

### Three terrorists perished F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Three hardcore terrorists of a banned organization were gunned down during a joint operation of the police and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Peshawar. According to details, all the dead terrorists were planning an attack in Peshawar and were involved in 19 terrorist activities. One of the dead terrorists was identified as Abdullah, who was an Afghan citizen.



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# Torrential rains, cloudbursts wreak havoc



MANSEHRA: A car swept away in a flash flood in Basian area.



KHAR: People offering funeral prayer of cloudburst and lightning victims in Bajaur.



SHANGLA: A view of damaged Alpuri-Bisham highway after heavy floods.

## 157 dead, hundreds missing in Buner after cloudburst

### F.P. Report

BUNER: As many as 157 people dead while hundreds of others missing after cloudburst and thunderstorms hits different areas in three tehsils of Buner district and swept away a school full of students, on Friday. The rescue operations are continuing in the premises but affected people flayed administration usual delay and argued for large scale operation by skilled professionals to end the hovac and chaos.

In response to heavy rains and subsequent flooding, the Deputy Commissioner of Buner has declared a state of flood emergency in the sub-divisions of Daggar, Gadezai, Gagra, Mandanr, and Chagharzi.

According to the official notification, all concerned line departments have been directed to activate their respective units as per the District Emergency Response Plan. Departments are also instructed to mobilize resources for timely rescue, relief, and assistance to the flood-affected population.

The directive further calls for immediate damage assessments, with detailed reports to be submitted to the District Administration. All officers and officials of line departments are required to remain on duty, including weekends, to ensure continuous monitoring and swift response.

The order will remain in effect until further notice. Copies of the directive have been forwarded to senior provincial officials, including the Additional Chief Secretary, the Senior Member board of Revenue, the Commissioner Malakand Division, and the Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

The District Police Officer has been instructed to mobilize the police force, while the Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief) will ensure field inspections and coordination. All assistant commissioners and rescue officials have been told to remain in the field to provide uninterrupted rescue services.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Barrister Gohar Ali along district development advisory committee chairman Abdul Kabir visited district headquarters hospital and tehsil headquarters hospital Pir Baba while directed utilization of resources for rescue operations.

According to details, a small earthquake followed by cloudburst and thunderstorms struck three tehsils of the district, Gadzi Dagar and Chagharzi. About 157 people died. Most of the dead were children and women. Heavy rains on Thursday night and early morning cloudbursts wreaked havoc. Floodwaters swept away many houses, schools, school-going children, teachers and houses near rivers and canals. Bodies piled up in Tehsil Hospital Pacha Kala.

The injured were shifted to DHQ Dagar. TMA Gadzi Dagar and Gagra provided coffins for shrouding the bodies. Volunteers rushed to deliver shrouds and medicines. Sultanos Pul Ghazi Khane bridge was closed for movement. Pacha Bazaar was more than half destroyed. In villages Kot Bar Gokand Batai Malikpur Pacha Balo Khan Bhai Ghazi Khane Sultan was Peerabai Ilai, many houses, schools, bridges and roads were washed away. Shops, cabins and houses were swept away. Ghazi Banda lead sliding Dargi Cheena in Chagharzi was badly

## 21 killed, five injured in Bajaur

### F.P. Report

KHAR: As many as 21 people killed including children and women and injuring five others due to devastating cloudburst and lightning strike in Salarzai tehsil area of Bajaur district. Rescue teams, supported by local authorities and Frontier Corps, are working tirelessly to search for two missing individuals, on Friday. The incident occurred at around 12 am in the Jabrai area, where four houses were completely destroyed, and 26 people were reportedly trapped under the debris. Despite the challenging terrain and fast-flowing water, rescue teams managed to recover 19 bodies and provide medical assistance to the injured.

Deputy Commissioner Bajaur, Shahid Ali, along with Assistant Commissioner Khar, Dr. Sadiq Ali, and District Emergency Officer Amjad Khan, oversaw the rescue operations. The rescue teams faced significant challenges due to blocked roads and fast-flowing water, but they successfully extracted people trapped under the debris. The funeral prayers for the deceased were offered by Maulana Abdul Rashid, while Provincial Assembly members, including Anwar Zeb Khan, Dr. Hamid Rahman, and Nisar Baz, visited the site and expressed condolences to the families of the victims. The District Headquarter Hospital Khar received three injured individuals, two of whom were discharged after treatment, while one was referred to Peshawar due to serious injuries.

The government has assured support to the affected families and initiated relief operations. Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur expressed sorrow over the loss of lives in rain-related incidents in the province. The deceased individuals in Bajaur cloudburst identified as Mehrana Bibi, 5 years old, daughter of Muhammad Hassan, Maina Bibi, 10 years old, daughter of Umar Ali Khan, Nura, 4 years old, daughter of Umar Ali Khan, Imad Khan, 6 years old, son of Umar Ali Khan, Murad Saeed Khan, 1 year old, son of Umar Ali Khan, Shah Wali Khan, 43 years old, son of Muhammad Zarin Khan, a 23 years old woman daughter of Shah Wali Khan, 20 years old, daughter of Shah Wali Khan, 17 years old, daughter of Shah Wali Khan, wife of Noor Alam, 25 years old, Asma Bibi, 4 years old, daughter of Noor Alam, Qasim Khan, 2 years old, son of Noor Alam Khan. Moreover, wife of Saeedullah, 31 years old, Kochey Bibi, approximately 5 years old, daughter of Saeedullah, Shabana Bibi, 11 years old, daughter of Saeedullah, Warisha Bibi, 6 years old, daughter of Saeedullah, Talha Khan, 3 years old, son of Saeedullah, Aalishah Bibi, 1 year old, daughter of Saeedullah, Newborn baby, child of Noor Alam Khan, daughter of Umar Ali Khan.

affected by the flood.

DC, DPO, DHO district emergency officer Engineer Kashif along with their teams reached the affected areas. Alkhidmat volunteers and general volunteers were active in rescue activities. Volunteers and private vehicles along with ambulances were taking the bodies and injured to the hospital. They kept searching for their loved ones among the dead bodies and taking them away. The biggest problem was that no one could contact anyone due to lack of mobile signal. When the first flood came around 8 am, the administration and media warned everyone. But there was a commotion when seven school-going children, including a teacher, were swept away in the flood in Burgokand. The people were further disappointed when two women were swept away in the flood from Kalil, and the news of more than twenty people from a single house being buried under a landslide from Chagharzi was a puzzle.

After some time, there was a report of a cloudburst in the Pir Baba mountain range, and as soon as they saw it, floodwaters rushed from the mountains. The floodwaters caused further destruction in Qadir Nagar Nizam, Batai, Kale, Bishondi, Malikpur, Pacha, Sultanwas, Ghazi Khane, Bhai, Kale and swept away houses, shops, schools. The doomsday was imminent and the sound of destruction started coming from all sides.

## Landslides block key roads in Gilgit-Baltistan

### F.P. Report

GILGIT: Heavy monsoon rains in Gilgit-Baltistan on Friday unleashed a fresh spell of landslides, flash floods, and mudslides, disrupting traffic at multiple points and forcing the closure of several key roads.

According to a National Highway Authority (NHA) spokesperson, the Jaglot-Skardu Road has been blocked at four separate points, including Jinnah Nullah, Chamcho, Malopa, and Baghicha, where two-way traffic remains suspended due to landslides. Floodwaters have also halted vehicular movement near the Sultanabad Bridge, the spokesperson added.

NHA teams are on-site carrying out relief and clearance operations, and traffic flow has already been restored in Balakot, Paras, and Paghil. Efforts are underway to reopen the road in Jhal Khad. All relief operations are being monitored from the control room established at the NHA headquarters. As per the directions of the Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan, the NHA Chairman, Shehryar Sultan, is personally overseeing the ongoing activities.

## 5 dead as helicopter crashes in Bajaur

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government helicopter engaged in flood rescue operations has crashed, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur confirmed.

The aircraft, which had been operating in Mohmand district, was dispatched to assist victims in Bajaur before communication was lost due to severe weather. It was initially declared missing, but later reports indicated it had crashed while on its mission. Two pilots were along five people who died in the crash.

## KP govt announces one day mourning

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has expressed deep sense of sorrow upon the martyrdom of five crew members of MI-171 Helicopter of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to crash during Rescue Operation. "May their souls rest in eternal peace, Ameen. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced one day mourning on Saturday, 16th August, 2025, throughout the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The National Flag will fly at half-mast. This has been announced through a notification by the Administration Department.

## KP govt stood shoulder to shoulder with victims: CM

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and widespread damage caused by cloudbursts, torrential rains, and flash floods in Bajaur, Buner, Mansehra, Dir, Battagram, and other districts of the province.

In a condolence message issued here, the Chief Minister offered heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families, praying for the forgiveness of the deceased and patience for the bereaved ones. He assured that the provincial government stood shoulder to shoulder with the affected families in this difficult time and would provide them with full support. He also conveyed his best wishes for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Upon receiving reports of the incidents, the Chief Minister immediately contacted the relevant administration, directing them to

provide swift relief to victims and ensure the safe rescue of those stranded in floodwaters. He instructed commissioners and deputy commissioners to personally oversee rescue operations in the field and submit situation reports to him. Two provincial government helicopters were dispatched to deliver relief goods and carry out rescue operations in Bajaur and Buner.

Given the current weather situation, the Chief Minister placed all district administrations and rescue agencies on high alert, stressing the need for timely response, preventive measures, and minimizing loss of life and property.

Meanwhile, in a video statement on the ongoing emergency, Gandapur said severe flash floods triggered by cloudbursts and heavy rains had caused extensive human and material losses, particularly in Malakand and Hazara divisions. He revealed that while two provincial government helicopters were

engaged in rescue operations, one tragically crashed due to bad weather, resulting in the martyrdom of five crew members. He said district administrations and all relevant provincial departments were actively engaged in rescue and relief work, with the situation being closely monitored from a control room set up at the CM House. Heavy machinery had been deployed to reopen blocked roads, while steps were also underway to compensate for property losses.

The Chief Minister reaffirmed that the provincial government stood firmly with the people in this time of crisis and pledged to fully compensate for damages caused by the natural disaster. He urged citizens to adopt safety measures and fully cooperate with local administrations. "Our elected representatives are on the ground in the affected areas, coordinating with local authorities. God willing, together we will overcome this situation soon," he said.

## US, UK, France mourn lives lost in flash floods

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The United States, the United Kingdom, and France have expressed grief and solidarity with Pakistan following the loss of lives in devastating flash floods in the country's northern regions, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott said she was "devastated" by the significant loss of life after further flooding across parts of Pakistan, including the

deaths of personnel onboard a government helicopter engaged in relief operations. "My thoughts are with the families affected. We stand by Pakistan at this difficult time," she said in a post on X.

US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker voiced her sorrow over the tragedy, saying she was "deeply grieved by the tragic loss of life and devastation caused by today's flash floods". She extended heartfelt condolences to the families who had lost their loved ones,

adding: "My team and I stand in solidarity with the people of Pakistan during this difficult time."

The French Embassy in Pakistan also expressed its condolences, noting it was "deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan where devastating flash floods have claimed precious lives, including a rescue helicopter crew, and left many missing". The embassy added: "Our hearts break for the families in the hardest-hit areas."

## President expresses grief over loss of lives

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives due to recent rains and flash floods in various parts of the country. In a statement, the president extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and prayed for the departed souls to be granted the highest ranks in Jannah. He directed the relevant authorities to expedite relief efforts in the affected areas and ensure that all necessary measures are taken for the assistance and rehabilitation of those affected.

## Six people rescued safely from Swat River

### F.P. Report

SWAT: As many as six people were safely rescued from flash floods in River Swat at Barikot area here on Friday. District Emergency Officer, Rafiullah Marwat told reporters that in Barikot tehsil near the Ariana hotel at Dadhara area, six people stranded in beds of River Swat were swept by a sudden flash floods. Upon receiving information about the incident, he said our water rescue team promptly reached the location. Despite the strong and rapid current, he said the rescue personnel demonstrated professional expertise and rescued all the six drowning people.

## PM reviews flood situation in country

### Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday held an emergency meeting to review the flood situation in the country due to recent rains.

Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik briefed the Prime Minister on the damage caused by cloudbursts and flash floods in the upper parts of the country and about the rescue and relief operation.

The Prime Minister directed the NDMA to continue its cooperation with the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to provide them with all possible support in the rescue and relief operation by utilizing all the available resources.

He directed the Chairman NDMA to enhance coordination with the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for rescue and relief activities. Tents, medicines, food items and other relief materials

should be delivered to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government immediately, he said adding relief supplies should be sent through trucks on priority basis. He ordered that people and tourists stranded in flood-affected areas should be immediately taken to safer places. During the meeting, the Prime Minister was briefed on the progress of rescue and relief operations along with an assessment of the damages.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister held a telephone conversation with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur. He said NDMA has been directed to provide all possible assistance to the provincial government in rescue and relief operations.

"The federal government will provide all possible assistance to the provincial government," he remarked. He told the chief minister that the federal government was sending medicines, tents and food items. "Our sympathies are with the victims in this difficult time," he added.

Shehbaz launches Chinese tex-

## Premier for stronger Pak-BD ties

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterating Pakistan's desire to enhance trade and people-to-people contacts with Bangladesh, called for further strengthening bilateral cooperation in political, economic, and cultural spheres.

The prime minister, in a meeting with High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan, who paid a courtesy call on him, expressed satisfaction over the growing engagement between Pakistan and Bangladesh across various domains. While recalling his "warm and productive" interactions with Chief Advisor of Bangladesh Dr. Mohammad Yunus, including their last meeting in Cairo on the margins of the D-8 Summit last December, he expressed satisfaction at the revival of various bilateral mechanisms between the two sides. The prime minister stressed upon the importance of maintaining this momentum to carry forward their bilateral ties.

tile group's economic zone, expecting \$400m in exports: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif launched a Special Economic Zone to be set up by a Chinese textile group, with a \$100 million investment over five years, projected to yield \$400 million in exports.

The Special Economic Zone will be established by the Chinese garments group "Challenge Fashion

Private Limited" that has already invested \$17 million in Pakistan since 2014. The prime minister, who met with the company's delegation led by Chairman Huwang Weiguo before the groundbreaking, welcomed the establishment of a Special Economic Zone that would facilitate technology transfer, skill development, and sustainable industrial growth.





LAHORE: Mourners attending the Chehlum procession to commemorate the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), the grandson of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). —APP Photo

## Abbasi, Australian envoy discuss boosting bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Australian Ambassador to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins, met with Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi here at the Railways Ministry on Friday to discuss strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation across multiple sectors.

During the meeting, both sides agreed to explore modern collaboration in the railway sector, including the exchange of technical expertise and experiences. They expressed mutual interest in launching technical assistance programs, training initiatives, and tourism-based rail services.

The minister highlighted new opportunities for partnership aimed at advancing Pakistan Railways and praised Australia's advanced railway system.

Ambassador Hawkins commended the reforms introduced by the Ministry of Railways and expressed hope that these measures would play a vital role in the sector's development in Pakistan.

## Sharjeel expresses solidarity with People of KP

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said he stands with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in this time of natural disaster and is deeply saddened by the loss of life and property there.

In a statement, he said that during this difficult time, the Pakistan Peoples Party stands with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is always ready to provide unconditional support. He added that they pray for the government and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to face this ordeal with courage and unity and to overcome it soon.

Sharjeel Inam Memon further stated that the Sindh government is always ready to help its brothers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and will provide all possible assistance if needed. The Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that supporting each other in difficult times is the true identity of the Pakistani nation, and the PPP fully upholds this spirit.

## Karachi communities celebrate uninterrupted power supply

KARACHI (PPI): K-Electric (KE) and residents of Karachi's Jama Cloth and Burns Road are commemorating the neighborhoods' newly acquired exemption from scheduled power outages. This accomplishment stems from a joint endeavor between KE and local inhabitants, leading to diminished transmission losses and enhanced bill collection in the area.

With the Jama Cloth feeder now designated as loadshed-exempt, the region enjoys continuous electricity, directly impacting thousands of residential and business customers. This milestone follows a multifaceted approach where KE collaborated with the community, engaged stakeholders, curbed energy theft, and secured prompt bill settlements. This progress contributes to KE's broader objective of making over 90% of Karachi free from planned blackouts by 2030.

A KE representative stated, "This success showcases the advantages of collaborative initiatives. Punctual bill payments by consumers and KE's persistent endeavors to minimize electricity theft have allowed several Karachi areas to achieve loadshed-exempt status. These actions have enabled KE to liberate 70% of its distribution network from scheduled outages. KE undertakes a comprehensive, data-driven quarterly evaluation of its network to guarantee transparency and precision. The corporation also commits its assistance to community leaders and elected representatives prepared to collaborate with the utility to tackle obstacles in the path to dependable power delivery."

## Pakistan's operation fueled Modi's unpopularity: Minister

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Sindh Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani today claimed Pakistan's Operation "Banyan Al-Marsous" has severely damaged India's financial standing, pushing the nation into diplomatic isolation and fueling public discontent with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"India is now facing global seclusion, while the world supports Pakistan," Ghani declared at a luncheon organized by the North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry (NKATI). "Indian citizens are turning against Modi, who has driven their financial system toward ruin," he continued. NKATI President Faisal Moiz Khan, along with prominent industrialists and trade figures, including Yunus Khamisani, were present.

Ghani also emphasized the importance of the

Pakistan Armed Forces, despite his past policy disagreements with the military. "I have differed with some of the army's activities, but concerning national defense, there is no substitute for our armed forces. A robust military is crucial, and any political entity seeking to undermine it is furthering the enemy's objectives," he cautioned.

The minister contrasted India's perceived decline as a regional influence with Pakistan's growing global recognition and backing. "It is crucial to protect our honor and our country from domestic and foreign plots," Ghani stressed.

Addressing the Pakistan Peoples Party's business-friendly position, Ghani reiterated the group's commitment to prioritizing the needs of the industrial and business sectors. He mentioned that Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah allocated

development funding for industrial zones, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari mandated full collaboration with industrialists to stimulate financial expansion and industrial advancement.

NKATI President Faisal Moiz Khan declared that Pakistan's recent military triumph has added historical significance to the 78th Independence Day. "This Independence Day is not just a celebration of liberty but also a mark of our triumph over India's hostility. The Pakistan Army delivered a powerful and effective counter-offensive, and we are proud of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and our armed forces," he commented. Moiz confirmed the business community's unwavering support for national bodies and its dedication to contributing to the country's progress and firmness.

## Mourners pay tribute to Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) on Chehlum

LAHORE (INP): The Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A.) the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the martyrs of Karbala is being observed with traditional reverence and respect in Lahore and across the country on Friday.

Due to the Chehlum (Arbaeen) of Hazrat Imam Hussain and the final day of the Urs of the Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hajveri (R.A.), strict security measures have been implemented. Punjab Police is on high alert for the mourning processions, majalis and Urs.

Inspector General Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has stat-

ed that strict arrangements have been ensured for the sacred events. He urged people of all sects to promote religious harmony and tolerance.

He assured comprehensive security for majalis, mourning processions, and Urs ceremonies.

Meanwhile, 644 majalis will be held and 392 mourning processions taken out to mark Chehlum of Karbala martyrs, for which more than 37,000 police officers and personnel have been deployed. Strict security measures have been adopted throughout the Punjab.

The main procession of Chehlum will be taken out

at 1 pm from Nishtar Park. Police have sealed MA Jinnah Road and surrounding streets by placing containers for the security of the procession. Shops in markets along the procession route have been closed after scanning by the bomb disposal unit.

Mobile phone service has been suspended in several areas of Karachi, and a ban has been imposed on pillion riding on motorcycles.

More than 4,000 police personnel have been deployed for procession security. Section 144 has been enforced in the city, and a red alert has been issued across Sindh due to the security situation.

## Punjab taking historic steps in health sector: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that the provincial government is taking revolutionary and historic measures worth billions of rupees in the health sector in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

He was chairing a meeting at the Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education Department on Friday on the Nawaz Sharif Medical District project, attended by Secretary Health Azmat Mehmood Khan and senior officials.

During the meeting, a detailed review of the project was conducted. The minister announced that under the initiative, Lahore will see the establishment of Children's Hospital 2, the Institute of Genetic and Blood Diseases, the Institute of Surgical,

Orthopedic and Medical Rehabilitation, the Center of Excellence for Nursing Education, a Specialized Medical Hospital, a Cardiac Hospital, a Medical University, and a state-of-the-art diagnostic lab.

Khawaja Salman Rafique said the Punjab government is expanding a network of new hospitals across the province to provide quality healthcare at people's doorsteps, as per the vision of the Chief Minister. He directed the Infrastructure Development Authority of Punjab (IDAP) to expedite work on all new health projects.

Secretary Azmat Mehmood Khan stated that relevant officers are closely monitoring the Nawaz Sharif Medical District project.

The meeting was attended by Dr Adnan Khan,

Chairman Punjab CM Advisory Committee for Cardiology Dr. Farqad Alamgir, Vice Chancellor University of Health Sciences Prof. Hassan Waheed Rathore, and Vice Chancellor Rawalpindi Medical University Prof. Muhammad Umar via video link. Other attendees included Special Secretary Development Zeeshan Shabbir Rana, Vice Chancellor King Edward Medical University, Vice Chancellor University of Child Health Sciences Prof. Masood Sadiq, Chief Planning Officer Abdul Haq Bhatti, Principal Allama Iqbal Medical College Prof. Tayyaba Waseem, CEO Mayo Hospital Prof. Haroon Hamid, Additional Secretary Amir Muhammad, Prof. Anbareen Anwar, Dr. Mamrez, IDAP officials, and other senior officers.

## Punjab reviews progress on 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' program

LAHORE (APP): An important review meeting on the Apni Chhat Apna Ghar Housing program was held at the Punjab Housing Department, chaired by Special Secretary Housing Waqar Azim.

Program Director Waleed Baig briefed the meeting on targets and progress, informing that efforts are being accelerated to meet the goal of constructing 100,000 houses by October. So far, loans worth PKR 75 billion have been distributed among deserving families.

The meeting was told that over 9,000 houses have been completed, while construction is underway on more than 56,000 units. Additionally, 62,500 families have received their first installment and 39,000 families have received their second installment.

According to the Housing Department spokesperson, awareness campaigns will be expanded to reach more families, with enhanced coordination between public and private institutions.

The application process has been kept simple and fully online. Representatives from Akhuwat, Bank of Punjab, NRCP, and RCDP also attended the meeting.

