country.

MoEW prioritizes Ghazni-Paktika project

SHARAN (BNA): Mullah Abdul Hadi Yaqub, the Deputy Minister of Energy and Water, held a meeting with some elders of Paktika, stated that the project to transmit electricity from Ghazni to Paktika and the expansion of the province's power network is among the ministry's top priorities.

According to the Ministry of Energy and Water's report, in the meeting, the elders of Paktika shared their problems and suggestions with Mullah Abdul Hadi Yaqub, the Deputy Minister, and called on the ministry's officials to pay attention to implementing developmental energy and water projects—particularly the construction of dams, electricity generation, and power distribution projects in the province.

During the meeting, the Deputy Minister and several directors from the ministry assured the elders of Paktika that implementing solar power projects, transmitting electricity from Ghazni to Paktika, and expanding the province's power network are top priorities for the ministry, and that execution will begin soon.

126 complete vocational training

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): Around 126 individuals have graduated from vocational training in Logar province, where officials pledged expanded opportunities for recently returned refugees from Pakistan and Iran to acquire skills and secure employment.

At the graduation ceremony on Sunday, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Maulvi Mohammad Zahid Jan Ahmadzai said thousands of young people in Kabul and other provinces have already gained access to vocational training.

He added that IEA is working to provide both vocational education and job opportunities for those who have recently returned from neighboring countries.

Ahmadzai urged the graduates to work in their professional fields and pass on their expertise to other youth. Similarly, Logar's Deputy Governor, Maulvi M. Anwar Dinparwar, stressed that Afghan youth now need vocational training and employment opportunities more than ever.

He said the provincial administration is striving to ensure access to both education and jobs for young people in the province.

Meanwhile, the province's Director of Labor and Social Affairs, Maulvi Mohammad Hanif Ans, said the 126 graduates completed six months of training in mobile phone repair, building wiring and plumbing.

250 investors commit \$225m to Afghanistan projects

PANJSHIR (BNA): Hafez Mohammad Agha Hakim, the governor of Panjshir, recently hosted a significant meeting with scholars and investors from ten Islamic countries, highlighting Afghanistan's readiness for foreign investment.

The meeting, attended by a delegation led by Dr. Abdullah al-Zindani, head of the Council of Scholars of Turkey, included representatives from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Bahrain, Iraq, Oman, Malaysia, Palestine, Syria, and India. Saifuddin Laton, spokesperson for the Panjshir provincial administration, reported that discussions focused on expanding trade and attracting investment, particularly in Panjshir.

Delegates expressed a strong interest in investing in Afghanistan, emphasizing their commitment to portraying a positive image of the country to the Islamic world. Governor Hakim underscored the end of a prolonged crisis in



Afghanistan, stating that the nation is now more prepared than ever for investment opportunities.

He encouraged Islamic nations to invest in sectors such as education, health, agriculture, mining, and tourism to bolster the Islamic system.

Dr. al-Zindani characterized Afghanistan's security situation as "unparalleled,"

urging investors to engage with confidence.

Qatari investor Mohammad Hassan Al-Emadi also announced plans to invest in the tourism and agriculture sectors.

During the meeting, Yemeni businessman Khalid, head of the Islamic Financing Committee, revealed a joint initiative where approximately 250

companies and investors from Islamic countries would invest around \$900,000 each in Afghanistan, totaling approximately \$225 million.

Recent efforts by the Panjshir local administration have notably increased foreign investment interest in the province, marking a hopeful turn for Afghanistan's economic future.

Kabul's District 13 struggles with water shortages

KABUL (TOLOnews): In Kabul, water is not just a liquid, it is a hope sought daily in long queues.

District 13 of Kabul is an example of other areas in the capital where life has become a challenge for residents. From small children to elderly men, everyone heads to the streets in search of a sip of drinking water.

From early morning, the lines begin, and everyone hopes to bring home a small share for their family before the water supply runs out.