## Punjab CM Maryam leaves on Japan visit

LAHORE (INP): On the special invitation of Japanese government, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Friday left for Tokyo on a five-day official visit.

Senior officials of the Punjab government bid farewell to CM Maryam Nawaz. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Information and Heritage Azma Zahid Bokhari,

Minister Malik Zohaib Bherth, Zeeshan Rafiq, Special Advisor Sania Asiq, and other officials accompanied the chief minister.

It is necessary to mention here that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is the first chief minister who is invited to visit Japan officially. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz will attend the World Expo in Osaka.

During her stay, the chief minister will visit the cities

of Yokohama, Osaka, and Tokyo, where she is scheduled to hold high-level meetings with Japanese business leaders, representatives of major corporations, and government officials.

The agenda includes discussions on investment opportunities, bilateral trade, and the promotion of economic ties between Japan and Pakistan, particularly in the Punjab province.

## Karachi mother's cold confession to killing kids

KARACHI (INP): In a disturbing development following yesterday's tragic double murder case in Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Khayaban-e-Mujahid, the accused mother, Adeeba, has confessed to killing her two children and revealed chilling details during police interrogation.

According to investigators, Adeeba claimed that her children would often stay at her home and that her son repeatedly expressed a wish to go to a place "where there would be no pain." She told Karachi police officials, "I took them to a place where they will no longer suffer."

The suspect admitted to taking both children into the washroom and fatally attacking them with a

sharp-edged weapon. Karachi police officials say a formal case against Adeeba is likely to be registered today as the investigation proceeds.

According to Karachi police, the victims include one boy and a girl, aged between 4 and 7 years. The incident was linked to a custody dispute following the mother's divorce in September 2024.

The children, identified as 7-year-old Zarar and 4-year-old Sania, visited their mother one or two times a week and were staying with her at the time of the tragedy. After committing the act, the suspect informed her ex-husband and family members about the incident before notifying the Karachi police. When law enforcement

officials arrived at the scene, the mother was found with the bodies of her children.

According to authorities, the suspect appears to be suffering from psychological issues, and investigations are ongoing to determine the full circumstances of this tragic event.

Earlier, a mother brutally killed her two children by slitting their throats. The tragic event occurred in the jurisdiction of Airport Police Station, Nawabshah.

According to reports, the mother, identified as Komal Sheikh, was taken into custody. During initial interrogation, the mother confessed to the crime, admitting that she had killed her children with a knife in separate rooms.

## Fakhar Jehan visits flood-hit Buner, oversees relief efforts

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jehan, spent the day among his people in Buner following the recent devastating floods, personally monitoring rescue and relief operations.

The provincial minister paid an emergency visit to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Pir Baba and District Headquarters Hospital Daggar, where he inquired after the health of individuals injured during the floods.

On the occasion, he issued strict directives to hospital administrations to leave no stone unturned in providing the best possible medical treatment and care to the injured.

Syed Fakhar Jehan prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured, elevation of the ranks of those who lost their lives and patience and fortitude for the bereaved families in bearing this great loss.

The minister also supervised the District Emergency Control Room

and remained in constant contact with the district administration, rescue agencies and all concerned

departments. Under his instructions, administrative and relief teams remained actively

engaged in rescue operations in Chagharzai, Gagra, Pir Baba and Gokand.



KOHAT UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY.  
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Ph # 0922-5291501, 0922-5291502 (Ext - 4633) WORKS DIRECTORATE

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Kohat University of science and technology (KUST) intends to engage consulting firm for provision of Consultancy Services for "DETAIL DESIGNING OF ACADEMIC BLOCK - IV AT KUST" KOHAT registered with PEC/PCATP and KPRA.

TERMS & CONDITIONS ARE AS UNDER:

- The firm will produce documents i.e. income tax certificate, NTN, valid Registration from Pakistan Engineering Council and KPRA.
- A firm/ Joint venture will be selected for the services under Quality- cum- Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method under the procedure / criteria described in the request for proposal (RFP) documents.
- The interested firms are required to submit Two Sealed envelopes containing technical and financial proposals separately, clearly marked on front of the envelope as "Technical and Financial Proposal" for the services required under the Request for Proposal (RFP) of the University, RFP documents can be obtained till September 03, 2025, 4:00 P.M on cash payment or demand draft Rs. 5000/- in favor of Treasurer KUST, from the office of the undersigned.
- Pre-bid meeting will be held on August 28, 2025 in the committee room of KUST at 11:00 A.M.
- The bids shall be submitted on 08 September, 2025 at 11:30 A.M. which will be opened on the same day at 12:00 AM in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives in the committee room of KUST

Director Works | Kohat University of Science & Technology, Kohat  
Ph #, (0922)52914790, Website: www.kust.edu.pk

Jubilee

LIFE INSURANCE

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The public at large is hereby informed that **Salah Uddin S/o Muhammad Taj**, bearer of Computerized National Identity Card Number: **37101-6748483-9**, resident of House No. L-42, Jamal-e-Ibrahim Society Quaidabad Karachi, Pakistan who was working as "Sales Executive" in Individual Life Sales Department of Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited has been found involved in malpractices including, defalcation of premium, unauthorized collection and misappropriation of premium, misrepresentation, mis-selling and has indulged in wrong sales practices detrimental to the interest of the Company.

Services of **Salah Uddin S/o Muhammad Taj** have been terminated by the Company with effect from 13 January 2025 and his name has been uploaded on CISSII portal of CDC. The Company reserves all rights to initiate appropriate legal action against him as per the laws of land.

Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited always upholds best interest of its clients and policy owners and makes every endeavor to protect their interest above all else. Therefore, we advise our esteemed policyholders and future clients not to enter into any business with **Salah Uddin S/o Muhammad Taj** with reference to Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited.

Please note that Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited shall not assume liability for any unauthorized dealing or illegal transactions of **Salah Uddin S/o Muhammad Taj**.

Legal & Compliance Department  
Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited

www.jubileelife.com

UAN : (021) 111-111-554

Jubilee

LIFE INSURANCE

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The public at large is hereby informed that **Ghulam Hussain S/o Ghulam Rasool**, bearer of Computerized National Identity Card Number: **35201-8034756-9**, resident of House No. 3, Street No. 11 Mughalpura Eshwar Nagar Chungi No. 3 Dry Port Road Near Khadim Hussain House Lahore Cantt, Pakistan who was working as "Branch Manager" in Individual Life Sales Department of Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited has been found involved in malpractices including, defalcation of premium, unauthorized collection and misappropriation of premium, misrepresentation, business churning, mis-selling and has indulged in wrong sales practices detrimental to the interest of the Company.

Services of **Ghulam Hussain S/o Ghulam Rasool** have been terminated by the Company with effect from 26 March 2025 and his name has been uploaded on CISSII portal of CDC. The Company reserves all rights to initiate appropriate legal action against him as per the laws of land.

Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited always upholds best interest of its clients and policy owners and makes every endeavor to protect their interest above all else. Therefore, we advise our esteemed policyholders and future clients not to enter into any business with **Ghulam Hussain S/o Ghulam Rasool** with reference to Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited.

Please note that Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited shall not assume liability for any unauthorized dealing or illegal transactions of **Ghulam Hussain S/o Ghulam Rasool**.

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UAN : (021) 111-111-554



Petition challenging inclusion of Jhagra’s daughter name in Stop List

# PHC issues notice to Federal Govt, FIA

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued written orders while directed federal government and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to submit response to a petition filed by the daughter of former provincial minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader, Taimur Saleem Jhagra. The petition challenges the inclusion of her name in the Stop List, which has prevented her from traveling abroad, on Friday.

The petitioner is a student at the University of California and had come to Pakistan for summer vacation. She is now trying to return to the United States, but her name has been placed on the Stop List, preventing her from traveling.

The petitioner's lawyer argued that her name was added to the Stop List without any reason, solely because her father is a political leader. The petitioner's claims that she would face consequences, including potential expulsion from the university, if she fails to attend her classes.

PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Khurshid Iqbal issued the notice to the federal government and the FIA, directing them to submit a detailed report by August 19.

## Top Civil Honour to Customs Agent as journalist Journalists’ bodies flays govt; Announce strong protest

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The representative bodies of journalists - the Khyber Union of Journalists (KhUJ) and the Peshawar Press Club - have denounced the awarding of a top civil award in the field of journalism from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to a customs clearing agent, calling it a mockery of the sacrifices made by journalists of the province.

They have announced strong protest and firm resistance against the nomination, and demanded that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government take up the matter.

In a joint statement issued on Friday, KhUJ President Kashifuddin Syed, Peshawar Press Club President M. Riaz, Press Club General Secretary Tayyab Usman Awan, KhUJ General Secretary Irshad Ali, and other office bearers said that on the occasion of Independence Day, Ziaul Haq Sarhadi - a leader of the Customs Clearing Agents Association, Coordinator of the Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Chairman of the Dry Port Committee of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry - was awarded the Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Star of Excellence) from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the category of journalism.

The journalist community of Peshawar strongly protests this nomination and condemns all institutions and authorities involved in every stage of this decision.

The statement added that if Mr. Ziaul Haq Sarhadi had been nominated for a civil award in recognition of his services in his own field - business or customs clearing - journalists would have had no objection.

However, nominating a person with no connection to the profession of journalism, who merely gets columns written by others and published under his own name, for a top national award in journalism is a violation of merit, a blatant example of nepotism, and a grave injustice to journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - a sensitive region where they have rendered invaluable sacrifices for the country and the nation. The crude manner in which Mr. Sarhadi has been awarded a top civil honour in journalism has also cast doubts over the awards presented to other leaders and personalities on Independence Day.

These representative journalist bodies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have warned that if this decision is not reviewed, they will resort to all options of resistance, including the boycott of the federal government and its institutions.

## Health emergency declared in flood-hit districts

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: On the special directives of Health Advisor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ihtisham Ali, a health emergency has been declared in the flood and heavy rainfall-affected districts of Buner, Swat, Mansehra, Bajaur, Mohmand, and Abbottabad. The recent heavy rains, landslides, and flash floods have caused significant loss of life and property in these areas.

According to the Directorate General Health Services Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all District Health Officers, Medical Superintendents, and Directors of Medical Teaching Institutions have been directed to immediately establish Flood Control Rooms within their districts and hospitals, and share daily updates on disease cases and the situation with the concerned authorities. The step aims to ensure uninterrupted availability of essential medicines and smooth functioning of health facilities.

The Health Department has instructed all doctors, paramedics, and medical staff to remain on high alert and respond promptly to any emergency. All leaves of healthcare staff have been cancelled to ensure uninterrupted medical services in hospitals.

Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali stated, "The provincial government prioritizes the health and safety of its people. In this emergency, all health facilities and staff must remain fully mobilized and maintain close coordination with district administrations and rescue teams to provide timely and effective services."

**Measures taken by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irrigation Department to deal with recent monsoon rains and flood situation**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irrigation Minister Aqib Ullah Khan has issued instructions to Chief Engineers to remain alert and all employees and staff to remain present at their respective stations to deal with recent monsoon rains and potential flood situation. He issued these instructions during a meeting with Secretary Irrigation at Civil Secretariat Peshawar yesterday.

In the meeting, the measures taken by the Irrigation Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to deal with the recent monsoon rains and possible situations were discussed in detail.

Aqib Ullah Khan said that the protection of the lives and property of the people is the responsibility of all of us. He stressed that the officials and employees of the Irrigation Department should be present at their duty stations so that timely awareness and coordination can be ensured in case of emergency.

Provincial Irrigation Minister said that he will also review the measures and preparations at the district level to protect against flood situations and will visit different areas in this regard. He said that strict action will be taken against negligent employees and officials.

## Secretary Tourism and Culture visits Kalam to inspect sewerage system

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary for Tourism and Culture, Dr. Abdul Samad, paid a visit to the popular tourist destination of Kalam in Swat district and carried out a detailed inspection of the sewerage systems of various hotels.

The visit was conducted in compliance with directives issued by the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Officials of the Upper Swat Development Authority accompanied the secretary during the visit.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Abdul Samad said the River Swat was the leading source of the region's natural beauty. He said that strict actions would be taken to protect it from environmental pollution.

He stressed that the provincial government, under the supervision of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the Advisor on Tourism and Culture and the Chief Secretary, was taking all possible steps to restore and enhance the natural environment at tourist sites.

He added that under the Authority Act all stakeholders were required to comply with regulations and play their role in promoting tourism. He also directed a crackdown on violations to safeguard the area's scenic beauty.

The Secretary also asked the Upper Swat Development Authority to organize various events in Swat, improve tourist access to new sites and enhance the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives.

He appreciated the Authority's performance and assured them of full cooperation from the department.

During the visit Dr. Abdul Samad also met with the President of the Kalam Hotels Association and other local notables, listened attentively to their suggestions and assured them of prompt implementation of viable proposals.



PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Mehsud celebrating Independence Day with minority community.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Major (R) Sajjad Barkwal chairing a meeting regarding the Good Governance Roadmap at Directorate General of Agriculture Extension.

## Inactive Farm Services Centers be revived: Brakwal

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Major (R) Sajjad Barkwal chaired a meeting regarding the Good Governance Roadmap at Directorate General of Agriculture Extension. The meeting was attended by Secretary Agriculture Ambar Ali Khan, Director General Agriculture Extension Murad Ali, Director General Agriculture Research Abdul Rauf, Director General Agricultural Engineering, Soil and Water Conservation, On-Farm Water Management, and district directors of the Agriculture Extension Department from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Officials were briefed on the Chief Minister's Good Governance Roadmap Vision, under which the provincial government's strategy aims to ensure timely, rapid, regionally and environmentally suitable, and simplified provision of agricultural facilities to farmers and those associated with the agriculture sector.

Provincial Minister Sajjad Brakwal directed that agricultural staff at the district level must establish close contact with farmers and take necessary steps to address their problems. He stressed that all projects and policies in the agriculture sector should be formulated keeping in view the needs and benefits of farmers.

Provincial minister urged district agriculture directors to take urgent measures for the development and revival of agriculture across all districts of the province in order to restore farmers' confidence and ensure economic stability.

He further instructed that under Model Farm Services Centers and Farm Services Centers, the provision of machinery, seeds, agricultural medicines, and other facilities to farmers at subsidized rates must be ensured. Inactive Farm Services Centers in the province should be revived on an emergency basis. He directed district officers to conduct experimental trials of new and economically significant crops suited to local and seasonal conditions so that farmers could have alternative income sources through the introduction of new crops.

Sajjad Brakwal also emphasized that district officers should maintain close coordination with other agriculture-related departments to ensure smooth delivery of services to farmers and effective resolution of their problems.

Concluding, Major (R) Sajjad Barkwal instructed all heads and district officers of the Agriculture Department to take all necessary measures to ensure farmers receive the required facilities, improve the economic conditions of those linked to agriculture, and make the province agriculturally self-sufficient. He made it clear that the department's primary responsibility is farmers' welfare, provision of facilities, and sustainable solutions to their issues, warning that strict action would be taken against any officials found negligent in their duties.

## Domicile and public services now just one click away: Shafqat

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Science, Technology & Information Technology, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, has said that under the vision of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan and the people-friendly agenda of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the dream of providing citizens with services at their doorstep through modern technology is rapidly becoming a reality. He stated that the "Digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" initiative is one of the greatest achievements in this regard, enabling the people of the province to access domicile certificates and many other services with just one click.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz informed that on a single day, August 13, 2025, a record number of online domicile applications were received, proving the popularity and effectiveness of this service.

A total of 5,686 online applications were submitted, out of which 4,000 domiciles were issued immediately, while 418 applications were rejected for not meeting the prescribed criteria.

The Special Assistant further said that the "Digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" initiative is not limited to domicile services.

Other modern applications and platforms are also operational, including the flagship "Dastak" app, which provides an efficient system for timely redressal of public complaints and issues. Additionally, the online file management system, digital integration of citizen facilitation centers, and establishment of IT hubs for youth are progressing at a fast pace.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz emphasized that, under Imran Khan's vision of "Digital Pakistan," Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is emerging as a model for other provinces.

By ensuring transparency, efficiency, and citizen empowerment through technology, the provincial government is committed to making every citizen an active participant in the province's development.

## Aun voices against demolition of Shahi Khata shops

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Aun Ali Syed, has strongly condemned the proposed demolition of historic Shahi Khata shops in Peshawar, terming the move as "cruel, unjust, and an act of economic terrorism." He demanded the provincial government to immediately revoke the demolition orders, warning that failure to do so will compel the business community to launch a widespread protest movement.

"These shops are not just buildings - they are the sole source of livelihood for thousands of families," he stated. Traders from conflict-affected and underdeveloped regions including Hangu, Thall, Parachinar, Bajaur, and other surrounding areas have been running businesses here, and the livelihoods of countless individuals are connected to these commercial activities.

Syed warned that the demolition would not only displace these traders, but also severely impact thousands of laborers, daily wage earners, sales staff, loaders, transporters, and other working-class individuals, pushing them into unemployment.

In unequivocal terms, he added: "It is the government's duty to provide employment, not to strangle economic lifelines." He stressed that if this oppressive decision is not overturned, traders across Peshawar and the entire country will be left with no option but to launch a full-fledged protest movement.

The responsibility for any unrest or economic disruption will lie solely with the provincial authorities, he warned.

Aun Ali Syed appealed to the government to urgently revisit the decision in view of public economic interests, the survival of Peshawar's commercial ecosystem, and the peace and stability of the region. He urged authorities to seek a constructive and practical solution to prevent mass unemployment of the affected traders.

## Govt bans officers from leaving stations without permission

**Syed Adnan**

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has issued a strict directive prohibiting officers from leaving their duty stations without prior approval.

The move comes after serious notice of repeated incidents of officers' absence from their posts.

According to the official notification, leaving the station without permission is a violation of the Civil Servants Conduct Rules. The order emphasizes that during emergencies, natural disasters such as floods, and situations affecting law and order, the presence of officers at their stations is crucial.

All officers have been instructed to remain at their posts at all times, and any departure without prior authorization will lead to disciplinary action. The notification warns that violating this directive will be considered misconduct and corruption.

The provincial government has directed all departments to ensure strict compliance with the order, underscoring the importance of officers' availability for effective governance and public service delivery.

## PIC sets world record with 14 TAVI procedures in a day

PESHAWAR (APP) Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC), the only public-sector cardiac hospital in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has set a new world record by successfully performing 14 Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) procedures on 14 August on a single day. This remarkable achievement saved 14 precious lives and broke Serbia's previous record of 13 such procedures in one day, according to PIC Spokesperson Riffat Anjum.

She added that this milestone is a historic achievement for Pakistan, reflecting the availability of modern medical facilities and the spirit of exceptional teamwork. Medical Director PIC, Dr. Ali Raza, stated that replacing heart valves for 14 patients on a single day without opening the chest was an extraordinary challenge.

These patients were not suitable for open-heart surgery; however, through the modern TAVI technique, the procedures were successfully completed.

He further noted that this record-breaking operation brought together cardiologists and surgeons from leading hospitals across the country under PIC's leadership. This achievement would not have been possible without provincial government support. Head of Cardiology Department, Dr. Abid Ullah, shared that patients aged between 70 and 80 years were given a new life through TAVI surgery. He emphasized that this success is the result of the tireless efforts of PIC's expert cardiology and cardiac surgery teams, and that PIC has previously brought multiple global honors to Pakistan achievements that are a source of pride for the province.





## In brief

### Shepherd killed due torture F.P. Report

THATTA: Police registered a case under Section 302 and other relevant sections of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, in connection with the murder of a 25-year-old shepherd, Sher Jamari, in the Jhumpir area of Thatta, after the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Thatta took notice of the incident. The incident drew widespread attention after a video of the deceased went viral on social media, showing him being subjected to torture by suspects Sadar Plari, Piyaro Plari, Raheman Palari, and two others. The viral video sparked public outrage and condemnation from various sections of society, prompting the local police to act. According to Station House Officer Ameer Bux Khoso, the deceased had been receiving life threats after accusing Piyaro Palari of stealing his goats. The body was recovered from outside a cattle pen with bullet wounds in the abdomen. Police have arrested three of the five accused nominated in the FIR, registered by the cousin of the deceased. The case is being investigated from different angles.

### Leopard killed by local youth F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: A leopard was killed after being assaulted by local youth by sticks and stones in Boi area on the outskirts of Abbottabad. The animal had strayed from the forest in Bakot police jurisdiction into a nearby settlement. It was reportedly in semi-conscious condition when it was captured by some locals and dragged along the road. Many onlookers recorded the disturbing scenes on their mobile phones, which were later posted on the social media. The footage quickly went viral, with some residents claiming the animal had caused livestock losses in the area. Police from the Boi checkpoint arrived at the scene and, after considerable effort, took the injured leopard into custody. However, the animal succumbed to its injuries shortly after being moved to the police post. The wildlife department later took possession of the carcass. Locals alleged that leopards had killed dozens of their goats in recent months. According to wildlife officials, the leopard's condition suggested it may have been poisoned. Officials of the wildlife department said that a post-mortem examination of the animal would be conducted at the veterinary hospital to determine the exact cause of its death. SDFO Mushtaq Khan stated that the individuals identified in the videos to be participating in the abuse would face charges under the relevant laws.

### Anti-India rallies, protest demos held F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Anti-India protest rallies and demonstrations were held in Muzaffarabad city and other parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to observe India's Independence Day as a Black Day. A large number of people, including AJK Minister Chaudhry Abdul Rashid, Director of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell Raja Sajjad, APHC AJK leaders Shaikh Abdul Mateen, Nazir Ahmed Karnai, Abdul Majeed Lone, Abdul Majeed Mir, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, AJK leader Showket Javed Mir and youth participated in the rally and protest demonstration from Burhan Wani Chowk to Ghapan Chowk in Muzaffarabad.

# PTI politicizes national days to meet their ends: Muqam

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Addressing a dignified ceremony of Battle for Truth at the Pakistan Muslim League-N House in Sangota, Swat, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, and President of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, termed Pakistan's recent military

controversy is tantamount to harming Pakistan's history and ideological foundations. Speaking on military operations in the tribal districts, the Federal Minister said that the government's policy is clear — there is no intention of launching a major operation in the province, but targeted actions will be carried out to crush terrorism and ensure the safety of lives and property. He



success as the fruit of the nation's collective pride, sacrifices, and the courage and bravery of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

He said that this victory does not belong to any one individual, any one institution, or any one government, but is the shared achievement of every Pakistani. The Minister made it clear that this historic triumph has sent a message to the world that Pakistan will never retreat from defending its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

Paying tribute to the leadership and personnel of all branches of the armed forces, including the Army, Air Force, and Navy, he said that their role in the Battle for Truth made the impossible possible and thwarted the enemy's designs. He described this success as a miracle that compelled major world powers to acknowledge Pakistan's capability and resolve.