Yar Mohammad, a resident of District 13, said: "I come here and take five barrels of water daily, and even that is not enough. Water consumption is very high. Previously, a 1000-Ltr barrel cost 40 Afghanis,

now it's 70 Afghanis (\$1.1)."

Mohammaduddin, another resident of the area, said: "People should not waste water because the water level will drop, and it will harm them."

Residents of this district are calling on officials to find fundamental solutions to their problems.

Bashir Ahmad, a resident of District 13, said: "We wander around looking for water. Our request from the government is to pay attention and provide facilities for us."

Mohammad Faiz, a child from the area, said: "I come early in the morning until 11 o'clock. Sometimes our barrels are filled, sometimes they remain empty. We ask the government to help us with a public water

tap."

Meanwhile, water management experts emphasize that to solve this challenge, all national and international bodies and citizens of the country must act in coordination.

Najib Rahman Sadeed, a water affairs expert, said: "Governments, international organizations, the people, and private enterprises must all work in coordination to solve this problem. Projects such as transferring water from the Panjshir watershed, especially now that work is ongoing on the Baghdara Dam, can strengthen this process."

The Ministry of Energy and Water also emphasizes that it has been able to properly manage and transfer water from the Qargha

and Arghandi dams to Kabul. The ministry's spokesperson added that they are also working to transfer water from the Shah and Aros dams to Kabul.

Matuallah Abed, spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy and Water, said: "The Ministry has a plan to transfer water from the Shah wa Arus Dam to Kabul. Fortunately, the cabinet of the Islamic Emirate has established a committee led by the Administrative Office, with relevant departments included, and technical work has begun."

Earlier, the state-owned water supply company had inaugurated a project to produce and transfer water from the Qargha Dam to a 10,000-cubic-meter reservoir at Kabul Polytechnic University.

Factory sealed in Kabul by MoPH

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has sealed a factory in Kabul that repackaged counterfeit food and non-food dyes imported from Pakistan and sold them under false Chinese labels.

Safiullah Alamyar, a food analysis and surveillance specialist at the ministry's Food and Drug Authority, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the facility, located in the industrial park in Sarak-i-Naw area of Pul-i-Charkhi, had been inspected several times before its closure. It was found selling both food and non-food dyes.

"During our inspections, we discovered the

factory was importing dyes from Pakistan, repackaging them, attaching Chinese labels, and selling them as Chinese products — a clear case of fraud," Alamyar said.

He added that the dyes, shipped in large sacks, were not clearly identified as either food or non-food.

"They were repackaged in Chinese-labelled containers and sold in the market. Due to this deception, the factory was sealed and its operations halted," he said.

The ministry had previously warned the factory's management to maintain strict hygiene standards.

"Our surveillance team

has visited this facility multiple times, and we have repeatedly advised them to keep food and non-food dyes separate," Alamyar noted.

Food dyes, he explained, were approved by global health bodies and national and international standards for use in edible products, while non-food dyes were meant for textiles, leather, plastics and pipe manufacturing.

"But because both types of dye were being packaged on the same production line, it became impossible to tell them apart. Since non-food dyes are prohibited in the food industry, there was no need for labo-

ratory testing," he said.

When asked how long the factory would remain closed, Alamyar said the matter had been referred to the ministry's leadership and further action would follow their decision.

Meanwhile, Dr. Faridullah Omari, a trainer at Kabul's National and Specialised Infectious Diseases Hospital, warned: "The use of artificial dyes in food can cause serious health problems. Studies show that artificial dyes — whether liquid, solid, or powder — available in the market can cause cancer, stomach disorders, allergies, and respiratory illnesses."

Tourism boom boosts economy, promotes culture

KABUL (TOLOnews): The significant increase in tourists visiting Afghanistan in recent years has created a new opportunity to boost the economy and promote the country's culture.

According to the Ministry of Information and Culture, in the past four years, about 24,000 tourists from different countries have entered Afghanistan to visit historical sites, natural landscapes, and experience Afghan culture.

Khabib Ghufuran, spokesperson for the Ministry of Information and Culture, said: "These tourists came from different countries of the world to Afghanistan and visited various provinces based on their personal interests, tastes, and travel goals. We have cultural and historical tourists, and tourists who come to see natural attrac-

tions and sightseeing areas. There are also mountaineering and other types of tourists. In total, we have nine types of tourism in Afghanistan."

Relative improvement in security, restoration of some cultural sites, and Afghanistan's abundant natural resources are considered important factors behind the country's tourism growth.

According to economic and cultural experts, the growth of the tourism industry can provide a source of income for Afghanistan, promote historical and cultural attractions, and create job opportunities in the country.

Abdul Zahir Modabber, an economic affairs expert, said: "Fortunately, Afghanistan has a very good base for tourism; it has many natural places and land-

scapes. By mechanizing this process, we can earn more income, meaning we should provide facilities, good security, a suitable environment, and proper hygiene."

Wali Shah Bahra, a cultural affairs expert, also said: "These visits certainly have an impact on the development and promotion of our culture, and they greatly influence the growth of our industry, especially in the fields of art and crafts."

Tourism is also an opportunity to present Afghanistan's culture and history to the world.

Cultural activists have always emphasized that direct interaction between tourists and locals can provide a more realistic image of the country and create more positive perceptions of Afghanistan internationally.

Unshaken by polio, Kabul girl on path of innovation

KABUL (Pajhwok): Asrar Parsa, a young girl in Kabul who contracted polio at the age of two and was left with a paralyzed left leg, is now actively working on several artificial intelligence-based projects with a sharp mind and unwavering determination.

She dreams of participating in global competitions in the field of innovation and technology.

Leading a six-member team, Asrar is currently working on multiple AI-based projects.

She appeals to the government and the international community to support her team so they can take part in international competitions.

Asrar Parsa: A girl who stood up to shape her future

Living in a small but bright home nestled in the bustling alleyways of Sarai Shamali, Kabul, Asrar Parsa, with trembling hands but a strong mind, is redesigning her future through science and technology.

She was not yet two years old when polio struck and paralyzed her left leg. However, Asrar never gave up. Encouraged by her family, she seized every oppor-

tunity to learn and grow.

Despite facing many challenges, she excelled academically from first to twelfth grade, consistently ranking among the top students. In 2013 (1392 Solar Year), she graduated from Bibi Sarwari Sangari High School.

Due to her strong interest in learning, especially English and computer, Asrar aspired to pursue higher education in computer science.

In 2021 (1400 Solar Year), she successfully enrolled at the private higher education institute "Idrak" to study her desired field.

However, her dream remains incomplete. After the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) came to power, education for girls in higher institutions was suspended until further notice.

Asrar says that the restrictions on girls' education negatively impacted her mental well-being. Still, she refused to remain idle and chose to move forward in her selected path. She is now taking various programming courses online.

In addition to her online studies, she works on AI-based projects alongside

her brother, who is a computer science graduate.

She said: "My motivation sparked when I watched a documentary that showcased various uses of artificial intelligence — from prosthetic limbs to self-driving cars."

She continued: "In one part, it showed a mountain climber whose leg was injured in an accident and couldn't continue his passion. But a friend built him a prosthetic leg controlled by the brain, allowing him to climb again. The artificial limb was so advanced that it felt like a real leg."

That documentary inspired her to research more about AI, its applications, and how it works — and to commit to the path.

With the help of her brother, Asrar's first project was a gas sensor. She now leads a six-member team that includes her brother and four of her former university classmates — all working on research and practical AI projects.

She mentioned one of their projects involves building a device that can track a ball based on color recognition.

"Unfortunately, it's very difficult to find the neces-

sary equipment in Afghanistan. I usually have to purchase the required tools from Iran with my own money," she said. "Another project involves designing an AI-based robot capable of recognizing 20 pre-defined objects. All these projects have been developed over the past one and a half to two years."

Asrar has a message for Afghan girls: "Never lose hope or think your future is dark. Use available opportunities like online courses and universities to continue your education and personal growth."