On the occasion, the Federal Minister strongly criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying these are the people who even try to politicize national days like August 14 for their political agendas. He pointed out that in 2019, when India revoked the special status of Occupied Kashmir, PTI was in power, and it was during their tenure that the enemy dared to take such a step — something that had not happened in the past 74 years. He stated that while protest is a democratic right, turning a national day into a political

noted that the provincial government has failed to establish its writ, and people fear leaving their homes after dark, while the federal government is fulfilling its responsibilities. He reminded that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have always been on the front lines in defending Pakistan — from the 1947 referendum until today — sacrificing lives and property to shield the nation from enemy designs. If these people were to lay down their arms, no region of the country would remain safe, so their role must be acknowledged, and their hardships understood as our own.

He expressed his determination that with the unity of the armed forces and the people, peace will prevail in the country. Pakistan's flag will always fly high, and the struggle for Kashmir's freedom will continue at every forum. Those who politicize national days for temporary political gains will never be forgiven by the nation, while those driven by patriotism will always succeed.

Addressing PTI directly, he said: "You oppose targeted operations only for cheap popularity. Tell us, what is your solution? Why is there no writ of the government? Why can't people go out after sunset? On the other hand, Nawaz Sharif was a lion who endured every kind of pressure, rejected bribes worth billions of dollars, and made Pakistan invincible because he cared for Pakistan's future. Only Nawaz Sharif had the courage to press the button

that made Pakistan secure.

To my party workers, I say — engage PTI supporters with logic. Tell them what we have given this country and what we will give in the future. Three chief ministers have come and gone; give me one chance, and I will transform Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and place it alongside Punjab. Here, I launched a major gas project — when there is no electricity, everything runs on gas. This is a project worth 3 to 4 billion rupees, benefiting the entire Malakand Division, but PTI's provincial government tried to block it to avoid road digging. The gas project up to Chuprial was approved during Nawaz Sharif's tenure, but PTI returned its funds — this is on record.

Even without a mandate, I provided gas supply across Malakand Division. Murad Saeed came from Kabul — what did he do for his people? I stood with you in every hardship and every field, without caring for my own safety. I solved Malakand Division's voltage problem without any mandate. Murad Saeed was the Communications Minister, but he couldn't build even one kilometer of road. He even opposed the construction of the road leading from my house, only because it would be associated with Amir Muqam.

The injustice PTI has done to the people here is clear to all, yet some still support them. I extended your income tax exemption from 2018 to 2023, and then again until June 2025. I am still fighting for sales tax relief, talking to the Prime Minister to ensure you are exempt. PTI has given nothing but lawlessness. Regarding hotels affected by the floods, the provincial government should have compensated the owners, as the encroachment took place during their tenure. My own hotel was purchased in 2005 with an approved plan, so I stayed quiet, but I condemn the injustice faced by other hotel owners. Work on resolving the road issue in Kalam is underway, and God willing, it will be resolved soon.

He said that the restoration of peace in Swat and the entire province is a priority. The federal government is assisting flood-affected people in Swat. "Today, I am once again gathering information on the current flood situation and damages in Swat," he said.

## Food Authority launches operations in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Halal Food and Food Safety Authority conducted a large-scale operation in Mardan City, on Friday, inspecting various business establishments, including an ice cream manufacturing unit. Assistant Director of the Halal Food Authority, Ruqia Nawaz Khan, was personally present during the operation and closely examined every stage of the production process along with her team.

During the inspection, it was discovered that the unit was using harmful chemi-

als, expired flavoring agents, mislabelled packaging materials, and maintaining poor hygiene standards. Additionally, several employees lacked valid medical certificates, which is a violation of Food Authority regulations. In light of these serious violations, heavy fines were imposed on the owners, who were warned that the use of substandard or hazardous ingredients in production would not be tolerated in the future.

Assistant Director Ruqia Nawaz Khan sternly instructed the owners and staff on the spot to immedi-

ately comply with the Food Authority's rules and regulations, warning that failure to do so would result in the closure of the factory or business. She further stated that a zero-tolerance policy has been adopted against substandard and hazardous food to safeguard public health, and strict actions will continue indiscriminately in the future.

Citizens appreciated the Halal Food Authority's action, stating that such measures will not only reduce the sale of substandard food but also raise public awareness about food quality standards.



**KHAR:** Rescue 1122 officials busy in rescue operation after landslide and flash flood caused by heavy rains, at Jabrarai district Salarzai area of Bajaur.

### Raksha Bandhan celebrated F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Like other parts of the country, the Hindu religious festival "Raksha Bandhan" was celebrated in Attock with traditional fervour. The festival symbolises the sacred bond between brothers and sisters. Members of the Hindu and Sikh communities participated in large numbers, as girls and women tied Rakhis on the wrists of their brothers and exchanged greetings.

The main ceremony was held at the Valmiki Temple in Saddar Bazar, Attock Cantonment, under the supervision of Pandit Sarwan Kumar, and was attended by a large gathering of men and women. Girls tied Rakhis on the wrists of men and boys, renewing the sacred bond of brotherhood. Following the Pooja and Rakhi ceremony, brothers presented gifts and sweets to their sisters.

The religious ritual was performed according to the time prescribed by the pundits. Participants wore traditional attire and offered special prayers. A similar spiritual ceremony was also held at Gurdwara Panja Sahib in Hassan Abdal, which saw a large participation from the Hindu community.

Expelling PTI leaders won't Solve Problems: Member Provincial Assembly from PTI, Syed Ejaz Hussain Bukhari, has said that the Chief Election Commissioner should at least leave behind a mark of integrity in his record. "Statements suggesting that an entire party should be disqualified are outrageous," he remarked, adding that the current government seems to think the easiest way forward is to throw PTI leaders, workers, and office-bearers into the sea to clear the path for their own corruption.

Speaking to the Attock media, Ejaz Bukhari said the alliance ruling the country is fully responsible for the current economic misery of the people. "Ministers today are those who were rejected in the elections," he said, adding that PML-N is able to take bold steps easily because of the powerful forces backing them. "But no matter how much power or oppression they use, the truth can never be suppressed," he added.

## Five of a family killed as house roof collapses

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Five members of a family, including three children, were killed and four others injured when the roof of a mud house collapsed in the Suri Pao area of Maidan here on Friday morning.

Police said the incident occurred after heavy rainfall caved in the roof of a mud room of one Shafiq, son of Mohammad Yaqoob, a resident of Kharkani, in the jurisdiction of Zaimdara police station.

As a result, several family members, including women and children, were buried under the debris. The deceased were identified as Rakhmeena, wife of Mohammad Yaqoob, 50, Safia, daughter of Mohammad Yaqoob, 16, Sheema, daughter of Mohammad Shafiq, 7, Abrar, son of Mohammad Rafiq, 4, and Bilal, son of Mohammad Shafiq, one year.

Four others, including Mohammad Shafiq, 40, his wife, 35, and two other relatives, were rescued alive. Rescue 1122 officials said their teams, despite heavy rain, floodwaters and damaged tracks, trekked for three hours on foot to reach the site. Residents demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to properly compensate the affected family.

Meanwhile, more than 25 tourists along with their vehicles were stranded in Shahi, a scenic spot, due to high water flow on the other side of Kambat and Shahi. They were safely evacuated by personnel of the Frontier Corps 181 Wing, Rescue 1122 and the district administration.

**Drug rehabilitation centre set up at Timergara jail:** A drug rehabilitation centre has been inaugurated at the District Jail, Timergara, to provide treatment to drug-addicted prisoners and help them become productive members of society.

The opening ceremony, held on Friday, was attended by Superintendent of District Jail Mohammad Ayub Bacha, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief) Ishfaq Ahmad, Child Protection Officer Tayyab Mohammad, Sir Foundation representative Daim Khan, and District Officer (Social Welfare) Nisar Ahmad, among others.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Bacha said new reforms had been introduced in the prison to ensure basic facilities for inmates and prepare them for constructive roles after release. He said a literacy centre had been established to promote education among prisoners, along with arrange-

ments for vocational training to equip them with skills. He termed the rehabilitation centre a positive step, expressing hope it would help improve inmates' moral character and reintegrate them as peaceful citizens.

**No links with PTM:** The Insaf Lawyers Forum member Fawad Alam Advocate on Friday announced his dissociation from the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), rejecting allegations of funding proscribed outfits or campaigning against state institutions.

Speaking at the District Press Club Timergara along with Bashirullah Advocate and others, he said some elements were running a malicious campaign against him. He clarified that his participation in a peace jirga in Khyber last October was only to highlight Pashtun rights and was not linked to PTM. Mr Alam said he respected state institutions and would continue to work for public rights within the bounds of the Constitution and the law.

**Opium seized:** Also on Friday, Timergara police claimed to have recovered 28.5 kilograms of opium from a drug peddler. SHO Saleem Shah Khan said police arrested the suspect, Khaista Rehman, a resident of Munda, during a raid. A case was registered under the Narcotics Act, and further investigation was underway. Police said operations against narcotics would continue without discrimination and called for public cooperation.

**Motorcyclist killed:** A 17-year-old motorcyclist, Anas, was killed when his motorcycle collided with a car at Khazana Bypass. He was buried in his ancestral graveyard in Khazana the same day.

**Youths rescued:** Rescue 1122 personnel saved two teenagers, Nasir, 16, and Hassan, 17, after they were trapped in the middle of a flood stream at Haya Serai in Maidan. Officials said both were pulled out alive and unharmed in a prompt operation.

**Roads blocked:** Meanwhile, several link roads in Lower Dir remained blocked due to landslides triggered by heavy rain. Candidates appearing in recruitment tests for teaching posts in Talash and other areas faced difficulties in reaching examination centres. Traffic was also suspended near Gulabad Bazaar at Safruno after flood waters damaged the road.

## Teacher looted by robbers

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Primary School Teacher (PST) Imdad Ali Solangi, a resident of village Khamiso Solangi of Mehar, along with his relative Zain Ali Solangi, protested in front of the Larkana Press Club near Bakrani for the return of the robbery.

On this occasion, the primary teacher said that last week, unknown gunmen robbed me of a motorcycle, mobile phone and Rs 12,000 at gunpoint from the Bakapur area and fled.

While such an incident was reported to the area police station in a timely manner, the police have not arrested the culprits so far, nor has there been any progress in the case. They demanded that the DIG and SSP Larkana take notice of the matter, arrest the culprits and bring them to justice, otherwise they will continue the protest.

American couple visits Mohenjo-Daro: A US tourist couple, husband and wife Mr. Lawrence Walter and Miss Jenny Yee, reached at the Mohenjo-

Daro. On this occasion, they visited various ancient monuments of the ancient civilization of Sindh, including the Stupa, Great Bath, DK areas.

The guide Irshad Solangi, appointed by the Sindh Tourism Department, gave a complete briefing to the foreign tourist couple about the ancient monuments of Mohenjo-Daro, the lifestyle of the people and their ancient civilization. While the foreign couple expressed their enjoyment of visiting Mohenjo-Daro.

## Geneticist from Pakistan leads FASD research

Dr. Humaira Aziz Sawal

**A**S a scientist from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, based in Syracuse, New York, leads pioneering research on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) at SUNY Upstate Medical University. Combining expertise in neuro-genetics and developmental biology, the studies focuses how environmental factors, especially alcohol exposure during pregnancy affects brain development before birth.

According to research alcohol "doesn't just damage cells — it reprograms their life cycle," seeing those changes happen in experimental model tissue samples. Sawal's work with the team of developmental biologists and neuroscientists is studying how prenatal alcohol exposure impacts craniofacial and brain development, resulting in more physical defects. CDC reports show 14.3% of pregnant women

consume alcohol, and with 45% of U.S. pregnancies unintended, many fetuses face early exposure linked to cognitive, behavioral, and learning impairments.

I provided the first-ever diagnosis to Pakistani families from Bhakkar and DI Khan with a rare condition that left them unable to feel any pain in her doctoral research. I characterized the disorder, a condition called congenital insensitivity to pain (CIP), with a novel homozygous nonsense mutation in SCN9A, a sodium channel that is the blueprint to a protein which makes it possible to sense pain through our nervous system. The loss of function of this sodium channel renders individuals completely insensate to physical pain, which can be life threatening when wounds, fractures, or burns go unnoticed.

My work was published in a peer-reviewed journal, providing affected families with a diagnosis, while also adding to the mutation spectrum for SCN9A. "This is more than just a gene

mutation,". "This discovery opens a window into how our bodies perceive the world, and how genetics governs our most fundamental protective mechanisms like the ability to feel pain." Pakistan is known for high rates of consanguinity, or marriage between first or second cousins. The study notes that this creates a unique genetic environment. "Many of our families have multiple generations living under one roof and affected by rare disorders. These are such clear genetic signals. I and My team have discovered novel pathogenic mutations in NTRK1 and GPR56 in families with intellectual disability and pain insensitivity, published in well-reputed Journals.

Understanding how a change in a single gene can lead to miswiring in the brain and prevent it from folding properly was a major accomplishment for our lab,". While serving at Rawalpindi Women University, I won research grant of 1 million PKR in 2021 from Pakistan's

Higher Education Commission to support a more systematic effort to study recessive disorders in the country's consanguineous families. From rare neurological conditions to developmental biology, my research highlights the potential of precision genetics and bioinformatics to unravel the intricacies of diseases at their core, providing both scientific understanding and hope for more targeted therapies.

My work represents a critical step forward in the emerging field of genomic medicine, one where the mysteries of our DNA are not merely revealed but also harnessed for solutions. I also vocal about the need for genetic research to study more diverse populations, both for discovery and clinical impact. "Only 30% of genetic disease research is conducted on underrepresented ethnic groups, and 70% of genetic research to date focuses on people of European ancestry. We've shown that studying rare diseases in different populations

can give rise to entirely different, previously unreported biological mechanisms with implications for future therapies. By itself, each of the mutations we are cataloguing in the Pakistani population is one more new way to think about rare disease and medicine's growing armamentarium to fight it,".

I had collaborated with scientists, at the UK and Canada, while serving at Rawalpindi Women University, shaping the next generation of Pakistani researchers. In another impressive study, I and my team worked on an adopter protein called TANK-binding kinase 1-binding protein 1 by employing the power of structural modeling software, developed with the help of AlphaFold2 (a deep-learning-based system capable of predicting protein structures), to help in delineating the mutation in patients with the gene mutation.

That in-silico and functional work was published in "Bioinformatics and Biology



Insights," a well-known journal in the field of Molecular Genetics. For young researchers just getting started, I emphasized the importance of learning both programming and benchwork. "Bioinformaticians must be trained in coding, but it's also important to have wet lab exposure. You need a strong sense of how those methods work and what's achievable in the lab to know how to build the right tools."





# Desperate Myanmar villagers scavenge for food as hunger bites

YANGON (AFP): People in western Myanmar have been driven to scavenging for bamboo shoots, as humanitarian workers warn a wartime blockade and aid cutbacks led by Washington have caused hunger cases to surge.

"Another day has gone, and I have to struggle again for another day," fruit vendor Kyaw Win Shein told AFP in the town of Mrauk U in Myanmar's Rakhine state. "It is getting worse day by day," the 60-year-old, whose business is faltering as prices rise and incomes drop -- a grim equation driving others to scour the countryside for sustenance.

Rakhine state -- a riverine slice of coastal Myanmar bordering Bangladesh -- has witnessed intense suffering in Myanmar's civil war, triggered by a 2021 coup deposing the democratic government. As the military fights an ethnic armed group, it has blockaded the territory -- throttling supplies to its estimated population of 2.5 million. The impoverished state has long been a focus of international aid organisations, but worldwide cutbacks spearheaded by US President Donald Trump's "America First" freeze on humanitarian funding have forced them to retreat.

The World Food Programme (WFP) -- which received nearly half its 2024 donations from the

United States -- warned last week that 57 percent of families in central Rakhine are now unable to meet basic food needs. The figure had risen from just 33 percent in December. "A deadly combination of conflict, blockades, and funding cuts is driving a dramatic rise in hunger and malnutrition," the WFP said. In northern Rakhine areas such as Mrauk U -- where conflict complicates data collection -- WFP warned the situation is "much worse". Residents said fertiliser is scarce, reducing crop yields and making produce unaffordable, driving people to desperate measures in a tightening spiral of misery.

"I am not the only one who has difficulties," said fruit vendor Kyaw Win Shein. "Everyone is the same." The village of Ponnagyun is a short distance from the state capital Sittwe, at the mouth of a delta opening onto the Bay of Bengal. Rakhine cuisine is famed for its fresh, simply cooked seafood, and fish is still on sale in markets. But people have no cash to buy it. "People are starving in my village," said one resident who runs a Ponnagyun payphone shop, but asked to remain anonymous for security reasons. "People find and eat bamboo shoots mostly," he said. "People can eat it, but it's not nutritious."

He said only two aid handouts reached their

community in the past year. The conflict blockade is so effective that currency notes are not leaving the state to be replaced with new ones for circulation, and instead are left crumbling from wear and tear in the pockets of customers and vendors. "The commodity prices are really high," said 64-year-old Mrauk U resident Hla Paw Tun. "Many people are selling, but few are buying," he said. "We have been struggling to survive day by day." Rakhine has long been wracked by civil conflict -- the site of alleged military atrocities against the resident Rohingya minority around 2017, which some countries have deemed a genocide.

More than one million Rohingyas now live in Bangladeshi border camps -- and the UN said last month a massive new influx had seen 150,000 arrivals over the previous 18 months. Meanwhile, nearly half a million people remain displaced inside Rakhine. Among them is 49-year-old Hla Aye, who fled her village for Mrauk U when two bombs fell near her house. She set up as a shopkeeper, but that business quickly failed in Rakhine's hostile wartime economy. Still, she believes, her struggles may not be over yet. "I have no idea how the future will be and if it will be more difficult," she said.

## New Zealand's population exodus hits 13-year high

SYDNEY (Reuters): New Zealand citizens leaving the country have hit the highest levels in 13 years, with more than a third of those emigrating aged under 30 years as unemployment rises and economic growth remains soft. Data released by Statistics New Zealand showed 71,800 New Zealand citizens departed New Zealand in the year ended June 2025, up from 67,500 in the previous 12-month period and below the record 72,400 in the year ended February 2012.

New Zealand's net migration, which is the number of those arriving minus those leaving, also fell with foreign nationals moving to the country of 5.3 million nearly halving from 2024. The rush to leave comes amid one of the worst economic downturns since 1991, which analysts blame on low productivity and various policy missteps. Unemployment ticked up to a near five-year high of 5.2% in the second quarter, data showed last week, while the labour force participation rate -- which includes workers either employed or actively looking for work -- fell to its lowest since the first quarter of 2021. Since August 2024, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand has cut its cash rate by 225 basis points to support an economy which sank into recession last year. The economy showed signs of improvement with gross domestic product increasing 0.8% in the first quarter.

New Zealanders aged 18 to 30 years made up 38% of the departures, compared with a peak of 60% in 1979. Economists and analysts have said New Zealanders, stung by fewer job opportunities and the cost of living, are looking to move to neighbouring Australia, Britain and elsewhere. Australia has been offering relocation packages in sectors where they have skill shortages to lure New Zealanders, who do not need visas to work there.

## Japan marks anniversary of WWII surrender

TOKYO (AP): Japan is paying tribute to more than 3 million war dead as the country marks its surrender 80 years ago, ending the World War II, as concern grows about the rapidly fading memories of the tragedy of war and the bitter lessons from the era of Japanese militarism.

In a national ceremony at Tokyo's Budokan hall, about 4,500 officials and bereaved families and their descendants from around the country will observe a moment of silence at noon, the time when the then-emperor's surrender speech began on Aug. 15, 1945. Just a block away at Yasukuni Shrine, seen by Asian neighbors as a symbol of militarism, dozens of Japanese rightwing politicians and their supporters came to pray.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba stayed away from Yasukuni and sent a religious ornament as a personal gesture instead of praying at the controversial shrine. But Shinjiro Koizumi, the agriculture minister considered as a top candidate to replace the beleaguered prime minister, prayed at the shrine. Koizumi, the son of popular former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi whose Yasukuni visit as a serving leader in 2001 outraged China, is a regular at the shrine. Rightwing lawmakers, including former economic security ministers Sanae Takaichi and Takayuki Kobayashi, as well as governing Liberal Democratic Party heavyweight Koichi Hagiuda, also visited the shrine.

The shrine honors convicted war criminals, among about 2.5 million war dead. Victims of Japanese aggression, especially China and the Koreans, see visits to the shrine as a lack of remorse about Japan's wartime past. As the population of wartime generations rapidly decline, Japan faces serious questions on how it should pass on the wartime history to the next generation, as the country has already faced revisionist pushbacks under former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his supporters.



GAZA: A Palestinian child suffering from malnutrition is treated at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah.

# New compromise but still no deal at plastic pollution talks

GENEVA (AFP): Countries trying to break the deadlock and strike a landmark global treaty on combating plastic pollution negotiated on a last-minute revised proposal. The new draft, issued by the talks chair after the original deadline passed, contains more than 100 unresolved passages of text -- but constitutes an "acceptable basis for negotiation", two sources from different governments told AFP.

However, several environmental NGOs said the new text still did not go far enough to protect human health and the environment. After three years of negotiations, nations wanting bold action to turn the tide on plastic garbage were trying to build last-minute bridges with a group driven by oil-producing states. Talks chair Luis Vayas Valdivieso issued his revised draft text after countries from all corners brutally shredded his previous version issued, plunging the talks into disarray. The Ecuadoran diplomat spent in frantic negotiation with multiple regional groups, resulting in a new text that went some way towards appeasing both major blocs. The High Ambition Coalition, which includes the European Union, Britain and Canada, and many African and Latin American countries, wants to see language on reducing plastic production and the phasing out of toxic chemicals used in plastics.

A cluster of mostly oil-producing states calling themselves the Like-Minded Group -- including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Russia, Iran, and Malaysia -- want the treaty to focus primarily on waste management. The new text "is far from what is needed to end plastic pollution," however, "it can be the springboard to get there, if we sharpen it in a next round", Panama's negotiator Juan Carlos Monterrey said. A diplomatic source from another country told AFP it was an "acceptable basis for negotiation". A total of 185 countries have been negotiating since August 5 at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva. Five previous rounds of talks over three years failed to land a treaty.