Polio had such a deep psychological impact on her that while recalling those painful memories, she broke down in tears and said: "Back then, the polio vaccine wasn't widely available. I got paralyzed. Later, I was taken to the Red Cross where I underwent surgery and had braces fitted. Now, I live with this leg and move forward with my life."

She appeals to national and international organizations to support her team so they can grow and compete globally.

Brother's support that

paved path of knowledge
Naveed Parsa, Asrar's older brother and a computer science graduate, stood by her side when girls were banned from education.

"My sister was deeply upset. I told her not to worry, that we would find a solution. We spent days thinking and working until we finally decided to form a team," he said.

After the team was formed, Naveed provided her with the necessary tools and equipment.

"I had some robotics equipment and handed them over. We began programming lessons. Asrar is passionate about science and technology and has great mathematical skills — traits that helped her progress."

Naveed said his sister dreams of using AI to design and build artificial limbs for people with disabilities.

Friendship that turned into a journey of growth

Ayesha Siddiqi, Asrar's university classmate at Idarak, and a member of the six-person team, said: "Asrar and I were classmates. After the universities closed for girls, I contacted her and asked what



she had been doing. She was involved in programming — which inspired me to join her."

She added: "Unfortunately, our country is behind in technology. Our goal is to contribute, even in small ways, to its advancement. We want to give hope to Afghan girls and prove that they are capable of achieving their dreams."

Education expert: Asrar is an inspiration to other girls

Abdullah Alizada, a professor at a private higher education institution in Kabul, told Pajhwok: "Education is a universal

right. Women make up half of society and play an impactful role both in families and communities."

He believes that the more women are educated, the more the society progresses.

"An educated girl has a different outlook on life compared to one without education. She plays a constructive role in the growth of her family and society."

According to Alizada, individuals deprived of education often have limited impact and mostly remain observers rather than change-makers.

"Girls who turn to online learning despite the restrictions are showing that they still seek to be contributors," he said. "The COVID experience also showed us that education is not limited to physical classrooms."

He concluded by praising Asrar, saying: "When a girl — especially one with a disability — chooses to learn, it not only builds her confidence but also inspires others. She proves it's possible to be independent and stand on your own feet."

Alizada called for equal educational opportunities for all girls.

KP govt hands over machinery to Kaghan, Galiyat authorities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As an important step towards strengthening the emergency response in province s tourist destinations, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has handed over state-of-the-art multi-purpose machinery to the Galiyat Development Authority and the Kaghan Development Authority.



The formal handover took place at a ceremony at the Chief Minister s House Peshawar, where Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally handed over the advanced machinery to the respective authorities. Briefing the chief minister, officials told that these are the first machines of their kind in Pakistan, designed to keep roads open during

snow season.

The high-performance equipment is capable of operating efficiently even in harsh weather conditions. In addition to clearing snow and glaciers from roads, the machines can also remove fallen trees, cut through concrete debris and metal barriers, and perform a total of seven different functions.

make tourists sites safer, more accessible, and more attractive for tourists.

He said the availability of these machines will ensure easier access to tourist areas even in winter, significantly improving safety for both tourists and locals during emergencies. He thanked the World Bank for its support in this initiative. The chief minister stressed that tourist safety and year-round accessibility are essential for promoting tourism adding that the current provincial government is working to keep tourism activities operational throughout the year by improving access roads, enhancing infrastructure, developing Integrated Tourism Zones, and opening up new tourist destinations.

The Chief Minister highlighted the government s unique Host Home Stay Tourism initiative, which aims to provide quality accommodation for visitors while creating employment opportunities for local communities. He added that these investments in emergency response and tourism infrastructure are part of a broader vision to develop the tourism sector on sustainable basis and strengthen the province s economy. The event was attended by relevant provincial cabinet members, as well as senior officials from the Tourism Department, Galiyat Development Authority, and Kaghan Development Authority.

The equipment has been procured under the World Bank supported Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Project (KITE), with the purchase process for four additional machines already underway. Speaking at the event, the chief minister said the provincial government, in collaboration with partner organizations, is taking practical steps to



ISLAMABAD: President, Asif Ali Zardari along with ministers and heads of minority communities cutting a cake to celebrate National Minorities Day, at Aiwan-e- Sadr.

SC judges visits KP Judicial Academy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of judges from the Supreme Court of Pakistan visited the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy recently. During their visit, the judges toured various departments of the academy and gained insight into the training programs offered to judges, lawyers, and para-legal staff, on Monday.

The delegation consisted of Supreme Court judges Justice Jamal Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar, Justice Shakeel Ahmed, and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim. They were welcomed by Peshawar High Court Chief Justice S.M. Atique Shah, senior puisne judge Justice Ijaz Anwar, and Director General of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy, Jehanzeb Shinwari.

During their visit, the delegation was briefed on the academy s functions and the training programs it offers. The Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court and the senior puisne judge informed the delegation about the academy s operations and the training provided to judges to perform judicial functions in the districts of FATA after their merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Director General of the academy also briefed the delegation on the training programs conducted by the academy and the benefits derived from them.

The delegation directed the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure timely release of funds to the academy to support its activities. This will enable the academy to continue providing quality training to judges, lawyers, and para-legal staff, which is essential for the effective administration of justice in the province.

Rahul, Priyanka freed after arrest

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police on Monday detained senior opposition parliamentarians, including Congress s Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut. All the arrested MPs were released two hours later. They were arrested for launching protest drive against Election Commission s 'collusion' with the ruling BJP, reported NDTV.

According to police, more than 30 MPs were detained and taken to the Parliament Street Police Station. The Election Commission had only given permission to 30 MPs to enter its premises but the protesters were in large numbers, they said.

Besides, no one had sought permission for the protest march to the Election Commission, they said. The MPs from various parties took out a protest march from Parliament House to the Election Commission headquarters, about a kilometre away, but were stopped midway by police. Earlier, Joint Commissioner of Police Deepak Purohit confirmed the detention but declined to give details.

Mr Purohit said the opposition did not have police permission for a protest of this scale, and that only a group of 30 MPs had been allowed to march to the Election Commission and submit a complaint. "The Election Commission said 30 MPs could visit them... but over 200 came marching. Agencies

No one can disrupt peace in Sindh, says Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that while the green crescent flag symbolises Pakistan s independence, its white portion stands as a guarantee for the rights and freedoms of minorities.

He said that Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had stressed the importance of granting equal rights to all minorities residing in the country, a principle that is also enshrined in the Constitution.

During his address in the Sindh Assembly, Senior Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said that minorities in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh, have always been accorded respect, protection and representation. He said the Pakistan Peoples Party was the only political party that had given representation to minorities not only on reserved seats but also on general seats. Citing examples, he noted that Mahesh Kumar Malani, Gianchand Israni and Hari Ram were elected to general seats.

Sharjeel Inam Memon added that the decision of the PPP leadership to send Krishna Kolhi to the Senate in her traditional attire was widely appreciated at the international level. He said that when President Asif Ali Zardari launched the Benazir Income Support Programme, a significant number of its initial beneficiaries belonged to minority communities. He added that in the ongoing 2.1 million housing project in Sindh, a substantial number of houses, along with ownership rights, were being allocated to minority families.

He said Pakistan presented a unique example in the world where security was provided to temples, churches and other places of worship, whereas in India, minorities enjoyed no protection for their life and property.

Speaking in the Sindh Assembly, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that at around 3am on Monday, a man riding a motorcycle with his young daughter and son was hit by a dumper truck. In the accident, both children died on the spot while their father sustained serious injuries.

He termed the incident a tragedy beyond condemnation, saying that every parent and every person with a sense of

humanity would feel the pain deeply. He added that immediately after the accident, police arrested the dumper driver and impounded the vehicle. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the driver was arrested and the vehicle was in police custody; however, some miscreants, who were clearly terrorist-minded and trained, reached the spot and set seven dumpers on fire. These individuals had planned to spread fear and panic in the city and disrupt peace.