One country's chief negotiator told AFP the new draft felt "more balanced text -- not too bad but not too good either. At least it feels like the chair is listening. But many of us are asking what's going to be the next steps". As for whether there was much movement from the Like-Minded Group, the negotiator said: "Nothing. It's the same...I'm not so sure if there's momentum." The plastic pollution problem is so ubiquitous that microplastics have been found on the highest mountain peaks, in the deepest ocean trench and scattered throughout almost every part of the human body.

On current trends, annual production of fossil-fuel-based plastics will nearly triple by 2060 to 1.2 billion tonnes, while waste will exceed one billion tonnes, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. With 15 million tonnes of plastic dumped in the ocean every minute, French President Emmanuel Macron asked: "What are we waiting for to act?" "I urge all states gathered in Geneva to adopt an agreement that truly meets the scale of this environmental and public health emergency," he posted on X. "We need to have a coherent global treaty. We can't do it on our own," said Environment Minister Deborah Barasa of Kenya, a member of the High Ambition Coalition seeking aggressive action on plastic waste. Barasa told AFP that nations could strike a treaty now, then work out some of the finer details down the line. "We need to come to a middle ground," she said.

IPEN, a global network aimed at limiting toxic chemicals, said the level of ambition in the new draft text "cannot become the new normal for these negotiations". And the World Wide Fund for Nature told AFP: "Efforts to pull together a treaty that all parties will accept has amounted to a text so compromised, so inconsequential, it cannot hope to tackle the crisis in any meaningful way."

# Sexual violence surged amid war in DRC's North Kivu last year: UN

DR CONGO: Healthcare providers in the war-torn eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) treated more than 17,000 victims of sexual violence over just five months last year, according to a United Nations report.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, released, said the cases were registered in the province of North Kivu between January and May last year, as fighting between Congolese forces and Rwanda-backed M23 rebels intensified. "Many survivors sought care after violent sexual attacks, including penetration with objects, perpetrated by multiple perpetrators," said the report, which charted crimes like rape, gang rape

and sexual slavery. The conflict, which has killed thousands this year alone and displaced millions, is still ongoing despite a Qatar-mediated agreement between DRC and M23 last month that was supposed to pave the way to a ceasefire, running parallel to United States efforts to broker peace between Kinshasa and Kigali. Last year's figure marked a continued surge in sexual violence as the Rwanda-backed M23 rampaged through the east, with a total of 22,000 cases registered throughout 2023. That figure was more than double the previous year's tally. In 2023, the spike in violence occurred as the conflict spilled over from North Kivu into South Kivu, forcing UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO to withdraw from the latter.

The report said that MONUSCO's operations narrowed, "owing to military operations and widespread insecurity". The mission had documented 823 cases of sexual violence in 2024, affecting 416 women, 391 girls, seven boys and nine men. The UN said that 198 of last year's cases were perpetrated by DRC "state actors", including the army. It found that "M23 elements", which "continued to receive instructions and support from the Rwanda Defence Force", were implicated in 152 cases. According to the report, survivors reported that they were exposed to the threat of sexual violence while searching for food in the fields and areas around displacement sites.

Many displaced women had resorted to prostitution to survive, "highlighting the nexus between food insecurity and sexual violence".

Denis Mukwege, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 for his work combating sexual violence in DRC, told The Times newspaper this year: "When you have people raping with complete immunity - and think they can go on and on without any consequence, nothing will change." Guterres's report charted violations in 21 countries, with the highest numbers recorded in DRC, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan. While women and girls made up 92 percent of victims, men and boys were also targeted. — Aljazeera

# Putin hails North Korean troops as 'heroic' in letter to Kim

MOSCOW (AFP): Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed North Korean troops sent to fight in Ukraine as "heroic" in a letter to Kim Jong Un, North Korean state media reported. In a letter marking the anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese rule, Putin recalled how Soviet Red Army units and North Korean forces fought together to end Japan's colonial occupation.

"The bonds of militant friendship, goodwill and mutual aid which were consolidated in the days of the war long ago remain solid and reliable even today," Putin said in a letter revealed by North Korean state media. "This was fully proved by the heroic participation of the DPRK soldiers in liberating the territory of Kursk Region from the Ukrainian occupationists," he said, according to news agency KCNA. "The Russian people will keep forever the memories of their bravery and self-sacrifice."

Putin added that the two countries would continue

to "act jointly and effectively defend their sovereignty and make a significant contribution to establishing a just and multipolarised world order." Russia and North Korea have been forging increasingly closer ties, with the two countries signing a mutual defence pact last year, when Putin visited the reclusive state. In April, North Korea confirmed for the first time that it had deployed a contingent of its soldiers to the front line in Ukraine, alongside Russian troops. South Korean and Western intelligence agencies have said Pyongyang sent more than 10,000 soldiers to Russia's Kursk region in 2024, along with artillery shells, missiles and long-range rocket systems. Around 600 North Korean soldiers have been killed and thousands more wounded fighting for Russia, Seoul has said. The letter from Putin came alongside a visit by a Russian delegation to Pyongyang, where the speaker of the Duma thanked Kim for sending "excellent soldiers" to

Ukraine, KCNA reported. Vyacheslav Volodin's delegation arrived and was received by a military honour guard for a visit marking "the 80th anniversary of Korea's liberation". Volodin thanked Kim for "dispatching excellent soldiers to the Kursk liberation operations for driving out the Ukrainian aggressors", according to KCNA. He added that Russia would never forget the North Korean troops "who fought at the cost of their lives in Russia." Kim, meanwhile, said the delegation's visit would promote the "development of the DPRK-Russia relations already on a new level." He also mentioned that he had a phone call with Putin two days ago, agreeing to expanded bilateral cooperation and "closer contact and communication between the state leaderships." The call came three days ahead of summit between Putin and Trump, the first between a sitting US and Russian president since 2021, as Trump seeks to broker an end to Russia's more than three-year war in Ukraine.



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# Conscience of humanity

THE humanitarian tragedy unfolding in the Gaza Strip must not be perceived merely as a conflict confined to a narrow strip of land; rather, it should be regarded as a deepening humanitarian catastrophe that wounds the collective conscience of humanity with each passing day. Israel's months-long bombardments have targeted women, children, and the elderly, rendering cities uninhabitable. Homes, hospitals, schools, and places of worship have been reduced to rubble; essential services such as food, water, healthcare, and electricity have collapsed. Hunger, thirst, and the threat of epidemic disease are propelling Gaza towards a total humanitarian collapse. To date, more than 61,000 Palestinians - the majority of them women and children - have been killed in Israeli attacks. This picture is not only the mark of war, but also a stark testament to a systematic policy of annihilation.

In the face of such a dire picture, the world's silence or its feeble responses only deepen the suffering and pave the way for the continuation of oppression. The West's double standards - rushing to act in other crises while adopting an ambivalent approach to Gaza - undermine the credibility of an international order purportedly founded upon principles and rules. It is a fact that had the swift and comprehensive sensitivity shown towards the crisis in Ukraine also been displayed in the face of the atrocities in Gaza, the landscape we confront today would be entirely different. Israel's ability to act without the slightest sanction has accelerated the erosion of international law and human rights norms. The crisis in Gaza stands before us as a litmus test of whether the international community is willing and able to uphold the most fundamental human values.

From the outset, Türkiye has demonstrated a resolute, consistent, and principled stance to end the atrocities and the worsening humanitarian disaster in Gaza. Our Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), the Turkish Red Crescent, and our civil society organisations are working actively on the ground, and despite all obstacles, food, medicines, and medical supplies are being delivered to the region with the support of brotherly nations in the vicinity. Wounded Gazans are being evacuated and treated in Türkiye. These relief efforts not only address urgent needs, but also proclaim to the world that the people of Gaza are not alone. On the diplomatic front, our calls for a ceasefire continue within the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and our mediation efforts between Palestinian groups are ongoing.

At the NATO Summit held in The Hague on June 25, I underlined that the fragile ceasefire must be transformed into a lasting peace, warning that "Gaza has no time to lose." I have openly defined Israel's attacks and policy of collective punishment - in flagrant disregard for international law - as genocide. We are working closely, particularly with Qatar, on humanitarian access, ceasefire negotiations, and reconstruction. We value Qatar's leading role in facilitating humanitarian aid and in advancing diplomatic initiatives aimed at bringing the massacre to an end.

The violence in Gaza threatens not only the Palestinian people but also the stability of the entire region. Tensions between Israel and Iran heighten the risk of a broader conflict, with the potential to disrupt the security balance from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Gulf. The deepening of the crisis poses serious threats in the form of new waves of displacement, increased radicalisation, and risks to energy security. The Gaza question is, therefore, not solely a humanitarian crisis, but also a matter of strategic importance for global security and peace.

The path to a solution is, in essence, clear. An immediate ceasefire must be declared, and all attacks must be halted unconditionally. Humanitarian corridors must be opened to ensure the unimpeded delivery of food, water, and medical aid, and international mechanisms must be established to protect civilians. Türkiye stands ready to serve as an actor in shaping this process. War crimes and human rights violations must be investigated before the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice; perpetrators must be held to account before the law. Sustainable resources must be secured for aid organisations - particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) - which are being strangled by Israeli pressure. The reconstruction of Gaza must not be confined to rebuilding destroyed structures; it must evolve into a comprehensive process that safeguards the rights to education, healthcare, infrastructure, economic development, and political representation. This process should be conducted with the direct participation of the local population and under the oversight of the United Nations and regional organisations. The foundation of lasting peace lies in the recognition of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine with its territorial integrity safeguarded. A two-state solution is the sole key to peace and stability in the region.

The events in Gaza once again demonstrate that war also targets those who pursue truth. In recent months, numerous journalists have been murdered simply for doing their duty, striving to bring the reality of conflict zones to the world. The losses suffered by Al Jazeera, in particular, rank among the most brutal assaults on press freedom and the right to information. The death of courageous individuals who strive to bring the truth to the world and to lift the veil of lies and propaganda that shrouds war is a profound loss for us all. Their memory will remain a symbol of the pursuit of justice. I extend my condolences to the families of the deceased, to their colleagues, and to the entire media community.

The cause of Palestine and Gaza transcends borders; it is a common test for humanity. We must never forget the heavy price borne by human dignity when the world turned a blind eye to the tragedies of Bosnia and Rwanda. For this reason, Türkiye's unwavering stance on Gaza is both a moral obligation and a strategic necessity. Together with all actors who believe in humanitarian diplomacy, foremost among them Qatar, we will continue our efforts towards a lasting, just, and honourable peace. We hold the view that achieving peace is not beyond reach, but rather an essential goal that has been awaited for far too long. We are committed to making every effort to achieve peace and will persist in our endeavours. History is bearing witness to those who took action and to those who turned away from the cruelty in Gaza. Gaza has no time to lose; the international community must heed the voice of the global conscience and act. The future of humanity will be shaped by the courage of the steps we take today.

## Important Notice

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# 80 years after Hiroshima: American bombs have turned Gaza into Hiroshima 2.0

Maung Zarni

As evidenced from the freshly emerging videos and photos, Gaza's physical landscape today resembles Hiroshima on the morning of Aug. 7, 1945, just as Israel's mass killing of Palestinians of all ages is the direct, intended outcome by Israel's planners of this "war for annihilation" of an entire Palestinian society mirrored by the near-total destruction of the physical infrastructure that sheltered the 2.3 million Palestinians at the start of the war on Oct. 8, 2023.

The vastly undercounted deaths of over 60,000 - of whom more than 16,000 were babies, and children - by the Gaza Health Ministry must be paired with the staggering number 377,000, a number presented by Dr. Yaakov Garb, professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev as "missing" Gazans (presumed dead and buried under dozens of tons of rubble of bombed out Gazan buildings).

Let's also not forget that Israel had allowed Gaza to exist as its "open-air prison," to use the term publicly uttered by retired Israeli Navy Adm. Ami Ayalon who also served as the chief of Shin Bet, or Shabek, which runs Gaza like prison guards, since 2007. That was the year when Hamas became the elected government of the 45-kilometer (28-mile) strip along the hydrocarbon-rich Mediterranean Sea, something Israel eyes with its characteristic lust for land and resources.

Chillingly, the common element here is that both Hiroshima and Gaza have been variously vaporized by American weapons. Obviously, the estimated 80,000 tons of explosives delivered through Made-in-USA 500 and 1,000 kg bombs - all provided by bipartisan Washington - and dropped from F-35s almost daily and nightly over 660 days, could do a similar degree of physical destruction as then-US President Harry S Truman's bombs did in Hiroshima

and Nagasaki.

Here worth noting is the fact that the American creator of history's first-ever atomic bomb, J. Robert Oppenheimer, the German-trained professor of theoretical physics at the flagship campus of the University of California, in Berkeley, was capable of the painful and honest self-reflection that "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds."

Alas, there is absolutely no sign of such capacity for honest soul-searching amongst the American political leaders and their foreign policy advisors: the United States continues to be the destroyer of worlds - that is, other peoples' worlds (wholesale societies, countries, and nations), from the Korean Peninsula to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to throughout the Muslim Middle East of Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and now Gaza and all of the occupied Palestine, as well as Latin America.

In the early autumn of 2016, I visited Hiroshima with an old British friend of mine, Professor Edward Vickers, whose father is a retired Royal Air Force pilot. Ed resides in Japan with his Japanese partner and their children. I was in Kyoto for a small international seminar on comparative cases of genocidal violence, where I presented my main research theme of my own "Buddhist" country's genocide against Rohingya people, still ongoing to date.

I decided to take a long train journey from Kyoto to Hiroshima and asked Ed to join me at Hiroshima, a place we had both wanted to go. For me, Hiroshima has long had a personal ring: the extended American family (of two sisters, both of whom did their undergraduate degrees at Oppenheimer's university when he was on the faculty of physics) which practically adopted me as a young foreign graduate student in Northern California was entangled in the Manhattan Project. The

older sister got a job at Los Alamos National Lab where the bomb was developed, specifically as Oppenheimer's personal secretary. As a matter of fact, her boss walked her down the aisle at a small chapel established for the thousands of project workers as she fell in love with and married a young scientist working on the project.

If it weren't for the name Hiroshima and our historical knowledge it triggers, we would see neither the traces of the old Hiroshima nor the evidence of the first atomic bomb's impact on the physical and natural environment.

Israel's genocidal patron, namely the leaderships of the United States, have shown an utter and complete lack of human empathy, conscience, or regard for the post-Hiroshima, post-Holocaust international law, which they helped create.

The United States has long become death, and destroyer of the worlds, while its corporate political class continues to celebrate its power of annihilation and seeks to send the message that they will continue to destroy the world, natural and human, in order to rule over it. George Orwell got one thing wrong: war is profit (for corporate masters of our universe), not peace. For that reason alone, I am not so sure that we can be optimistic about Gaza's reconstruction a la post-war Hiroshima, even as a Trumpian dystopian riviera on the unmarked mass graves of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians exterminated in their extended families over two or three generations. As Rev. Dr Munther Isaac, the renowned Palestinian theologian of Shepherd's Field, Bethlehem, said in his recent address to the Churches for the Middle East Peace Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, US, the ongoing US-Israel's joint mass extermination campaign against his fellow people in Gaza (and the West Bank) is the clearest

indication of the total collapse of the current moral order of this post-Holocaust world.

In Isaac's words, "Never again!" is really "Yet again!" while the Zionized Imperialists have integrated elements of both Auschwitz (closed on Jan. 27, 1945) and Hiroshima (destroyed on Aug. 6, 1945) in their annihilation of Gaza, both the physical environment and residential human population. Isaac continued: "The law (now) protects the perpetrators of genocide in Gaza while punishing those who oppose (this crime against humanity)."

In passing, I will point out that even the relentless attempts to deny, defy, and erase truths about the US and Israel by the planners, executioners and supporters of the genocide in Gaza have a precedent in the way the United States as the occupying military power in Tokyo handled the atomic bomb survivors' attempts to document and tell the factual truths about what the Americans did with it in a single morning at 8.15 am on Aug. 6, 1945.

The destroyers of Gaza today see themselves as God's chosen people with the divine right to perpetrate a Holocaust of their own against the largely Muslim population of Palestine, whose land they have stolen to build "the Jewish national homeland," under the imperial patronage of first Britain and now the US. There are daily crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in Gaza by US and Israel over 660 mornings - and still counting.

So expect these two states to become even more shrill and extreme as they struggle to exterminate factual truths about their victim-livestreamed crimes against Palestinians, specifically, the bogus "antisemitism" laws as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) run by the Jewish Supremacist or Jewish Exceptionalist working for the genocidal state of Israel.

AA

# Why disarming Hezbollah cannot wait

Hani Hazaimeh

LEBANON stands at a decisive crossroads. The choice is stark and unavoidable: reclaim the monopoly on legitimate force or watch the slow, irreversible erosion of the state. At the heart of this crisis lies Hezbollah's arsenal - a parallel military power that operates beyond government authority, answers to an external command structure and wields enough influence to veto national decisions at will.

For decades, Hezbollah's weapons have been justified under the banner of "resistance," originally framed as a necessary shield against Israeli aggression. That narrative, however, has long since expired. What began as a defensive posture has morphed into a political and military apparatus that holds the Lebanese state hostage, subverts democratic institutions and serves as an arm of a foreign power's regional strategy. Today, Hezbollah's weapons no longer protect Lebanon - they protect Hezbollah's ability to dictate Lebanon's future.

The foundation of any sovereign state is its monopoly over the use of force. In Lebanon, this principle is broken. Hezbollah maintains a standing arsenal, a command structure independent of the national army and the capacity to make war or peace without consulting the state. This dual security system corrodes the very idea of sovereignty. One side is accountable to the Lebanese people through democratic governance. The other side is accountable to foreigners, drawing its legitimacy from an ideology and an external agenda that do not always align with Lebanon's national interests. As long as Hezbollah retains its weapons, Lebanon's national sovereignty is conditional at best - a slogan for political speeches rather than a lived reality. Foreign policy decisions will remain hostage to the calculations of an armed faction whose priorities extend far beyond Lebanon's borders.

The consequences of this military imbalance are not theoretical. Every regional escalation risks pulling Lebanon into confrontation, whether through military exchanges with Israel or covert operations on Lebanese soil. This constant risk makes the country a bargaining chip in geopolitical rivalries it cannot control and should not have to endure. The region itself is moving toward a different paradigm. Arab capitals are engaging in diplomacy and prioritizing economic recovery over ideological confrontation. Supporters of Hezbollah's armed status often argue that these weapons serve as a deterrent against Israeli aggression. In practice, they have not prevented conflict; they have invited it. Each round of escalation devastates Lebanese infrastructure, displaces civilians and deepens the economic crisis. The destruction of southern Lebanon in past confrontations and the lingering risk of renewed war are proof that this deterrent is, at best, a temporary shield with a devastating price tag.

Moreover, the military balance has shifted in ways that diminish Hezbollah's strategic value. Israel's technological and intelligence capabilities have evolved, making Hezbollah's arsenal less of a deterrent and more of a liability. What remains is a political reality: the weapons are less about protecting Lebanon from external threats and more about preserving Hezbollah's leverage in the internal balance of power. Beyond the battlefield, the presence of an armed faction outside state control distorts Lebanon's democratic process. No government can operate freely when one political actor can back its demands with the implicit - or explicit - threat of force. Cabinet decisions, parliamentary debates and policy initiatives all exist under the shadow of Hezbollah's military muscle. This imbalance makes genuine reform nearly impossible. Political leaders, even those opposed to Hezbollah's influence, must calculate their positions based not only on the public interest but also on the risk of provoking an armed response. The result is a system in which accountability is selective, governance is paralyzed and corruption thrives in the absence of real checks and balances. Lebanon's prolonged economic collapse - marked by currency devaluation, banking failures and mass emigration - has been compounded by political paralysis. International donors have made clear that aid and investment depend on political stability, transparency and a functioning state. None of these are possible while an armed group operates outside the chain of command of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The longer the disarmament issue is postponed, the deeper Lebanon sinks into dependency and division. As economic desperation grows, the state's capacity to assert itself will shrink, making eventual disarmament even harder. The country risks reaching a point where the armed status quo becomes so entrenched that it can only be dismantled through crisis, not consensus. Disarming Hezbollah will not be easy. It will require a coordinated national strategy that combines political consensus, regional diplomacy and international support. The Lebanese state must reassert itself as the sole legitimate authority over arms within its borders. This is not merely a security measure - it is a prerequisite for national revival.

The process will demand courage from Lebanon's political class, unity among its fractured institutions and a clear message to both domestic and foreign actors: the era of divided sovereignty must end. Regional partners must also recognize that a stable, unified Lebanon serves the interest of the entire Middle East. Without their support - political, financial and diplomatic - the Lebanese state will struggle to break free from the cycle of dependency and coercion. In the end, the debate over Hezbollah's weapons is not just about disarmament; it is about whether Lebanon chooses to be a real state or a geopolitical pawn. A sovereign Lebanon can decide its own foreign policy, rebuild its economy and restore public trust in governance. A Lebanon where an armed faction holds veto power over national decisions will remain trapped in instability, vulnerable to external manipulation and cut off from the opportunities of a changing region. The choice is urgent. Delay will only make the cost higher and the consequences more severe. Disarmament is not a favor to foreign powers, nor is it an act of hostility toward a single community. It is an act of self-preservation - the only path toward reclaiming Lebanon's sovereignty, securing its future and honoring the right of its people to live in a state where power is wielded by elected leaders, not by the force of arms.

Arab News

# Scope, sustainability of Trump's new trade agreements

Dr. Adam Yousef

ON Aug. 7, US President Donald Trump's new tariffs on imports from dozens of countries took effect. Prior to that, the Trump administration concluded several agreements with various partners, including the European Union, the UK and Japan. Those agreements raise several questions: Why were they agreed? What did the parties seek to gain? Could they be realistically fulfilled? Will they avert future tariffs and economic discord?