He said this was the same old method through which the politics of linguistics, extortion and gangsterism had been promoted in the past. He added that the city had achieved peace after great sacrifices and that this peace would not be allowed to be disturbed at any cost.Sharjeel Memon said that following the incident, emergency negotiations were held with transporters and dumper owners, and a written agreement was obtained from them on stamp paper. Under the agreement, only those dumpers equipped with modern trackers and cameras would be allowed to enter the city after the 25th, and the complete record and licence of every driver, regardless of which city they came from, would be checked.

He said the measures were aimed at preventing such accidents in the future and ensuring that no one had the opportunity to take the law into their own hands. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh chief minister had directed immediate financial compensation for the families of the deceased children. He added that another driver, who had no connection with the accident, was seriously injured by the angry mob and was currently in a coma at Jinnah Hospital.

Sharjeel Inam Memon asked what kind of message was being conveyed, questioning whether there was a desire to see the city once again fall into the grip of gangsterism and fear. He termed the incident an organised conspiracy but made it clear that the government would not succumb to any pressure and would not allow anyone to destroy the city s peace. He said that if anyone attempted to spread unrest again, strict action would be taken against them in the manner of "responding to violence with violence", and the city s peace would be maintained at all costs.

PHC approached to prevent blasphemous content on social media

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A writ petition has been filed in the Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking direction to the government to legislate to regulate and prohibit blasphemous content related to the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), Islam, and the Holy Quran on various social media platforms.

The petition, filed by Saqib ur Rehman through his lawyer Noman Mohib

Kakakhel Advocate, names the federal government, Ministry of Information, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), and others as respondents.

The petitioner has argued that blasphemous content is being uploaded on social media platforms, which is causing hurt to the feelings of millions of Muslims. The petitioner has further contended that

there is no effective mechanism to regulate such content on social media, and therefore, it is necessary for the court to direct the government to legislate to prevent the uploading of such content in the future.

The petition has stated that the court may direct the government to legislate to regulate social media and prevent the uploading of blasphemous content, and also direct that no such content be allowed to be uploaded in the future.

China says it expels Philippine vessels near Scarborough Shoal

BEIJING (AFP): China s coastguard says it has expelled Philippine vessels from waters around the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea while Manila reports a collision in the confrontation. The Philippine boats were intercepted on Monday after they ignored warnings in an operation China s coastguard said was professional, standardised, legitimate and legal .

The incident is the latest in a series of confrontations between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, one of the world s busiest maritime routes, which Beijing claims almost entirely despite an international ruling that the assertion has no legal basis. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also claim parts of the contested waters. The China Coast Guard took necessary measures in accordance with the law, including monitoring, pressing from the outside, blocking and controlling the Philippine vessels to drive them away, said Gan Yu, a Chinese coastguard spokesperson.

Manila, meanwhile, stated that a Chinese navy vessel collided with one from its own coastguard while chas-

ing a Philippine patrol boat, and it released video footage of the confrontation. The [Chinese coastguard vessel] CCG 3104, which was chasing the [Philippine coastguard vessel] BRP Suluan at high speed, performed a risky manoeuvre from the [Philippine] vessels starboard quarter, leading to the impact with the PLA [People s Liberation Army] Navy warship, spokesman Commodore Jay Tarriela said in a statement.

This resulted in substantial damage to the CCG vessel s forecastle, rendering it unseaworthy, he said. The incident occurred as the Philippine coastguard escorted boats distributing aid to fishermen in the area, Tarriela added. In a video sent to reporters, a Chinese coastguard vessel can be seen heading towards a Philippine coastguard vessel when suddenly a Chinese navy ship cuts between and that s when the two Chinese ships collide with each other, said Al Jazeera s Barnaby Lo, reporting from Manila.

The Chinese coastguard vessel sustained significant damage, a direct result of dangerous maneuvering by

the Chinese , Lo cited the Philippines as stating, China made no mention about the collision in its statement. Tarriela told the AFP news agency that the Chinese crew never responded to the Philippine ship s offer of assistance.

During the incident, the BRP Suluan was targeted with a water cannon by the Chinese but successfully evaded it, Tarriela s statement said. Speaking at a news conference on Monday, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said the country s patrol vessels would continue to be present in the area to defend and exercise Manila s sovereign rights over what it considers to be part of its territory.

The Scarborough Shoal, a triangular chain of reefs and rocks, has been a flashpoint of tension between the countries since China seized it from the Philippines in 2012. Marcos also addressed another source of tension with Beijing, stating China has misinterpreted his recent comments saying Manila would be inevitably drawn into a conflict between China and Taiwan should one erupt.

Governor accuses KP govt of graft

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday alleged that the province had been handed over to terrorists as the provincial government had completely failed to fulfill its responsibilities.

Addressing as chief guest, the third death anniversary of former provincial minister Bakht Baidar Khan in Ternaon, Adenzai, the governor launched a scathing attack on the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government in the province. He claimed that corruption had reached its peak, alleging that Rs30 billion had been embezzled in the Sehat Card health insurance scheme, while the Kohistan financial scandal was also a product of the PTI s tenure.

The event, organised by the PPP Adenzai in memory of Bakht Baidar Khan, was attended by party workers from across Lower Dir as well as central and provincial leaders, including PPP Secretary General Humayun Khan, provincial president Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha, former provincial president Najmuddin Khan, Bakht Baidar s son Naemullah Khan, and other local leaders. Former MNAs and MPsas Mohammad Zamin Advocate, Malik Azmat Khan, Badshah Saleh, and PPP Lower Dir president Nawabzada Ahmad Zaib Khan were also present.

Speakers paid tribute to Late Bakht Baidar Khan s political services and dedication to public welfare, saying he had earned public trust through his commitment to serving without discrimination. They expressed the hope that his son Naemullah Khan would follow in his father s footsteps.

Without naming, Governor Kundi alleged that a former prime minister, in collusion with a former army general, had settled militants in the province, which had plunged KP into unrest. Today, that prime minister is in jail, and the general is facing court martial, he said.

On provincial issues, he said he would take up matters related to the federal government with the prime minister. He urged the people to support the PPP, claiming that the future belongs to the PPP if public backing was ensured.

Criticising Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the governor accused him of playing a double game spending the day with party workers and the night with his masters. He demanded strict punishment for those found involved in the May 9 riots to deter any repeat of such incidents.

PPP provincial president Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha also criticised PTI, claiming that Malakand division saw the most development during the PPP government s tenure. He urged participants to once again repose trust in the party to put the region back on the path of progress.

Funerals held for journalists assassinated by Israel

GAZA: Hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza City have attended the funeral of five Al Jazeera staff, including correspondent Anas al-Sharif, who were killed in an Israeli air strike outside al-Shifa Hospital.

On Monday, large crowds joined the funeral procession, carrying the journalists bodies from al-Shifa Hospital to Sheikh Radwan Cemetery in central Gaza. Colleagues, friends, and relatives embraced in grief, while a man lifted a press flask jacket high above the crowd. The strike late on Sunday killed seven people, including correspondent Mohammed Qreiqeh, along with camera operators Ibrahim Zaher, Moamen Aliwa, and Mohammed Noufal. Freelance reporter Mohammed al-Khaldi was also among those killed. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said three more journalists were wounded in the attack.

Footage verified by Al Jazeera showed mourners chanting slogans against the killings, with some pledging, With our soul and blood, we sacrifice for you, Anas, in reference to the slain journalist. Al Jazeera Media Network condemned the targeted assassination by Israeli forces, accusing the military of deliberately striking the journalists position. The Israeli military admitted to their crimes, the network said, describing the attack as another blatant and premeditated assault on press freedom .