In an earlier article for Anadolu, I highlighted the fact that as the Trump administration escalated its tariff rhetoric, some countries either started increasing their holdings of US Treasury Bonds (with the intention of later selling them), or threatened to sell their existing holdings. With a mounting national debt that exceeds \$37 trillion, an impending economic slowdown, and the

risk of higher inflation, the US finds itself in a precarious situation. In addition, there is a domestic political context in which the Trump administration is underperforming in the polls, and an international context characterized by increased polarization amidst continuing wars in Europe and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, other countries are keen to mitigate the effect of US tariffs on their exports, given that their growth prospects are relatively subdued and the US remains the world's largest importer. Countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia and China have based their growth strategies on exporting manufacturing products, and they have been targeted by the Trump administration as it seeks to reshape manufacturing. Meanwhile, European countries seek to reduce the effect of tariffs on specific sectors (e.g., automobiles and steel) that the US considers vital to its national interests, while other

partners seek US support to grow their nascent activity in frontier industries (e.g., the United Arab Emirates (UAE)). All this made it timely and necessary for all parties to reach agreements and restore much-needed stability. We still do not have the full details behind the announcements. Nevertheless, scrutinizing the announcements, one would be amazed by the magnitude and scope.

For example: The agreement with the UAE secured \$200 billion in commercial deals for the US, covering aerospace, aluminum, energy and artificial intelligence (AI). The agreement with the EU commits it to the purchase of \$750 billion in US energy exports and to invest \$600 billion in the US by 2028. The agreement with Japan commits it to investing \$550 billion in key US industries, including energy, semiconductors, critical mineral

mining and pharmaceuticals. The announcements cover more than just tariffs. They are better described as economic cooperation agreements since they address non-tariff barriers, investment, and comprehensive sector-specific collaboration. This reflects the Trump administration's strategic take on economic relations with countries - allies or rivals. Tariffs and trade policy are part of a broader toolkit used to secure political, economic and industrial advantages for the US. Furthermore, the Trump administration has retained tariff rates on those countries that are higher than those in place before March 2025 - UAE: 10%, Japan: 15%, the EU: 15%. In other words, the agreements did not lead to tariff-free trade.

Another thing to highlight is the incredible numbers announced. For example, Japan's \$550 billion commitment represents approxi-

mately 14% of its annual gross domestic product and 32% of all assets under management of its Government Pension Investment Fund, which is the largest pool of retirement savings in the world. The figures are too large to be realistically fulfilled, and the same applies to some of the other announcements made. It underscores that the numbers should not be viewed as the primary focus of the agreements. From the US perspective, the agreements with the Gulf countries reinforced existing economic and security partnerships while countering China's political, military and economic rapprochement with those states. In contrast, the agreement with the EU aimed to deepen European reliance on US energy imports while preserving access to the EU's single market and retaining protections for US companies via the 15% tariff.

From the perspective of the other countries, a com-

mon denominator was to secure US cooperation - political, military and economic - while reducing the tariff rates on their exports. With this in mind, are the agreements likely to survive? While it is virtually impossible to predict the future, one could envisage a scenario where the signatories opt to amend or replace them.

For example, the EU-EEU agreement has already been significantly criticized by leading French and German politicians, while recent surveys of US consumers reveal their displeasure with current US trade policy. We have already seen the first Trump administration replace a previous agreement with Mexico and Canada (NAFTA) with another (USMCA). Therefore, the agreements are unlikely to serve as permanent accords and bulwarks against future tariffs. In an era of growing economic nationalism and geostrategic rivalry, discord perennially remains a possibility.



# Major European cities have little but tourism left

Khaled Abou Zahr

ON the recent occasions I have returned to Paris, the city where I grew up, I have noticed a shift. There was once a cafe and bakery in the Trocadero, overlooking the Eiffel Tower, a place you could just walk into without a reservation to enjoy a coffee and one of the best croissants in town. Now, every time I pass by, there is a long queue of tourists waiting to be seated. A glance at the terrace shows that most are there to film themselves pouring hot chocolate and whipped cream to post on Snapchat or TikTok. This is textbook social media-driven over-tourism.

While it has certainly made the owners of the cafe happy, it has destroyed the fabric of the place. Indeed, this constant rush of visitors has made it nearly impossible for the locals to sit down and enjoy a coffee and a croissant or a pain au chocolat, like I did with my family and friends when I still lived in Paris. This has deprived many like myself of a "madeleine" moment that reminds them of their younger years.

I also imagine that the familiar faces we would once see regularly and create a bond with must have all but disappeared. In that instance, I would not mind and would be quite happy to see people from across the world enjoying a nice Parisian terrace; if it were not for the fact that no one was actually drinking their delicious hot chocolate or enjoying their pastries, but only filming the moment to share on their social media accounts.

Parisians (which I consider myself to be even before being French) are a special breed and are quick to criticize. We are usually unimpressed by anything and have

an indifferent attitude. Today, however, locals in most cities across Europe have started to feel resentment toward tourists, just as Parisians do. And we should not forget that tourists, too, have their frustrations with the City of Light.

Moreover, these changes have a real impact on people's daily lives. It starts with real estate and rental prices going up due to Airbnb and other furnished rentals popping up. Small grocery stores then usually change their prices to reflect "tourist prices." Increased traffic and footfall increase inflation due to rising demand. These countries and areas may be dependent on tourism and might have to support some changes and sacrifice some local areas. France's tourism sector contributed a record-breaking €246 billion (\$288 billion) in 2023, or 8.8 percent of gross domestic product. It accounts for nearly 2.9 million jobs.

So, tourism is not just a romantic way for foreigners to make memorable moments, but an economic necessity. Paris' travel and tourism industry brought in nearly \$36 billion in 2022 and accounts directly for 3.5 percent of the city's economy, along with much more indirectly through supporting activities. According to L'Institut Paris Region, tourism sustains more than 300,000 jobs. It is most certainly similar for other European hubs such as London, Rome and Barcelona, which, with time and the changes in their countries' economies, have also become highly reliant on tourism. Western capitals and landmark cities are among the world's most visited and have become addicted to tourist inflow.

It is now becoming clear that overreliance on tourism is a risk,

while also being a witness to a changing world. One clear outcome is that it leaves cities vulnerable to many crises. While locals are complaining and protesting, it might not be their activities that stop the inflow of tourists, but a crisis such as a shift in travel trends, a pandemic like we witnessed just a few years ago or even a geopolitical shift with a lack of visas granted. Yet, many cities have shifted their economies to be exclusively specialized toward tourists. This makes them vulnerable. Can policymakers find a way to balance both locals' lives and tourism's economic importance? I have my doubts. I think that until the "hot chocolate on social media" trend passes, I will still be deprived of my favorite pain au chocolat.

The show "Emily in Paris" encapsulates a specific aspect of this dynamic and the importance of tourism for jobs. The show has been so influential that, of those who said that pop culture inspired them to visit the city, 38 percent said it was "Emily in Paris" that persuaded them. This impact even forced an intervention from the highest level of politics in France, when news emerged that the show might move its main character to Rome. Indeed, the reaction was swift and French President Emmanuel Macron publicly declared: "We will fight hard. And we will ask them to remain in Paris." Amid difficult times in the Middle East and rising global tensions, this is futile. However, I believe it tells a deeper story of a changing world and shifting balances of power. Global tourism is today also a barometer of how economic power is shifting. While, 50 years ago, the Western tourist represented the entire value of tourism,

purchasing power is today increasingly dispersed across a broader set of nations. The rapid rise in outbound travel from countries such as China, India, Brazil and Mexico demonstrates how greater disposable incomes in these nations are reshaping the flows of international visitors.

This diversification of global purchasing power can also be seen in global geopolitical dynamics, as nations capable of generating both capital flows and outbound tourists are gaining more diplomatic and political weight globally. Europe's increasing reliance on these markets for economic vitality has translated into a shift in their weight in terms of political affairs. It is something we are already witnessing. While decisions and political solutions used to mainly come from the West, now, just like the tourists, they come from across the world. Many critics of the last decade's policies have stated that Paris, London and other European cities now represent what the countries have become: a hotel, a museum and a restaurant. They are only capable of exploiting their past greatness, symbolized by grandiose architecture and a way of life, including culinary delights. And that's it.

While I can imagine how a foreign dignitary would have felt arriving in London at the beginning of the last century and crossing The Mall, which projected power and advancements, today it is no longer impressive. But it amazes as a historical passage that attracts tourists and needs their money to fund its maintenance. In light of this, the exclusive focus on artificial intelligence by Western powers could look like a last effort to regain their advantage. But this time they are not alone.

# Can Pistorius' reforms secure Bundeswehr's future?

Prof. Ulrich Schlie

**BORIS Pistorius has now been German defense minister for over 2 1/2 years. The press and public opinion remain favorable towards him. His predecessor, Christine Lambrecht, was considered unlucky and leisure-oriented, while he is seen as hands-on and determined. A Defense Ministry press release dated Aug. 1 announced that Pistorius has once again reorganized it. This is its third reorganization in just over two years. Anyone familiar with large organizations knows how disruptive restructuring of this magnitude can be.**

The reasons given are similar. According to the ministry press release, the aim this time is also to "strengthen military and strategic leadership capabilities, further accelerate procurement, and organize the necessary expansion of the armed forces." The statement succinctly states that the move aims for "even closer integration and a resulting adjustment of the top structure and leadership organization."

Specifically, this means that in the future there will be three instead of two permanent state secretaries (i.e. ultimately four, if the inspector general is considered on par with the state secretaries), a new situation and command center will be assigned to the inspector general, central mission management will remain with a control staff introduced by Pistorius in the management area, the planning and command staff, also introduced by Pistorius just two years ago, will lose responsibilities, the number of departments will be slightly reduced from 10 to eight, but a new level of main departments - "Armed Forces" and "Growth" - is introduced, which can be considered prime inter pares among the now eight departments. Pistorius has thus achieved the dubious feat of having tinkered with the structures of the ministry the most frequently in the last 30 years within a comparatively short period of time, repeatedly correcting himself and, overall - with the increase in the number of state secretaries to three and the introduction of two main departments - having made the ministry even more top-heavy. Whether the declared goal of strategic control can be achieved this way is more than questionable.

The German Armed Forces and Defense Ministry remain significantly below their potential, particularly because the ministry is plagued by duplication of work, excessive hierarchical structures, and a climate of widespread frustration. The work of military staff and the requirements of ministerial bureaucracy are incompatible. Strategic decisions cannot be prepared exclusively in military departments. Errors in the leadership organization lead to divisions and information blockages. A lack of a strong culture of trust leads to mistakes being covered up, and behind the big picture, hidden systems with their own agendas and dual loyalties emerge.

For many years, the German Armed Forces have suffered from stalled reforms, empty promises of reorganization, and the spirals of a change management process with an unclear outcome. In addition, the gap between political leadership and the technical levels of the ministry and the armed forces has widened in recent years. At the same time, the ministry has grown considerably in terms of permanent positions. The associated bureaucratic effort has led to considerable personal and professional frustration and ultimately has not resulted in any streamlining of processes. Even today, there is no uniform understanding within the ministry as to how the organization should be effectively and efficiently organized in the future and how the individual areas of reform should be linked. The fundamental question for the leadership of the ministry is how to strike a balance between cross-service and cross-organizational leadership on the one hand and the involvement of personnel and expertise from the ministry and its subordinate departments on the other.

It is striking that the ministry restructuring took place before the government's organizational decision to introduce a National Security Council: this is a

topic on which Pistorius is conspicuously reticent in his commentary. If the government is serious about the structural adjustments in security policy associated with the establishment of a National Security Council, it would have made more sense to wait for further decisions in this area, because the consequence of this plan can only be: "After the reform is before the reform."

The yardstick for this reform is whether the new leadership structure facilitates the political role of the defense minister as a departmental minister and holder of command-and-control authority. His Social Democratic predecessor Helmut Schmidt complained about the top-down structure of the ministry in 1968, while still serving as parliamentary party leader. The Blankensee Decree, which he issued in 1970 as defense minister, did not solve all the problems, but for the first time clearly outlined and strengthened the role of the inspector general. In 2011, then-Defense Minister Thomas

scription - more precisely, it is only a matter of ending the suspension of conscription for basic military service decided by the Bundestag in 2010 by means of a simple legal regulation, i.e., without amending the Basic Law - Pistorius favors the neither-fish-nor-fowl solution of voluntary military service because he is reluctant to speak out in favor of universal conscription for party political reasons. In terms of the strategic orientation of the armed forces as an instrument of politics, Pistorius did not leave his mark on the national security strategy adopted by the "traffic light" coalition government, and in 2023 he allowed the lead role to shift from the Defense Ministry to the Foreign Office, unlike in previous white papers on Germany's security policy and the future of the Bundeswehr. The National Security Strategy adopted in 2023 virtually excludes the role of the armed forces (as well as that of the Federal Intelligence Service), and the ministry was only peripherally involved in the drafting of the document. The conceptual founda-

**A lack of a strong culture of trust leads to mistakes being covered up, and behind the big picture, hidden systems with their own agendas and dual loyalties emerge. For many years, the German Armed Forces have suffered from stalled reforms, empty promises of reorganization, and the spirals of a change management process with an unclear outcome. In addition, the gap between political leadership and the technical levels of the ministry and the armed forces has widened in recent years. At the same time, the ministry has grown considerably in terms of permanent positions. The associated bureaucratic effort has led to considerable personal and professional frustration and ultimately has not resulted in any streamlining of processes. Even today, there is no uniform understanding within the ministry as to how the organization should be effectively and efficiently organized in the future and how the individual areas of reform should be linked.**

de Maiziere made adjustments in a Dresden decree and further strengthened the role of the inspector general of the Bundeswehr. And Pistorius also issued the Osnabrück Decree last June, a document named after his former political seat, in which he regulated the top-level structure.

However, Pistorius has not yet made any progress on crucial issues relating to the reorganization of the Bundeswehr. The problems that have existed for years in military procurement remain unresolved. The aid deliveries in the Russia-Ukraine war make it more necessary than ever to replace outdated equipment, replenish stocks that have been significantly reduced in recent decades, and promptly carry out the resupply necessitated by the changing capability profile. The potential for rationalization has been largely exhausted in recent years. Underfunding has largely depleted the substance and reserves of the armed forces. Within defense investment expenditures, current projects can just about be maintained. For a long time, the budget for material maintenance has been set below the statutory requirements. This has long since led to the decommissioning of weapon systems and a massive reduction in operations. Even with the various restructuring measures of recent years, it has not been possible to bridge the growing gap between the demand side, the armed forces, and the armaments sector, which sees itself as the supply side. The operationalization of armaments policy priorities still has a number of weaknesses. The processes in customer product management in particular, with their claim to seek "golden solutions," lead to bureaucratic bloat, the hierarchization of decisions, and the diffusion of responsibility, thus resulting in an unacceptable slowdown of the process.

On the question of reintroducing universal con-

tions for the Bundeswehr's new role remain undressed. It will be interesting to see how the National Security Council implements the tasks of the instruments derived from a national umbrella document in line with the logic of a new security architecture. Pistorius' track record will become clearer when he is measured against the yardsticks of his third structural reform within a year. Will the Bundeswehr become less bureaucratic when another state secretary responsible for innovation and digital affairs joins the team in the future? Will the role of the inspector general as military advisor to the federal government and as the highest-ranking soldier in the German armed forces be strengthened, especially in his internal role in the management of the ministry? How is a minister supposed to cope with such a wide range of tasks if he continues to inflate his political management structure and imposes an increasingly complicated bureaucratic superstructure on the units where the actual ministerial work is to be done, i.e., the departments? Finally, what role does the ministry play in the overall structure of the new architecture, a question that will sooner or later arise with regard to the National Security Council?

Last autumn, Pistorius gave a master class in political power politics when he waited too long to withdraw from the race for the chancellorship, putting then-incumbent Chancellor Olaf Scholz, his party colleague who wanted to run again but was less popular than Pistorius, in a difficult position. Pistorius secured his return to the federal government after the SPD lost the elections, and he probably also had a free hand in choosing his position. Since then, he has been considered a papabile. However, after several attempts at structural reform, he has yet to deliver on his cabinet piece as defense minister.

# India and Saudi Arabia: Shaping a shared future together

Dr. Suhel Ajaz Khan

ON the occasion of the 79th Independence Day of India, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to all Indian citizens in Saudi Arabia, and to our dear Saudi friends and partners. Aug. 15 holds great importance for every Indian, as it was on this day in 1947 that India gained independence. It marked the end of colonial rule and the beginning of our journey as the world's largest democracy. On this day we remember those who fought for our freedom, and we honor the brave soldiers who continue to protect our borders, many of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice for the country.

India is proud of its rich civilizational history, diverse cultural ethos, and strong democratic values. India's approach to international relations is based on trust and partnership. India is a leading voice for the Global South, has been a major contributor to UN peacekeeping efforts, and has taken an active role in upholding sustainability and climate action.

Close to eight decades after Independence, India stands out as a shining example of what is possible through the collective action of 1.4 billion people. In the economic realm India is a leader in global trade, investments, and innovation, driven by a robust business environment, a dynamic demographic profile, and sustained economic reforms.

As the world's fourth-largest economy with a GDP size larger than \$4 trillion, we are on track to become the third-largest economy with a projected GDP of \$7.3 trillion by 2030. India is also the world's fastest-growing major economy with real GDP growing at 6.5 percent on average.

India remains a favored destina-

tion for global investments, with cumulative FDI inflows reaching \$1.05 trillion as of 2024-25. Our strategic initiatives such as Production Linked Incentive schemes, revitalization of MSMEs, and the expansion of digital infrastructure have laid the foundation for a high-growth, high-opportunity economy. We have charted new paths, from space to the high seas, and set our goals on a developed India by 2047.

This day is also a time to reflect on our close relationships with key partners. Saudi Arabia is one of India's most trusted and valued strategic partners. Our ties are rooted in a rich tapestry of civilizational, cultural, and commercial connections that date back centuries. Today, the India-Saudi partnership spans a wide array of domains, including defense, security, trade, investment, energy, technology, healthcare, education, culture, and vibrant people-to-people exchanges. However, the strength of our relationship goes far beyond individual sectors: It is anchored in mutual trust, goodwill, and a shared recognition that, in an increasingly uncertain world, our partnership stands as a pillar of stability and strength.

The landmark state visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Kingdom in April 2025 was a true reflection of this deepening bond. Prime Minister Modi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had highly productive engagements in Jeddah, resulting in key outcomes - including the agreement on the establishment of two India-Saudi joint venture refineries in India, and agreements in health,

space cooperation, sports and postal cooperation. The two leaders co-chaired the second meeting of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council, or SPC, during this visit. And in keeping with the deepening of the strategic partnership over the past few years, two new ministerial committees under the SPC, one on defense cooperation and another on tourism and cultural cooperation, were created.

On the commercial side, our bilateral trade reached around \$42 billion in 2024-25. India is now Saudi Arabia's second-largest trading partner, and the Kingdom ranks fifth for India. Indian companies are increasingly investing in Saudi Arabia. Many of them are involved in major infrastructure and energy projects under Vision 2030. Indian IT and tech firms are contributing to Saudi Arabia's digital transformation, while interest is also growing in areas like healthcare, logistics, mining, and startups. We have set up strong institutional frameworks, including a Ministerial Committee on Economy, Energy, Investment and Technology, and a high-level task force on investment. Our economic visions - the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and India's Viksit Bharat (Developed India) 2047 - complement each other, creating vast synergies for growth.

Energy remains a key pillar of our partnership. Saudi Arabia is a major and reliable supplier of oil and gas, which continues to support India's development. We are also working with Saudi Arabia in areas such as solar, wind, and hydrogen. An agreement signed in 2023 covers electrical interconnection, hydrogen, and sup-

ply chains. We are exploring the idea of linking our power grids - a project that fits within the broader India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor announced in 2023.

We recognize that stability, in the region and beyond, benefits our nations and the world. To this end, defense cooperation has grown steadily. The first joint army exercise, Sada Tanseeg, took place last year, along with two naval exercises - Al-Mohed Al-Hindi - in 2021 and 2023. There are regular exchanges of military leadership, training programs, and growing collaboration in defense industries. On the security front, we are working closely together to combat terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, and cyber threats.

The vibrant Indian community in Saudi Arabia is a living bridge connecting our two countries. We deeply appreciate the role of the Saudi leadership in taking care of the welfare of 2.7 million Indians living in the Kingdom. We also congratulate the Saudi leadership for successfully organizing the Hajj pilgrimage this year.

India and Saudi Arabia are not only consolidating a dynamic partnership but also charting a bold vision for the future. Together, we are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping peace, progress, and prosperity; not just for our people, but for the entire world. On behalf of the government, people of India and the Indian diaspora in the Kingdom, I take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the sustained peace, progress, and prosperity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

# This is the most dangerous moment of the war for Zelensky

Adrian Blomfield

TO a degree, Vladimir Putin has already won. Securing a one-on-one summit with a US president is something he has long coveted. American leaders rarely meet pariahs. Sitting down with Donald Trump cloaks Putin in legitimacy, flatters his great-power pretensions and delivers a propaganda coup to burnish his domestic standing - a prize won not for a tangible concession, just the merest hint of one.

Having banked a symbolic victory, Putin will hope Friday's summit in Alaska yields a far greater one: the legitimisation of his Ukrainian land grab. For Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's leader, this is arguably the most perilous moment of the war - one in which his country's fate could be decided at a meeting he wasn't invited to. If the worst happens, he and his European allies fear, it would amount to a betrayal on the scale of history's great power carve-ups.

Parallels are already being drawn with Yalta in 1945, when Stalin coerced Churchill and Roosevelt into redrawing Poland's borders and consigning it to Soviet overlordship, and Munich in 1938, when Chamberlain ceded the Sudetenland to Hitler - decisions taken without the countries concerned being present. To prevent a repeat, Mr Zelensky and his European allies have been locked in frantic diplomacy ever since Steve Witkoff, Mr Trump's golfing partner turned peace envoy,

emerged from a Moscow meeting last week heralding a surprise breakthrough.

Putin, he said, was ready to halt hostilities in return for a territorial swap in eastern Ukraine. The claim so impressed the White House that Mr Trump dropped plans to impose new sanctions on Russia and instead agreed to a grand summit.

European officials scrambled to find out what Putin had actually offered - a task that reportedly required three telephone calls with Washington because, embarrassingly, Mr Witkoff seemed unsure of the details. "What became apparent in time was that the Russian offer was much less substantial than initially understood," said one European official briefed on the talks.

Mr Witkoff appeared to believe Putin had offered to surrender Russian-occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions in exchange for territory in Luhansk and Donetsk under Kyiv's control - a potential concession.

In reality, Putin demanded all of Luhansk and Donetsk in exchange for a ceasefire and freezing the frontlines in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, in effect attempting to secure at the negotiating table what his forces had failed to seize in battle. European leaders were aghast and alarmed that Mr Trump seemed willing to entertain the idea. They pressed their case directly with the president and his deputy, catching JD Vance during a

busman's holiday in the Cotswolds.

The pressure worked - to a point. Mr Trump began playing down expectations, calling the Alaska meeting a "feel-out" session. His press secretary described it as a "listening exercise." Mr Trump promised: "I'm going to call President Zelensky and the European leaders right after the meeting. I'm not going to make a deal." Yet reassurance goes only so far. Diplomats say Mr Trump is often swayed by the last person he speaks to - a risk magnified when that person is Putin. In 2018, Mr Trump emerged from a two-hour meeting with Putin in Helsinki openly dazzled, accepting the Russian's denial of election interference over the findings of his own intelligence agencies and embracing his proposal for a joint US-Russia cyber task force. John McCain, the late Republican senator, called it "one of the most disgraceful performances by an American president in memory".

This time, the stakes are far higher - and the US has even fewer Russia hands in place. Many senior specialists at the State Department and National Security Council have been purged in the Trump administration's drive to gut the federal workforce. The US lacks a serving ambassador in Moscow and Kyiv. Ironically, it has fallen to European leaders, rather than US diplomats, to prepare Mr Trump for the summit - leaders who will

not be present when he faces Putin, a former KGB officer renowned for his guile. "The question is who will be in the room to help Trump see through Putin when he bulls---," a Western diplomat said. "And I fear the answer is: no one."

Putin is likely to flatter and cajole. He may revive his claim that Ukraine has provoked its own invasion - an argument Mr Trump has shown sympathy for - or even invoke Alaska's 1867 purchase from Russia as proof of border fluidity. He could also win Mr Trump's favour by backing his territorial claims in Greenland. If he succeeds, the summit could end with Mr Trump echoing Kremlin talking points and endorsing a carve-up of Ukraine - driving a wedge into the Western alliance. Mr Zelensky would then face an invidious choice: accept an unfavourable deal or reject it and be cast by Washington as the aggressor, risking the loss of vital US support.

European leaders hope they have done enough to avert the worst. If their diplomacy has succeeded, Mr Trump might even see through Putin and revert to his threat of harsher sanctions and energy tariffs - measures that could push Moscow towards a genuine ceasefire. It is a slender hope. But from such inauspicious beginnings, it is still possible that the two presidents could stumble on common ground to revive a peace process that Ukraine, battered and bloodied, urgently needs.

The Telegraph





Fly Jinnah marks Pakistan's 78th Independence Day with a special in-flight celebration

## Haroon and a choir come together at 30,000 feet for live performance



**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: August 14, 2025: In celebration of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's leading low-cost carrier, surprised passengers onboard its Karachi to Lahore flight with a unique in-flight

experience, marking the nation's cultural richness and unity. Renowned Pakistani artist Haroon Rashid, best known for his iconic anthem "Dil Se Maine Dekha Pakistan," performed live during the flight. He was joined by a multicultural choir featur-

ing voices from across Pakistan, with verses beautifully rendered in Sindhi, Balochi, Pashto, Punjabi, and Urdu, reflecting the country's diversity. Adding to the festive atmosphere, Fly Jinnah's cabin crew, representing various regions across Pakistan, participated in

the celebration onboard, further enhancing the onboard experience for passengers.

Fly Jinnah spokesperson commented: "Our commitment at Fly Jinnah extends beyond providing convenient and reliable travel services. We also recognize the importance of creating moments that bring people together. This Independence Day, we aimed to deliver a unique experience that goes beyond transportation and celebrates the culture and unity of the people and communities we serve."

The entire performance was professionally recorded, extending the celebration to audiences across the country and beyond.

To watch the full performance, Visit Fly Jinnah's Youtube Channel or social media channels to view the full performance.



MISSISSIPPI: A combine harvester and a field of corn during a harvest at Triple Run Farm in Dockery, Mississippi, US.

## SBP to Issue Rs.75/- commemorative coin to celebrate Marka-e-Haq

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: To honor the valor of our armed forces during the Marka-e-Haq and to celebrate Independence Day with due dignity, the Federal Government is pleased to issue a commemorative coin of Rs. 75 denomination, featuring the following metal composition, shape, and dimensions:-

Metal composition: Nickel-Brass, Cu 79%, Zn 20% & Ni 1%  
Dimension: 30.0 mm  
Weight: 13.5 grams

OBVERSE:

On the obverse side of the coin, the waxing crescent moon and five-pointed star facing North-West in rising position is in the center. Alongwith periphery on the top of the crescent star is inscribed in wording "ISLAMI JAMHURIA PAKISTAN" in Urdu



Obverse

Reverse

script. Below the crescent and on the top of two springs of wheat with arms curved upward, there is the year of issuance 2025. The face value of coin in numeral "75" in bold letters and RUPIA in Urdu script are written on the right and left sides of the crescent star respectively.

REVERSE:

On the reverse side of the coin, wordings "MARKA-E-HAQ" in Urdu script and "2025" in numeral are inscribed in the center.

The wordings "PAKISTAN HAMESHA ZINDABAD" in Urdu script is written along with the periphery on the top side of the coin. Two Fighter Aircrafts (shown

on right & left sides of the coin), one Naval Ship and one Multiple Rocket Launcher System (MRLS) are shown on the reverse side of the coin.

The coin shall be issued through the exchange counters of all the field offices of SBP Banking Services Corporation from August 15, 2025.

## Nadir Gabool visits OICCI



**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: The Spokesperson for the Government of Sindh, Nadir Gabool, visited the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) in Karachi - the oldest trade representative body in Pakistan, established in 1860 and representing leading foreign companies that contribute nearly one-third of Pakistan's total tax revenue.

During his meeting with the OICCI leadership,

Nadir Gabool outlined the Sindh Government's comprehensive strategy to foster trade, investment, and industrial growth in the province. He emphasized that Sindh is positioning itself as Pakistan's premier hub for commerce through a combination of infrastructure development, business reforms, and investor facilitation.

Among the flagship projects discussed were:

SITE Phase 2 Industrial Zone - A new 2,000-acre industrial estate to attract domestic and international

investors, backed by billions of rupees in infrastructure upgrades.

Sindh Business One Stop Shop (SBOSS) - A newly launched digital portal to automate and streamline company registration, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and promote transparency.

Safe City Project - Advanced surveillance, command, and control systems to enhance law and order, ensuring a secure environment for businesses and citizens.

Hub River Canal (100 MGD) - Recently inaugurated to improve Karachi's water supply, directly benefiting industries and residential areas.

Road and Port Connectivity Improvements - Ongoing upgrades to highways, industrial access roads, and links to Karachi Port and Port Qasim to facilitate smoother goods movement.

Renewable Energy Expansion - Continued investment in wind and solar projects in Jhimpir, Thatta, and other districts to meet industrial and urban energy demands sustainably.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Initiatives - Successful execution of large-scale PPP projects in health, education, and infrastructure, setting a model for private sector collaboration.

"The Sindh Government is determined to create an enabling environment for investors through infrastructure development, digital reforms, and strong security measures," said Nadir Gabool. "From industrial estates to the Safe City Project, from renewable energy to water security, our focus is on creating the conditions for sustained economic growth and investor confidence."

OICCI leadership welcomed the Sindh Government's efforts and acknowledged the importance of continuous engagement between public and private sectors to address business challenges and unlock new opportunities.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the province's commitment to inclusive, sustainable, and innovation-driven economic development.

## FFC observes Independence Day with Zeal at Sona Tower

**F.P. Report**



RAWALPINDI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) commemorated Pakistan's 78th Independence Day with a dignified flag hoisting ceremony at its Head Office, Sona Tower, Rawalpindi.

Held in sync with nationwide celebrations,

the event embodied the spirit of patriotism, unity, and national pride that defines FFC's corporate ethos.

MD&CEO, Mr. Jahangir Piracha hoisted the national flag and addressed employees and senior officials, stating:

"Independence Day is a reminder of the sacrifices

behind our freedom. At FFC, we remain committed to national progress and proudly stand with Pakistan as a true Partner in Prosperity."

The ceremony concluded with a collective pledge to uphold national values and continue contributing to a stronger, self-reliant Pakistan.

## Pakistan set to become olive oil exporter in 5-7 years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan is steadily moving towards self-sufficiency in olive oil and aims to become an exporter within the next five to seven years, said Dr. Muhammad Tariq, National Project Director at Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) on Friday.

Pakistan has the potential to be globally competitive across the olive value chain. Currently, the country imports over Rs2 billion worth of olive oil annually, a figure the government hopes to significantly cut through domestic production, he told Wealth Pakistan.

Dr Tariq heads the project titled "Promotion of Olive Cultivation on a Commercial Scale in Pakistan" at the MNFS&R.

He said that the ministry's Pakistan's olive cultivation programme has planted approximately 6.9 million olive trees under national and various provincial initiatives across 60 districts, engaging more than 11,400 farmers since its launch in 2014.

Backed by public-private partnerships, international agencies, and a farm-to-fork strategy, the initiative includes modern nursery management and sustainable irrigation systems on 5,594 acres, he said.

Additionally, 51 oil extraction units have been installed nationwide by national, provincial, and international organisations, he said. "The project has also supported post-harvest infrastructure, including fruit processing facilities, weather stations, and quality testing laboratories."

A major leap forward

came in 2022 when Pakistan shifted from importing saplings from Mediterranean countries to domestic propagation, reducing foreign dependency and boosting local capacity.

Since then, more than 238 training programmes have been conducted, reaching over 16,000 stakeholders and equipping them with skills in orchard management, oil extraction, and capacity building.

He said these efforts are beginning to bear fruit, with Pakistan's olive oils earning international acclaim. "LO-Loralai Olives," produced in Balochistan, secured a silver award at the 2025 New York World Olive Oil Competition — one of the industry's most prestigious contests.

Pakistan has also gained observer status at the International Olive Council, paving the way for deeper integration into the global olive industry," he added.

Dr. Tariq said the global

olive oil market, valued at \$15.2 billion in 2024, is projected to exceed \$18 billion by 2027, driven by rising health awareness and the growing adoption of Mediterranean diets. Increasing demand for organic and functional foods presents a timely opportunity for emerging producers like Pakistan to expand their footprint in the international market.

He said Pakistan's "olive revolution" is transforming barren lands into golden groves — from Balochistan's rugged highlands to Punjab's fertile plains.

"Unused land is now a productive agricultural ecosystem, supporting thousands of livelihoods," he added.

With over four million hectares deemed suitable for olive cultivation, long-term projections indicate the sector could contribute Rs7.6 billion annually to the national economy. Economic models forecast a 50% reduction in olive oil imports and a notable rise

in exports between 2019 and 2023.

Dr. Tariq said a National Olive Policy and Action Plan is currently under review to institutionalise progress. He noted that Pakistan's olive sector has seen a surge in entrepreneurship, growing from a handful of ventures to more than 85 startups nationwide.

These businesses produce extra virgin olive oil, pickles, jams, cosmetics, soaps, and nutraceuticals, contributing to rural employment, agribusiness diversification, and consumer health awareness.

He said there is untapped potential in carbon credits, pomace oil, and other olive by-products, which could further boost farmers' profitability.

Highlighting the environmental and health benefits, Dr. Tariq said olive trees contribute to carbon sequestration and climate resilience, while greater olive oil consumption could help reduce public healthcare costs.



## Weekly inflation up by 0.31 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.31 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on August 13, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 329.15 points as compared to 328.12 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 2.21 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the

base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed an increase of 0.31 per cent by going up to 317.94 from last week's 316.97 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733 to 22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 0.33 percent, 0.31 percent, 0.33 percent and 0.31 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 17 (33.33 percent) items increased, 09 (17.65 percent) items decreased and 25 (49.02 percent) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded major increase in their

average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (12.62 percent), chicken (4.68 percent), eggs (2.11 percent), onions (1.98 percent), garlic (1.60%), wheat flour (1.44 percent), gur (1.04 percent), pulse mash (0.52 percent) and firewood (0.17 percent).

The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included bananas (2.52 percent), potatoes (1.65 percent), pulse gram (0.84 percent), pulse moong (0.73 percent), lpg (0.36 percent), pulse masoor (0.29 percent), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.10 percent), salt powdered (0.06 percent) and rice irri-6/9 (0.04 percent).

On year-on-year basis, the commodities that wit-

nessed decrease in prices included

bananas (2.52 percent), potatoes (1.65 percent), pulse gram (0.84 percent), pulse moong (0.73 percent), lpg (0.36 percent), pulse masoor (0.29 percent), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.10 percent), salt powdered (0.06 percent) and rice irri-6/9 (0.04 percent).

The commodities which recorded a increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included onions (52.10 percent), tomatoes (34.33 percent), garlic (26.7 percent), pulse mash (22.62 percent), wheat flour (19.41 percent), packet (17.93 percent), potatoes (17.80 percent), pulse gram (10.88 percent), electricity charges for q1 (10.02 percent) and LPG (5.16 percent).

## MCB Islamic Bank inaugurates Dolmen Mall Branch, Lahore

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: MCB Islamic Bank proudly inaugurated its new, state-of-the-art branch at Dolmen Mall, Lahore on Pakistan's Independence Day.

The branch was inaugurated by Mian Mohammad Mansha - Chairman MCB Bank & Nishat Group, and hosted by Mr. Zargham Khan Durrani - President & CEO MCB Islamic Bank. The ceremony was also attended by senior management of MCB Islamic Bank.

Strategically located in one of Lahore's busiest lifestyle and retail hubs, the Dolmen Mall branch of MCB Islamic Bank is designed to enhance accessibility and cus-

tom convenience. The modern facility blends digital facilities with a welcoming, customer-focused environment, reflecting the Bank's core Islamic banking values.

The branch operates 7 days a week with extended timings and features a secure locker facility, offering unmatched convenience and flexibility to meet the evolving needs of customers.

It is fully equipped to serve walk-in clients with a comprehensive suite of Shariah-compliant banking services, seven days a week.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Zargham Khan Durrani - President & CEO MCB Islamic Bank said, "The inauguration of our Dolmen Mall branch

marks a significant milestone in our journey, reflecting MCB Islamic Bank's unwavering commitment to national progress, financial inclusion, and the delivery of ethical, modern Islamic

banking solutions."

This new addition to the Bank's growing network further underscores its dedication to providing seamless, Shariah-compliant financial services to the public.







In brief

Flick unhappy Rashford still not registered

LONDON (Agencies): Marcus Rashford has still not been registered by new club Barcelona, with manager Hansi Flick saying he is "not happy" about the situation. The Spanish champions' season begins on Saturday, but they are struggling to sign players because of La Liga's financial rules. In the 2024-25 season, Barca spent more on buying players and on wages than they made in revenue. "For me, the situation, you can imagine I'm not happy about that. But I know the situation and I believe in the club," Flick told a news conference on Friday. "We will focus on what we can change and what is in our hands. The other things, I believe in the club." Barcelona's finances have proved an issue in recent years, with them only being able to register Dani Olmo for the first half of the 2024-25 season as a special exception. They then had two appeals rejected in their attempt to register him for the rest of the season. The club were allowed to re-register him temporarily in January 2025, and that was extended to the end of the season in April. In 2022, they only managed to register four signings - including striker Robert Lewandowski - shortly before their opening fixture after freeing up funding with several 'economic levers'. This season, they have managed to partially help their registration headache by getting German goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen to agree to a long-term medical leave agreement, freeing up 80% of his wage value to register a replacement. The departure of 34-year-old defender Inigo Martinez to Saudi Arabian club Al-Nassr has also freed up salary space. Defender Joao Garcia is also yet to be registered. Barcelona's first game of the season takes place at Mallorca on Saturday (18:30 BST).

Arteta hits back at criticism of Arsenal captain Odegaard

LONDON (AFP): Mikel Arteta has slammed calls for Martin Odegaard to be stripped of the Arsenal captaincy by insisting there is "no question" the Norway midfielder is the right man to lead their Premier League title challenge. Former Arsenal skipper Tony Adams recently urged Arteta to give England midfielder Declan Rice the armband instead of Odegaard. But the Gunners boss mounted a strong defence of Odegaard's leadership qualities after revealing Arsenal's players had voted for him to be retained as captain. "My opinion is clear, and it's not just my opinion. It's all the staff and especially the players," Arteta told reporters on Friday. "I asked them to vote for the captain and I got the results yesterday. By a mile, by a big, big (margin), by 100 miles, everybody chose the same person, Martin Odegaard, which is the most clear sign that you can have. "It's how they feel about who has to be their captain, to defend, to improve, and win the matches that we want to win, so I think there is no question about that." Arsenal, who last won the English title in 2004, have finished as Premier League runners-up for the last three seasons and are without a trophy since the 2020 FA Cup. Their inability to last the pace in the title race has led to mounting questions about Arsenal's mental strength, with Odegaard among those in the firing line.



MASON: Anna Kalinskaya of Russia in action against Iga Swiatek of Poland in the quarter finals of the Cincinnati Open at the Lindner Family Tennis Center.

Afridi, Sana among nine icons to receive civil awards

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): The federal government announced civil awards for nine distinguished sports personalities on the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, recognizing their exceptional contributions to the nation's sporting legacy. The awards will be formally conferred on Pakistan Day (March 23, 2026).

According to sources, former all-rounder and captain Shahid Afridi, who would be honoured with the Hilal-e-Imtiaz. Afridi, who played 524 international matches across formats and was part of Pakistan's victorious ICC Men's T20 World Cup

squad in 2009, is being recognised for his remarkable services to cricket. Alongside Afridi, celebrated mountaineer Shehroze Kashif—the youngest Pakistani to scale all 14 peaks above 8,000 metres—and late equestrian Malik Muhammad Atta will also receive the Hilal-e-Imtiaz. Former women's cricket captain Sana Mir has been shortlisted for the Sitara-e-Imtiaz. She represented Pakistan for 15 years and became the first woman from the country to achieve Hall of Fame recognition earlier this year. The nation's most successful para-athlete, Haider Ali, who has won four Paralympic medals, includ-

ing a bronze in discus throw at the 2024 Paris Games, will also be honoured with the Sitara-e-Imtiaz. In addition, mixed martial artist Shahzaib Rind and kabaddi player Muhammad Sajjad will be decorated with the President's Award for Pride of Performance (PAPP), while squash player Hamza Khan, shooter Mohsin Nawaz, and tennis veteran Rashid Malik have been nominated for the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz. These awards highlight Pakistan's commitment to recognising excellence in sports and honouring those who have brought pride to the nation on both national and international stages.

National team's training camp kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The national team's training camp for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers kicked off in Abbottabad on Friday. Head coach Nolberto Solano will oversee the camp, which is set to run for two weeks under his supervision, said a press release. A total of 50 players, initially selected through tryouts, are participating in the training camp. The final 23-member squad will be announced at a later stage. As part of the qualifiers, Pakistan will play their first match against Iraq on September 3, followed by a game against host nation Cambodia on September 6. The team will conclude the group stage with a match against Oman on September 9. The players in the camp include Abdul Rehman, Abdul Wahab, Abid Ali, Adam Najeel Ahmad Kshan, Adeel younas, Adnan Justin, Ahmed Salman, Ali Asif, Ali Haider Shah, Ali Zafar, Ameer Hamza, Amir Aslam, Ans Amin, Furgan Umar, Hamdaan Hassan, Hamza Munir, Harun Arshad Hamid, Haseeb Khan, Hassan Ali, Hayan Khattak, Junaid Shah, Kamil Marwat Khan, Khalid Owais, Khalil, McKeal Aroon Abdullah, Mohibulah, Moin, Ahmed, Muhammad Adeel, Muhammad Bilal, Muhammad Haroon, Muhammad Hassan, Muhammad Huzafa, Muhammad Jeevarn Khan, Muhammad Junaid, Muhammad Mazhar, Muhammad Khalid, Muhammad Musawir, Muhammad Raheel, Muhammad Saad, Muhammad Sudais, Muhammad Suleman Ali, Muhammad Zoraiz, Naveed Ahmed, Shahab Ahmed, Syed Ali Raza, Tufail Khan, Umair Arooj, Umair Bahader, Usnman Ali, Wasiq ur Rehman and Faiz Karim.

Women's T20 Blind World Cup expected to begin in November

KATHMANDU (Agencies): The inaugural edition of the Women's T20 Blind Cricket World Cup is expected to commence on November 10, 2025, with a unique hybrid hosting model splitting matches between India and Nepal.

According to details, the tournament will follow a single-league format and adopt a hybrid hosting model, with matches staged in Delhi and Bangalore (India), while Pakistan will play all of its fixtures in Nepal. The competition is expected to feature six teams. One of the semi-finals has been proposed for Bangalore, while the other will be played in Kathmandu, Nepal.

If Pakistan qualify for the final, the championship clash will also take place in Kathmandu; otherwise, it will be held in Bangalore.

The Indian Blind Cricket Association will release the official match schedule in



the coming weeks.

In preparation, the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) has already shortlisted 20 probable players during a selection and training camp held in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, in July.

The final 16-member squad will be announced on October 15.

The probables list includes seven players from the B1 (totally blind) category, seven from the B2 (partially blind) category, and six from the B3 (partially sighted) category.

B1 Category (Totally Blind): Bushra Zahoor (Gujranwala), Bisma Hussain (Lahore), Shumaila Kiran (Swabi), Esha Faisal (Karachi), Rimsha Shabbir (Islamabad), Qandeel Fatima (Rawalpindi), Sumera Malik (Rawalpindi).

B2 Category (Partially Blind): Nimra Rafique (Rawalpindi), Nusrat Batool (Sargodha), Eman Arshad (Islamabad), Meerab Ashraf (Lahore), Hooria Malik (Kashmir), Sadia Khalid (Gujranwala), Rabia Javed Hashmi (Hafizabad).

B3 Category (Partially Sighted): Armeen Tariq (Gujrat), Mehreen Ali (Gilgit), Nisha Baksh (Lahore), Noor Fatima (Shorkot), Maryam Jahangir (Kashmir), Maryam Khan (Karachi).

Atmane stuns Rune to set up Sinner semi-final

CINCINNATI (AFP/APP): French qualifier Terence Atmane toppled another top-10 player in Holger Rune on Thursday to line up a semi-final showdown with world number one Jannik Sinner at the Cincinnati Open.

Atmane followed up his victory over fourth-ranked Taylor Fritz with a 6-2, 6-3 win over ninth-ranked Rune. The 23-year-old will now face the ultimate test against defending champion Sinner, who said he "felt great" as he thrashed Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-0, 6-2.