Al-Sharif was one of



Gaza s bravest journalists , said Al Jazeera, adding that the attack was a desperate attempt to silence voices in anticipation of the occupation of Gaza . The Israeli military admitted killing Al Jazeera s journalists in Gaza, falsely claiming al-Sharif led what it called a Hamas cell.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said it was appalled by the killings. Israel s pattern of labeling journalists as militants without providing credible evidence raises serious questions about its intent and respect for press freedom, said CPJ s regional director, Sara Qudah. Those responsible for these killings must be held accountable.

Media watchdog RSF also condemned what it described as the acknowledged murder by the Israeli army of al-Sharif, calling him one of the most famous journalists from the Gaza Strip (and) the voice of the suffering Israel has imposed on Palestinians in Gaza . The group said the attack mirrored the 2023 killing of Al Jazeera s

Ismail al-Ghoul, who was also labelled a terrorist by Israel.

Without strong action from the international community we re likely to witness more such extrajudicial murders of media professionals, RSF warned, urging the United Nations Security Council to intervene. Al-Sharif s assassination comes more than a year after Israel bombed his family home in a refugee camp, killing his 65-year-old father.

The killings of the Palestinian journalists come days after Israel s security cabinet approved a plan to seize Gaza City and forcibly displace nearly one million people Palestinians, rights groups and legal experts have pointed out that Gaza home to more than two million people remains under Israeli occupation. Nothing can go in or out without Israeli permission. A total Israeli blockade since March 2 has triggered a starvation crisis, killing more than 200 people, including over 100 children, in the last few weeks. Aljazeera

Australia to recognise Palestinian statehood

CANBERRA: Australia will recognise a Palestinian state in September, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has announced, drawing condemnation from Israel. Albanese said on Monday that his government would formally announce the move when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meets in New York.

Australia will recognise a Palestinian state in September, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has announced, drawing condemnation from Israel. Albanese said on Monday that his government would formally announce the move when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meets in New York.

Australia s announcement comes as Canada, France and the United Kingdom are also preparing to formally recognise Palestine at the meeting next month, joining the vast majority of UN member states that already do so. Israeli Ambassador to Australia Amir Maimon said recognition of a Palestinian state will do nothing to end the war in Gaza, telling the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC): We reject the recognition, unilateral recognition.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog also slammed the Australian announcement as a reward for Hamas for its October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel, repeating the Israeli government s stance on all recognition announcements thus far. This latest recognition comes about a week after hundreds of thousands of Australians marched across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to protest Israel s war in the Gaza Strip.

Speaking a day after the protest, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong told ABC that there is a risk there will be no Palestine left to recognise. In relation to recognition, I ve said for over a year now, it s a matter of when, not if, Wong added. The opposition Liberal Party criticised the move, saying it put Australia at odds with the United States, its closest ally, and reversed a bipartisan consensus that there should be no recognition while Hamas remains in control of Gaza.

Despite his words today, the reality is Anthony Albanese has committed Australia to recognising Palestine while hostages remain in tunnels under Gaza and with Hamas still in control of the population of Gaza. Nothing he has said today

changes that fact, Liberal Party leader Sussan Ley said in a statement. Recognising a Palestinian state prior to a return of the hostages and defeat of Hamas, as the Government has today, risks delivering Hamas one of its strategic objectives of the horrific terrorism of October 7.

The Australian Greens, the fourth largest party in parliament, welcomed the move to recognise Palestine but said the announcement did not meet the overwhelming calls from the Australian public for the government to take material action . Millions of Australians have taken to the streets, including 300,000 last weekend in Sydney alone, calling for sanctions and an end to the arms trade with Israel. The Albanese Government is still ignoring this call, Senator David Shoebridge, the party s spokesperson on foreign affairs, said in a statement.

The Australian Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) also criticised the announcement, describing it as a political fig leaf, letting Israel s genocide and apartheid continue unchallenged, and distracting from Australia s complicity in Israeli war crimes via ongoing weapons and components trade . Aljazeera