"I don't think any words can describe how I feel right now," the 136th-ranked Atmane said after blasting 22 winners past Rune, 14 of them off his powerful lefty forehand.

"It's pretty insane to be honest," added Atmane, who will move inside the top 100 in the rankings for the first time.

"I cannot believe it. Being here in the semi-



finals of a Masters 1000, breaking into the top 100. It means a lot to me."

He will face a formidable challenge in Wimbledon champion Sinner, who powered through a rapid-fire opening set and bounced back

quickly after dropping serve to open the second.

Sinner prevailed in a brief 71 minutes as he claimed an eighth victory in a row at this event and his 30th match win this season.

"I felt great on the court today, you could see that,"

said the Italian, who turns 24 on Saturday. "But every day can be different. Let's see what I can do in the semis."

Sinner took advantage of Auger-Aliassime's serving troubles to take the first set in less than 30 minutes, the Canadian delivering three double-faults in the final game.

After going down a quick break in the second Sinner broke back to level at 2-2 and advanced as Auger-Aliassime coughed up his eighth double-fault on match point.

"I served well today, that was the key for me," Sinner said. "I had a small drop in the second set and I'm happy that I broke back. He moves and serves well, he's difficult to play."

In the day's only other men's match, fifth-seeded Ben Shelton -- coming off a title in Toronto -- posted a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Jiri Lehecka to book a quarter-final clash with third-seeded Alexander Zverev.

Ghazanfar bag Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling C'ship title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ghazanfar Bilal has won the men's singles title of the Azadi Cup Ten-Pin Bowling Championship here at the Leisure bowling Club, F-7. Meanwhile, Ijaz-ur-Rehman bagged the second position and Daniyal Shah secured third position. In the team event, the Islamabad team won the field, while the teams of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab were in second and third place respectively. Deputy DG, Pakistan Sports Board, Muhammad Shahid Islam was the chief guest at the concluding ceremony of the championship and distributed medals, trophies and cash

awards among the successful players. President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz-ur-Rehman, Secretary General, Lt. Col. (R) Kamran Khalid Janjua, President, Pakistan Taekwondo Federation (Women's Wing), Madam Saba Shamim Jadoon and President, Paktoon Action Committee, Javed Bangash, besides a large number of spectators, were also present and they also distributed prizes among the players of different categories. Ghazanfar Bilal lifted men's singles title with 492 points, Ijaz-ur-Rehman won 2nd position

with 359 points, Daniyal Shah got 3rd position with 339 points and Faheem Khan secured 4th position with 307 points. In the team event category, the players of the Islamabad team, Ijaz-ur-Rehman, Daniyal Ijaz, Aizaz Ijaz and Afzaal Akhtar won the victory with 885 points. The second position was won by the players of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team, Daniyal Shah, Faheem Khan, Shahrukh and Naveed-ul-Haq with 694 points, while the players of the Punjab team, Muhammad Hussain Chatha, Saleem Baig, Junaid and Shahzad were in the third position with 659 points.

Richardson breaks flying 200m world record



LONDON (Agencies): Britain's Matt Richardson has broken his own world record in the 200m flying start, a day after becoming the first cyclist to go under nine seconds in the discipline. The sprinter has now lowered the mark in the flying 200m on three occasions having briefly first held the record in 2024, while representing Australia at the Paris Olympics. Richardson, 26, eclipsed Dutchman Harrie

Lavreysen's old benchmark on Thursday with a time of 8.941 seconds and shaved a fraction off that time on Friday with a run of 8.857secs in Konya, Turkey. "There was more time on the table after yesterday's out of sprint lane ride," said Richardson. "I knew if I came in with good execution and rode as close to the black as possible I'd go quicker and that's what happened. "[I'm feeling] pretty good, a big, big relief. I knew there was more in

the tank yesterday, so I was obviously really stoked about yesterday but I was hungry for more." The 25-year-old, who switched nationalities back to Britain in August 2024 was born in Kent but moved to Western Australia at the age of nine, and maintained dual citizenship during his 16 years living there. The flying 200m is not a championship medal event, but is used as a qualifying effort to seed riders in the match sprint.

Bethell to become England's youngest cricket captain



LONDON (Agencies): Jacob Bethell is set to become England's youngest international men's cricket captain after the 21-year-old was named Friday as skipper for next month's T20 international series in Ireland.

The talented Warwickshire all-rounder is regarded as one of the rising stars of the English game, even though he has still to score his first professional century in any format.

Bethell, however, has still been appointed to lead England in a three-match T20 series against Ireland in Dublin from September 17-21, which will serve as part of the team's preparations for next year's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

He is now in line to become England's youngest men's captain in an international match, breaking the record of Monty Bowden, who was 23 years and 144 days old when he led England in a Test against South Africa at Cape Town in 1888/89.

Bethell has featured in just four Test matches but has become a white-ball regular with 13 Twenty20 appearances and 12 one-day internationals to his credit since making his T20 bow in September last year.

"Leadership qualities" - "Jacob Bethell has impressed with his leadership qualities ever since he

has been with the England squads and the series against Ireland will provide him with the opportunity to further develop those skills on the international stage," said England selector Luke Wright.

Bethell's most recent international appearance was in the fifth and deciding Test against India at the Oval this month where, having replaced injured red-ball captain Ben Stokes, he managed scores of just six and five, while not taking a wicket with his left-arm spin.

But former England captain Michael Vaughan said team management had made a "diabolical" decision to call-up Bethell for such a key match on the back of so little first-class cricket this season.

Bethell has been given the chance to lead England after team chiefs decided regular white-ball captain Harry Brook should take a break following the ODI and T20 series against South Africa.

The all-format quartet of Ben Duckett, Jamie Smith, Jofra Archer and Brydon Carse have also been rested from the Ireland series as they take a breather ahead of the upcoming shopwiece Ashes campaign.

Fast bowlers Mark Wood and Gus Atkinson are not in any of the three squads as they prepare for the tour of Australia, with the first Test in Perth start-

ing on November 21, but uncapped fast bowler Sonny Baker has been included.

Wood had knee surgery in March and missed the whole of the Test series against India. England squads for one-day international and T20 series against South Africa and Ireland:

ODI squad v South Africa:

Harry Brook (capt), Rehan Ahmed, Jofra Archer, Sonny Baker, Tom Banton, Jacob Bethell, Jos Buttler (wkt), Brydon Carse, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Saqib Mahmood, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Jamie Smith (wkt)

T20 squad v South Africa:

Brook (capt), Ahmed, Archer, Banton, Bethell, Carse, Liam Dawson, Duckett, Jacks, Mahmood, Overton, Rashid, Phil Salt (wkt), Smith (wkt), Luke Wood

T20 squad v Ireland: Bethell (capt), Ahmed, Baker, Banton, Buttler, Dawson, Tom Hartley, Jacks, Mahmood, Overton, Matthew Potts, Rashid, Salt (wkt), Wood

Fixtures England v South Africa ODIs (1200 GMT unless stated)

Sep 02: 1st ODI, Headingley, Leeds

Sep 04: 2nd ODI, Lord's, London

Sep 07: 3rd ODI, Rose Bowl, Southampton (1000 GMT)

England v South Africa T20s (1730 GMT unless stated)

Sep 10: 1st T20, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff

Sep 12: 2nd T20, Old Trafford, Manchester

Sep 14: 3rd T20, Trent Bridge, Nottingham (1330 GMT)

Ireland v England T20s (all at Malahide, Dublin, 1230 GMT)

Sep 17: 1st T20

Sep 19: 2nd T20

Sep 21: 3rd T20.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 531,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 531,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 588,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1546.50 feet which was 144.50 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 353,700 cusecs and 353,300 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1209.35 feet, which was 159.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 63,100 cusecs and 7,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 337,400, 261,300, 199,200 and 135,100 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 37,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 104,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### 21 outlaws held

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, Karachi Company, Khanna, Sihala, Phulgrun, Shahzad Town and Bani Gala police station teams arrested nine accused involved in various criminal activities. A police spokesperson told APP on Friday that police teams also recovered 275 grams of Ice, 710 grams of heroin, six pistols, and one Kalashnikov with ammunition from their possession. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are underway. Additionally, during a special campaign launched for the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders, various police teams apprehended 12 criminals. Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the ICT Police continue their effective crack-down against crime and criminal elements to ensure peace and tranquility in the federal capital. The ICT Police remain committed to protecting the lives and property of residents, and no element will be allowed to disturb public peace. Ensuring peace and safeguarding citizens remain the top priorities of the ICT Police.

### Tree plantation campaign begins

ISLAMABAD (APP): The "Clean and Green Islamabad Movement" on Friday held tree plantation, dustbin installation in connection with Independence Day celebrations at Jinnah Super market under the leadership of Chairman Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. During the drive, the participants planted saplings and installed dustbins. President of Traders Welfare Association Asad Aziz, General Secretary Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ejaz Abbasi, and former President of Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry Malik Nadeem, along with other distinguished personalities, participated, said a release issued here. The event began with tree plantation, where participants expressed their resolve to continue collective efforts to make Islamabad greener and more beautiful. On the occasion of Independence Day, a cake-cutting ceremony was held, and dustbins were installed in the market for the convenience of citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with US Coordinator for Counterterrorism Gregory LoGerfo at Ministry of Interior. —APP Photo

## Kundi calls on Gilani, development, welfare issues discussed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, met with Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, at the Parliament House on Friday and discussed wide range of issues, including political, economic and social stability in the country, as well as challenges faced by the people of KP and practical measures to address them.

Chairman Senate underscored that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa holds a pivotal place in Pakistan due to its strategic geographical

location, historic role, and the unparalleled sacrifices of its people for the nation's security, stability, and progress.

He emphasized that the people of the province have, from the creation of Pakistan to the present day, made invaluable contributions towards peace, unity, and stability contributions that will be remembered in golden words in the annals of national history.

Governor Kundi provided a detailed briefing on the province's developmental priorities,

pressing challenges, and the specific issues of the merged districts of the former FATA region.

He apprised the Chairman Senate of ongoing strategies to strengthen engagement with tribal elders and to implement welfare initiatives aimed at ensuring sustainable development and prosperity for the people of the province.

Chairman Senate reiterated his firm commitment that the well-being of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is integral to Pakistan's sustainable

future, assuring that all possible cooperation will continue at the federal level to support the province.

The meeting was also attended by newly elected Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood. Both the Governor KP and Senator Talha Mahmood prayed for the departed soul of cousin of Chairman Senate and former federal minister Syed Tanveer-ul-Hassan Gilani.

They eulogized social and political services of late Syed Tanveer ul Hassan.

### Dengue cases surged to 73, preventive efforts underway

RAWALPINDI (APP): Health officials in Rawalpindi and Murree are on high alert following a hike in dengue cases, with 2 new cases reported in Rawalpindi and 7 in Murree over the past 48 hours. This brings the total to 34 cases in Rawalpindi and 39 in Murree for the year.

According to the details, no deaths have been reported, but the District Health Authority (DHA) is ramping up efforts as September approaches, a month when monsoon rains and warm temperatures create conducive conditions for dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

The DHA has launched a robust response, targeting high-risk areas in Rawalpindi, including Pothohar Rural and Rawalpindi Cantonment, as well as parts of Murree. Measures include fogging, spraying and strict enforcement of dengue prevention guidelines, with fines and property closures for non-compliance. The authority is also conducting awareness campaigns at public spots like bus terminals and through community rallies to urge residents to eliminate standing water and adopt preventive measures.

Dr. Waqar Ahmad, DHA spokesperson confirmed APP that recent increase in cases has prompted urgency. "With September nearing, the risk of dengue spreading is significant due to ideal mosquito breeding conditions. Our teams are working tirelessly, but we need the public to remove stagnant water and report symptoms like fever promptly to prevent a wider outbreak", he said.

Dr Waqar stressed that community cooperation is essential to keep the situation under control. "This is a shared responsibility, residents must stay proactive in keeping their surroundings clean", he said adding that the health authority was fully committed to stopping this surge, but public vigilance remained critical to avoid a larger crisis. The DHA continues its aggressive campaign to protect the region from a potential dengue outbreak.

**RDA seals five sites over violation of anti-dengue SOPs:** On the directions of the Director General, Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Kinza Murtaza, the enforcement squad carried out a targeted operation against violations of Dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and illegal constructions on Girja Road.

## Naqvi, Gregory LoGerfo agree to boost Pakistan-US Cooperation in security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with US Coordinator for Counterterrorism Gregory LoGerfo at Ministry of Interior in Islamabad.

Minister of State for Interior Tallal Chaudhry, Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker, and Federal Interior Secretary were also present on the occasion. Gregory LoGerfo congratulated Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and the people of Pakistan on the country's 79th Independence Day.

During the meeting, both sides agreed to further enhance Pakistan-US rela-

tions especially in the areas of counterterrorism, border security, and Anti-narcotics.

They also agreed to make the exchange of information more effective in the fields of counterterrorism and counter-narcotics.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi stated that since President Donald Trump's administration came into power, Pakistan-US relations have improved significantly.

He commended President Trump's sincere efforts for global peace and noted that transparency, mutual trust, and cooperation are the hallmarks of the bilateral relationship. He emphasized that this is

an excellent opportunity to further strengthen bilateral relations in all areas.

Mohsin Naqvi added that counterterrorism dialogue will help in creating a joint strategy.

He termed the US decision to designate the banned BLA and banned Majeed Brigade as Foreign terrorist organizations a commendable step, expressing hope that Pakistan-US cooperation will yield positive results in eliminating terrorism.

Gregory LoGerfo acknowledged Pakistan's geo-strategic importance. He also expressed condolences over the loss of lives in terrorist attacks.

## Internet suspension in Balochistan a security measure: Tariq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Friday informed the Senate that the recent temporary suspension of internet services in parts of Balochistan was solely a security measure.

Responding to a calling attention notice regarding the suspension of mobile internet across 36 districts of Balochistan on security grounds, he said that under the Pakistan Telecommunication (Teoregnization) Act, 1996, such decisions followed a specific process.

Requests originate from the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control, based on recommendations from relevant security stakeholders, and are then forwarded to the

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) for implementation, he said.

The minister said that mobile internet services in Balochistan were suspended from August 6 to August 31 due to credible security concerns.

However, telephone services remained fully operational, and the restriction was limited to mobile internet. "All airlines, including PIA and private carriers, are fully functional in Balochistan, while road and rail links to Quetta and other cities remain open," he added.

"These decisions are taken for specific locations where credible security threats exist, not in unrelated areas," the minister stressed. Recalling past

incidents of terrorism in the province — including attacks on the Jaffar Express and the Army Public School in Khuzdar, where innocent children lost their lives — he said such measures are based on intelligence reports and aim to prevent loss of life.

Addressing concerns about prepaid internet packages purchased by students and residents during the suspension period, Dr. Tariq Fazal assured that he would raise the matter with the relevant ministry.

"I commit to the House that unused credit for the days affected by the suspension will be carried forward to the next month so that people, especially students, do not suffer financial loss," he added.

## Bangladesh's HC participated in Independence Day event

RAWALPINDI (APP): The High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal Hussain has expressed his good wishes for Pakistan and reiterated the continued mutual cooperation between both the brotherly countries.

He said that people of the two countries have strong relations which would be further strengthened in the days to come. The High Commissioner remarked this while talking at the flag hoisting ceremony, organized by Rawalpindi Medical University (RMU) to mark Pakistan's Independence Day here on Friday.

The High Commissioner while recalling the separa-

tion in 1971, said that despite the separation, the bond of affection between the two nations remains strong. "We may have parted ways, but we are still working together, and our relations are strengthening", he said.

The High Commissioner further said that the bilateral cooperation in various fields including in education and trade would be further enhanced.

He expressed his delight at visiting RMU and highlighted Bangladesh's heartfelt love for Pakistan.

During the visit, he participated in the flag-hoisting ceremony, toured various departments of the university and also planted a sapling.

Earlier upon his arrival at the University, the High Commissioner was accorded warm reception by Dr. Muhammad Umar, VC RMU along with the University's senior officials.

The vice chancellor while welcoming the visiting dignitary, described the visit as 'historic development' since it was the first ever visit by any Bangladeshi Ambassador to RMU.

"The visit highlights the strengthening diplomatic and educational ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh", said Dr. Umar. Special prayers on the occasion were offered for the peace and prosperity of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

## ANF recovers over 63 kg of drugs worth Rs 24.6 million

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting 10 operations across the country, recovered as many as 63 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 24.6 million and arrested 10 suspects, including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday.

He informed that 1 kg of heroin was recovered from a motorcyclist at the Motorway Toll Plaza in Islamabad. As much as 250 grams of ice and 6 grams of cocaine were recovered from a motorcyclist in Rawalakot, Poonch District. 1200 grams of hashish and 5 grams of cocaine were recovered

from a motorcyclist near Golra Mor, Islamabad.

Similarly, 1200 grams of hashish were recovered from 2 motorcyclists in Mandara, Rawalpindi. The arrested suspects confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions.

During other operations, 192 grams of ice were recovered from a woman's luggage going to Bahrain at Jinnah International Airport. 378 grams of ice-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Bahrain at Allama Iqbal International Airport.

As many as 22 grams of heroin were recovered from a parcel sent to the UK at

the cargo shed of Allama Iqbal International Airport.

In another operation, 5,550 kg of ice absorbed into clothes was recovered from a parcel sent to the UK from a courier office in Sohawa.

45,200 kg of opium was recovered from a vehicle in Khanazai Bazar, Tehsil Pishin and the accused was arrested. As much as 9 kg of heroin was recovered from a truck near Deepalpur Road, Kasur and 2 accused were arrested.

Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.

## Rubina conducts open court to address women's issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid on Friday held a "Khuli Katcheri" at Government Boys Degree College, Nathia Gali, to hear and resolve the problems of deserving women in the area.

More than 300 women attended the session, where the Chairperson issued on-the-spot directives to concerned staff for immediate resolution of grievances.

Senator Rubina Khalid reiterated that financial assistance under BISP is the legitimate right of eligible women and warned that strict action would be taken

against any illegal deductions. She clarified that the registration process is fully computerized and free of cost, requiring no forms or payments.

Advising beneficiaries to only visit payment centers after receiving an official SMS from 8171, she said this would help prevent overcrowding and inconvenience. She also announced plans to launch a dedicated awareness portal for deserving women.

The Chairperson instructed BISP officials to connect successful scholarship recipients from deserving families to the Benazir Hunarmand Program for skill development and eco-

nom ic empowerment. She also directed that BISP beneficiaries be given priority assistance at NADRA offices.

During the session, women highlighted issues such as biometric verification problems during payment collection, and delays in receiving Benazir Taleemi Wazaif and Nashonuma stipends. They also requested the establishment of a dynamic registration center in Nathia Gali to ease travel difficulties.

Senator Rubina Khalid assured the attendees that their concerns would be addressed on priority and that steps would soon be taken to meet their demands.

## Rawal Dam spillways to open today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration has announced that the dam's spillways will be opened today at 1 pm to regulate the water flow, following continuous rainfall in recent days and the water level at Rawal Dam has risen significantly, reaching 1,751.30 feet.

According to officials, the Assistant Commissioner of Nilore will personally supervise the process of opening the spillways. The decision has been taken as part of routine safety measures to manage the increased water level and ensure smooth discharge.

Rescue teams, security personnel, and medical units have been deployed at various locations around the dam to respond promptly to any emergency situation. The district administration stated that all necessary preparations have been completed well in advance, including coordination with relevant departments and placement of resources at key points.

Authorities have advised citizens to avoid unnecessary activities near the dam, particularly during the spillway operation, to ensure their safety. The administration also urged the public to follow safety

instructions and cooperate with teams on duty.

The district administration reaffirmed its readiness to handle any situation arising from the increased water flow, emphasizing that preventive steps and on-ground arrangements have already been put in place.

Opening the spillways will help maintain the dam's capacity and prevent overflow, ensuring water safety for both the dam structure and surrounding areas. The public has been requested to remain vigilant and avoid visiting the dam's vicinity during the operation.

## Chehlum procession in G-6 concludes peacefully

ISLAMABAD (APP): The central Chehlum procession in Sector G-6 concluded peacefully under a comprehensive seven-tier security plan, with Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi praising the unwavering dedication of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police and allied security forces.

"I am proud of every officer and jawan who stood for 16 hours to protect the public," Rizvi said, extending heartfelt congrat-

ulations and appreciation to the entire force for their professionalism and resolve. He also expressed special gratitude to the Islamabad administration, Pakistan Army, and Pakistan Rangers for their cooperation, noting that complete harmony prevailed among all institutions on security duty.

An official told APP on Friday that over 5,000 male and female officers and personnel, including teams from the district police, Investigation

Wing, Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA), Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), and all five police divisions, remained fully mobilized throughout the event.

The IGP Rizvi said the security plan featured inner and outer cordons, flanking arrangements, and rooftop deployments, ensuring full coverage of the procession route. He commended all security personnel for their courage and commitment, describing their efforts as "truly commendable."



ISLAMABAD: Traffic wardens stopping heavy vehicles that are ban to enter in the federal capital in day time. —APP Photo



### 2 killed, 6 injured in road accident

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): At least two people have been killed and six others wounded in a traffic accident in western Badghis province, an official said on Friday. Police spokesman Sediq Sediqi said in a statement the accident occurred on Badghis-Faryab highway in the Koi Khari area of Muqur district on Thursday afternoon. The victims were residents of the Maruchaq area in Bala Murghab district, and the injured were taken to a health centre for treatment.

## The Frontier Post

Safar 21, 1447 — Saturday, August 16, 2025

### UNHCR, UNICEF sign pact to protect Afghan children

KABUL (Pajhwok): The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says it has signed a strategic cooperation framework with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to protect displaced children in Afghanistan. In a post on X, UNHCR said the UN family is uniting to support children at risk in Afghanistan. "UNHCR and UNICEF have signed a strategic collaboration framework, strengthening joint leadership, cooperation.

# IEA marks anniversary, seeks balanced global ties

KABUL (Pajhwok): On the fourth anniversary of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) return to power, officials said the country poses no threat to others and will not allow anyone to threaten it, stressing a policy of balanced and mutually respectful relations with all nations.

The IEA regained power on August 15, 2021; this day is marked annually in the capital and provinces.

Today (Friday), on this occasion, a gathering was held in the Loya Jirga tent in Kabul.

Speaking at the event, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi highlighted the Islamic Emirate's

achievements over the past four years.

He cited the general amnesty, implementation of Islamic Sharia, establishment of full security and a central government, creation of a unified military force, elimination of "islands of power," counter-narcotics efforts, financing the budget from domestic revenues, maintaining the stability of the Afghani currency, and the implementation of various infrastructure projects as among the IEA's major accomplishments.

Muttaqi said that with the IEA's rise to power, oppression and injustices were ended, and through great sacrifice, the Afghan people secured

Afghanistan's independence—where Islamic Sharia is now fully enforced.

He reiterated that the IEA has no enmity with any country and seeks relations built on mutual respect and balanced policy.

He stressed that the IEA aims for engagement, trust, and cooperation with the world, rather than disputes and confrontation.

Minister of Interior Khalifa Sirajuddin Haqqani, also addressing the gathering, called on Afghans living abroad to return home and live with dignity.

"Some people, for their own personal interests, accuse Afghanistan of being a center for interna-

tional terrorists and claim such threats still exist. We remain committed to the Doha Agreement. If anyone has a problem with the current system, our door is open to them, but they should resolve their personal issues themselves," Haqqani said.

He added that a complete Islamic system is now in place in the country and that no one will be held accountable for past actions. Independence, he noted, is a great blessing understood only by those who have endured hardship—"It is not just about raising a flag."

Haqqani said: "We will celebrate independence in a way that disappoints no one, and we

must avoid arrogance. Through understanding, we seek diplomatic relations with all countries, and as promised in Doha, we are neither a threat to anyone nor will we allow anyone to threaten us. We tell all foreign opponents that we have been tested, and we will not allow anyone to disrupt the country's security."

He also urged all Muslims to unite in support of the people of Gaza.

Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi told the gathering that in the past three years, more than three million Afghan refugees have been expelled from neighboring, regional, and European



countries and have returned to Afghanistan.

He added that around 35 townships have been built

in 25 provinces to accommodate the returnees.

According to Hanafi, over the last three years,

more than three million expulsions from abroad. According to Hanafi, the country following expulsions from abroad.

## Azizi invites Kyrgyz PM to visit Kabul



KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Minister of Commerce and Industry has invited the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan to

visit Kabul to strengthen bilateral relations.

In a statement, the MoCI said on Friday that the acting Minister

Nooruddin Azizi met with Kyrgyz Prime Minister Adalbek Qasimaliyev during his visit to Kyrgyzstan. During the meeting, the

two sides emphasized their shared religious, cultural, regional and economic ties. They highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation across these areas to further mutual understanding and collaboration.

They also discussed enhancing diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level, supporting transit routes, establishing a joint chamber of commerce and trade house, setting up a trade center, and holding a Kyrgyzstan forum in Kabul.

To further develop ties between the two countries, Azizi formally invited Prime Minister Qasimaliyev to visit Afghanistan.

### Residents demand local e-ID center

KANDAHAR (TOLONews): Residents of Spin Boldak district in Kandahar have complained about the difficulties they face in obtaining electronic ID cards (e-Tazkira).

They say that to receive an e-Tazkira, they must travel 100 kilometers to reach the provincial center in Kandahar. These residents are urging authorities to establish an electronic ID distribution center within their district.

Naqeebullah, a resident of Spin Boldak, said: "Due to the lack of an electronic ID distribution center in Spin Boldak, people are facing many challenges. We travel to Kandahar city, which is 100 kilometers away. We want a distribution center to be set up here."

Payenda Khan, another resident of the district, said: "To get an electronic ID, we leave behind our livelihoods and daily work for several days—but still fail to obtain one. This is a serious problem for us." Local officials in Spin Boldak say that based on public demand, an electronic ID issuance center will be opened in the district next year.

Ali Mohammad Haqmal, the district's information officer, said: "Attention to Spin Boldak is among the leadership's priorities. The issue of electronic IDs is indeed a serious concern, but a building has already been constructed here, and it is expected that the ID distribution center will be inaugurated next year."

Spin Boldak is one of the most populous districts of Kandahar, where many residents still lack access to basic living facilities.

### Germany announces 5.8 million euros aid

KABUL (Ariana News): The German government has pledged an additional 5.8 million euros in humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan to provide food and to maintain life-saving basic healthcare.

The aid comes as more than 23 million Afghans, including 3.5 million children under five and over a million pregnant women, are in urgent need of support.

The new funding—provided through Germany's Federal Foreign Office and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development—will be distributed via the World Food Programme, UN agencies, and humanitarian NGOs.

German officials say the aid will focus on returning Afghan refugees and vulnerable communities in border areas, with special priority given to women and children. The funds will support emergency food supplies and basic healthcare services amid worsening conditions exacerbated by mass returns from Iran and Pakistan.

While reaffirming its humanitarian commitment, the German government also urged the Islamic Emirate to improve conditions for the Afghan people—especially by lifting restrictions on women, ensuring impartial aid delivery, and providing safe access to essential services.

## Afghanistan criticizes global inaction in drug fight

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Interior has criticized the lack of cooperation from countries and international organizations with Afghanistan in the fight against narcotics.

The spokesperson for the ministry stated that, based on findings by border police, certain types of synthetic drugs are being trafficked into Afghanistan from other countries, including European nations.

Abdul Mateen Qani called on neighboring and regional countries to prevent the trafficking of synthetic drugs into Afghanistan. He said: "Last year, we even had individuals from European countries who were trafficking inside Afghanistan, and fortunately, they were arrested. The

modern types of narcotics that are coming in are naturally entering from countries in the region."

The Ministry of Interior claims that poppy cultivation has been completely eradicated across Afghanistan, and drug trafficking has reached zero.

Officials from the ministry also stated that the production and consumption of synthetic drugs in the country have been effectively controlled.

The spokesperson added: "Factories and all types of narcotics in the country have been eliminated. Unfortunately, no neighboring country, nor any international organization—whether from the European Union or the United Nations—has

cooperated with the Islamic Emirate in the fight against drugs."

These remarks come while some UN agencies and neighboring countries had previously expressed concern over the growing trafficking of synthetic drugs from Afghanistan into the region.

Sadeq Shinwari, a military affairs analyst, said: "To address these concerns, there is an urgent need for practical, comprehensive, and sincere regional coordination."

Although the United Nations has established a working group for the development of alternative crops in Afghanistan, no significant progress has been made in this regard so far.

## A review of the IE's economic achievements



KABUL (Ariana News):

Four years after the Islamic Emirate's return to power, the government has recorded notable progress in economic development and infrastructure. During this period, hundreds of development projects worth billions of Afghani have been implemented, and major agreements—particularly in electricity generation and mining—have been signed with both domestic and international investors.

Key developments include:

A \$10 billion memorandum of understanding with a domestic investor for

electricity production

Construction of major and medium-sized dams, check dams, and irrigation canals to improve water resource management

Investment in domestic power generation and electricity transmission

An MoU for feasibility studies and design of the Trans-Afghan railway line

Contracts for the development of large, medium, and small-scale mining operations

According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the total trade volume over the past year reached \$13 billion, with

exports accounting for \$2 billion. Despite international pressure and ongoing sanctions, substantial steps have been taken toward economic growth.

The Ministry of Water and Energy has emphasized the critical role of energy in economic development, highlighting ongoing efforts to secure power from both domestic and international sources.

Private sector representatives have noted that significant progress has been made in advancing both national and regional economic development, with clear positive effects on the broader regional economy, including Afghanistan.

Economic analysts have commended the efforts of the Islamic Emirate's leadership, while also underscoring the need to accelerate national and regional economic initiatives. In their view, a sustainable and well-structured economic model can only be achieved through the optimal use of domestic resources.

## IEA supreme leader directs officials to drop 'acting' from titles

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) supreme leader has declared that Afghanistan now has a legitimate Sharia-based system and urged all officials to work for the welfare and stability of the people.

He also instructed ministers and cabinet members to remove the term "acting" from their official titles.

Marking the anniversary of the IEA's return to power on August 15, 2021, Sheikh Haibatullah Akhundzada said: "The fourth year of the great victory – the liberation of Afghanistan from the occupation of the US and its allies – has now passed.

To establish a pure Sharia-based system, the Afghan people endured over fifty years of severe hardship and made great sacrifices. Following the end of the occupation, Afghanistan became the owner of a



genuine Sharia system."

He said that security has been restored across the country and, in accordance with Sharia law, Afghanistan has been protected from corruption, oppression, land usurpation,

narcotics, theft, looting and plunder.

"A suitable environment has been created for the country's development and reconstruction and Afghans have been freed from linguistic, ethnic, regional, party and other divisions," he added.

"These are great divine blessings that our people must not forget. On the day of victory, they should offer abundant thanks to Allah Almighty so that these blessings may increase. But if, God forbid, we fail to show gratitude, we will face severe punishments from Allah," he warned.

He further directed all officials to serve the Sharia system and the Muslim community and to work for the welfare and comfort of the people.

All ministers and cabinet members must no longer use the term "acting" in their titles. The supreme leader also urged IEA officials to prioritize the care and protection of orphans.

## Afghan girls urge IEA to reopen schools, universities

KABUL (Pajhwok): On the eve of the fourth anniversary of the caretaker government's re-establishment, Afghan girls urged the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to reopen schools beyond grade six and allow female students to return to universities.

Soon after regaining power in 2021, the IEA suspended education for girls above grade six and later extended the ban to universities.

School students Sahar Jafari, a Kabul high school student, said she was in grade eight when the IEA returned. "If our education had not been suspended, I would now be in grade twelve," she said. Calling the continued closure worrying, she urged the Ministry of Education (MoE) to reopen schools for girls. During the closure, she learned sewing and hopes to resume formal studies soon.

Freshtha Mohammadi, who was in grade seven at Chehel Dokhtaran High School, said the first two years of the ban caused severe depression. She later joined a religious seminary, learned painting and continued studying at home in hope that schools would reopen.

She called on the IEA to allow girls' education in



line with Islamic Sharia.

Zohra Taheri, a former grade ten student, said, "We have no problem with the hijab and could study comfortably while observing it. If schools had not been closed, I would now be in my second year at university."

University students

Nabila Salehi, a dentistry student at Ghalib University, said, "If our studies had not been stopped, I would now be a doctor serving other women."

She urged the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to allow female students to return to universities.

Shafiq, a second-year journalism student at Kabul University, said she

would have graduated by now if education had not been suspended. "We have no issue with the Sharia hijab, as it is an obligation from God," she added.

Shukria Tabasum, a second-year Dari literature student, expressed disappointment, saying the closure "crushed the hopes of many girls."

Experts views on negative impacts

Tafsir Siahposh, a women's rights expert, emphasized that Islam considers acquiring knowledge obligatory for all. He urged the interim government to "give glad tidings to the girls of this land and reopen the gates of knowledge."

Education expert Sanullah Salehi warned that the four-year suspension

will have serious consequences, including a shortage of female teachers, doctors, nurses, and other specialists.

He suggested reopening girls' schools in phases under a controlled plan.

IEA stance

MoHE spokesman Ziaullah Hashimi told Pajhwok: "Until further notice, universities will remain closed to female students. The final decision will be made by the IEA leadership."

Pajhwok also sought comment from the MoE but did not receive a response.

IEA officials have repeatedly stated that the suspension is temporary and that girls will be allowed to study once a "suitable environment" is created.

## Taekwondo athlete Zain wins bronze in Kazakhstan

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghanistan national taekwondo team member Hekmatullah Zain has won the bronze medal at the Kazakhstan Open International Taekwondo Championships after consecutive victories over athletes from Saudi Arabia and Kyrgyzstan.

The tournament began on Thursday, with more than 10 Afghan athletes participating. Mohammad Bashir Taraki, head coach of Afghanistan's national team, wrote on Facebook: "Hekmatullah Zain defeated his Kyrgyz opponent and secured the bronze medal for Afghanistan at

the Kazakhstan Open Taekwondo Championships."

Competing in the fourth weight category, Zain advanced to the semifinals after defeating his Saudi Arabian and Kyrgyz opponents. He was the only Afghan athlete to win a medal at the competition.





## PHC seeks govt report in 9 missing persons cases

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has sought a report from the federal and provincial governments regarding the cases of 11 missing persons from various parts of the province. The court issued notices to the governments in 9 cases, while 2 cases were disposed of after the missing persons returned home, on Friday.

The cases were brought before the court through habeas corpus petitions filed by the families of the missing persons. The petitioners' lawyers argued that the missing persons were likely taken into custody by law enforcement agencies, and their whereabouts were unknown. The petitioners' lawyers argued that the families of the missing persons had approached the court due to concerns about their loved ones' safety and well-being.

PHC single bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali heard the petitions and directed the federal and provincial governments to submit a report in 9 cases. The court disposed of 2 cases after being informed that the missing persons had returned home. In another case, the court was informed that the missing person, Iftikhar Ahmad, was in jail, facing multiple cases, and disposed of the petition accordingly.

## Lebanon PM slams Hezbollah chief's threat

BEIRUT (AFP): Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem vowed Friday to fight government plans to disarm his group, with Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam accusing him of making "unacceptable" threats to unleash civil war.

Qassem gave a televised address after meeting with Iran's security chief Ali Larjani, whose country has long backed the Lebanese militant group. Hezbollah emerged badly weakened from last year's war with Israel, and the Lebanese government — under US pressure — has ordered the army to draw up a plan to disarm the group by the end of the year.

Iran, whose so-called "axis of resistance" includes Hezbollah, has also suffered a series of setbacks, most recently in its own war with Israel, which also saw the United States strike its nuclear facilities. "The government is implementing an American-Israeli order to end the resistance, even if it leads to civil war and internal strife," Qassem said.

"The resistance will not surrender its weapons while aggression continues, occupation persists, and we will fight it... if necessary to confront this American-Israeli project no matter the cost," He urged the government "not to hand over the country to an insatiable Israeli aggressor or an American tyrant with limitless greed," adding the state would "bear responsibility for any internal explosion and any destruction of Lebanon." Prime Minister Salam later denounced the remarks, saying on X that they "constitute an implicit threat of civil war."

He added that "any threat or intimidation related to such a war is totally unacceptable," Salam also hit back at Hezbollah's characterization of the disarmament push as an American-Israeli effort. "Our decisions are purely Lebanese, made by our cabinet, and no one tells us what to do," he said.

Before the war with Israel, Hezbollah was believed to be better armed than the Lebanese military. It long maintained it had to keep its arsenal in order to defend Lebanon from attack, but critics accused it of using its weapons for political leverage. Qassem said Friday that Hezbollah and its political ally Amal would not be organizing any street protests against disarmament at this time, but threatened to do so in future.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council chief Larjani was in Beirut this week, and held talks with Qassem as well as with President Joseph Aoun. Iran has expressed its opposition to the government's disarmament plan, and has vowed to continue to provide support, with Lebanese officials recently hardening their tone toward Hezbollah and its patron.

# Pakistan rejects Israeli 'Greater Israel' remarks

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan on Friday categorically condemned and rejected the recent statements by the Israeli occupying power suggesting the creation of a so-called "Greater Israel" and plans for the forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza.

Ambassador Khan, in a statement issued by the Foreign Office here, said such rhetoric was a blatant violation of international law, the UN Charter, and relevant United Nations resolutions. He urged the international community to "outrightly reject" these provocative notions, which he warned were aimed at entrenching Israel's illegal occupation and undermin-

ing all efforts toward lasting peace in the region.

"These statements demonstrate the occupying power's complete contempt for international efforts and reveal its intention to escalate instability in the region," the spokesperson stressed, calling for immediate and concrete action to halt Israel's ongoing crimes and atrocities against the Palestinian people. Reiterating Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause, Ambassador Khan reaffirmed Islamabad's backing for the Palestinian people's legitimate rights including self-determination and the establishment of an independent, viable, and contiguous State of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Pakistan also expressed

deep grief at the tragic loss and damage caused by the recent cloudburst in Kishtwar, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The government and people of Pakistan are deeply grieved at the tragic loss of precious lives and extensive damage to property caused by the recent cloudburst in Kishtwar, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), a statement issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson said.

"We extend our sincere condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. Pakistan stands in solidarity with the Kashmiris in this time of distress and reiterates its unwavering support for their resilience in the face of continuing hardships," the spokesperson added.

## Every step being taken to protect human lives: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Friday that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to ramp up relief and rescue operations in areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) hit by heavy rains and flooding.

"The Prime Minister is fully aware of the flood situation and is issuing constant instructions to ensure timely relief operations," Tarar said in a statement. He added that Shehbaz Sharif has instructed NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider to maintain close coordination with the governments of KP and AJK and accelerate response activities.

A special cell had been established at the Prime Minister's Office to main-

tain round-the-clock contact with NDMA, the minister noted. "The government's focus is on relief and rescue measures, with all agencies deploying maximum resources in the affected areas," he said.

Tarar stated that about 40 people are reported missing in KP as rescue teams work to save lives. NDMA's early warning system is providing regular alerts to all provincial governments, while its command and control center remains operational 24/7 to monitor the evolving situation. The information minister reminded that the Prime Minister has personally visited NDMA three times during the ongoing monsoon emergency to review rescue and relief operations. "Every possible step is being taken to protect human lives," Tarar said.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting postponed a two-day Independence Day

program scheduled for August 16 and 17 at Islamabad's F-9 Park, citing the ongoing floods, heavy rains and loss of lives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. According to the ministry's spokesperson, the event themed "Marka-e-Haq and Independence Day Celebrations" has been deferred on the directions of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar.

The decision, the spokesperson said, was made to express solidarity with flood-affected communities and to focus attention on relief efforts. "Given the widespread damage caused by rains and floods, the entire nation must stand united in supporting the victims," the spokesperson emphasized. He also assured that Independence Day celebrations would be held later with even greater zeal and spirit.

## Trump, Putin head for high-stakes Alaska summit

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin flew to Alaska on Friday for a high-risk summit that promises a stern test of the US president's promise to end the bloody war in Ukraine.

Both leaders voiced hopes of a productive meeting, but while Trump warned he could judge it a failure after just a few minutes if Putin does not budge, the Kremlin said the two would speak for "a minimum" of at least six or seven hours. For the Russian president, the meeting marks his first foray onto Western soil since he ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, triggering a relentless conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people.

In recent days Russia has made significant battlefield gains that could strengthen Putin's hand in any ceasefire negotiations. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Anchorage, Trump sounded a positive note. "There's a good respect level on both sides and I think something's going to come out of it," he said.

Every word and gesture will be closely watched by European leaders and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was not included and has publicly refused pressure from Trump to surrender territory seized by Russia. "It is time to end the war, and the necessary steps must be taken by Russia. We are counting on America,"

Zelensky said in a social media post.

Trump has called the summit a "feel-out meeting" to test Putin, whom he last saw in 2019, and said Friday he was not going to Alaska to "negotiate." "I'm here to get them at the table," he said of the Russian and Ukrainian leaders. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow would not forecast the outcome of the meeting.

"We never make any predictions ahead of time," Lavrov told Russian state TV after he reached Alaska, wearing what appeared to be a shirt with "USSR" written across it in Cyrillic script. Russia's "position is clear and unambiguous," he said. Trump has promised to consult with European leaders and Zelensky, saying that any final agreement would come in a three-way meeting with Putin and the Ukrainian president to "divvy up" territory.

Trump has boasted of his relationship with Putin, blamed predecessor Joe Biden for the war and had vowed before his return to the White House in January that he would be able to bring peace within 24 hours. But despite repeated calls to Putin, and a stunning February 28 White House meeting in which Trump publicly berated Zelensky, the Russian leader has shown no signs of compromise.

Trump has acknowledged his frustration with Putin and warned of "very severe consequences" if he does not

accept a ceasefire -- but also agreed to see him in Alaska. The talks are set to begin at 11:30 am (1930 GMT) at Elmendorf Air Force Base, the largest US military installation in Alaska and a Cold War facility for surveillance of the former Soviet Union.

Adding to the historical significance, the United States bought Alaska in 1867 from Russia -- a deal Moscow has cited to show the legitimacy of land swaps. The Kremlin said it expected Putin and Trump to meet alone with interpreters before a working lunch with aides. Neither leader is expected to step off the base into Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, where protesters have put up signs of solidarity with Ukraine.

The summit marks a sharp shift from the approach of Western European leaders and Biden, who vowed not to hold discussions with Russia on Ukraine's future until Kyiv was also at the table. Putin faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court, leading him to curtail travel sharply since the war began. However, the United States is not party to the Hague tribunal and Trump's Treasury Department temporarily eased sanctions on top Russian officials to allow them to travel and use bank cards in Alaska. Zelensky has called the Alaska summit a "personal victory" for Putin, whose forces have gone on the offensive in eastern Ukraine in recent days.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing an emergency meeting on recent cloudburst, flood situation and ongoing rescue and relief operation.

## Trump's takeover of DC police dept faces new lawsuit

WASHINGTON: The United States capital, Washington, DC, has challenged President Donald Trump's takeover of its police department in court, hours after his administration stepped up its crack-down on policing by naming the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) chief, a federal official, as the new emergency head of the department, with all the powers of a police chief.

District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwab said on Friday in a new lawsuit that Trump is exceeding his power under the law. Schwab urged a judge to rule that control of the department remains in the city's hands, and he has also sought an emergency restraining order. "The administration's unlawful actions are an affront to the dignity and autonomy of the 700,000 Americans who call D.C. home. This is the gravest threat to Home Rule that the District has ever faced, and we are fighting to stop it," Schwab said.

Washington's police chief said Trump's directive would deeply threaten law and order by upending the department's command structure. "In my nearly three decades in law enforcement, I have never seen a single government action that would cause a greater threat to law and order than this dangerous directive," Police Chief Pamela Smith said in a court filing.

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser also pushed back, writing on social media that "there is no statute that conveys the District's personnel authority to a federal official." The White House defended its move: "The Trump Administration has the lawful authority to assert control over the D.C. Police, which is necessary due to the emergency that has arisen in our Nation's Capital as a result of failed leadership," White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said in a statement.

The lawsuit comes after Trump's Attorney General Pam Bondi said on Thursday night that DEA boss Terry Cole will assume "powers and duties vested in the District of Columbia Chief of Police." The Metropolitan Police Department "must receive approval from Commissioner Cole" before issuing any orders, Bondi said. Earlier this week, Trump announced that the federal government would take control of the District of Columbia (DC) Metropolitan Police Department to address surging crime.

"I'm announcing a historic action to rescue our nation's capital from crime, bloodshed, bedlam and squalor and worse," Trump said during the news conference, in which he was joined by Bondi, who was initially set to oversee the city's police force while it is under federal control. "This is Liberation Day in DC, and we're going to take our capital back. — Aljazeera

## Pak Navy launches third Hangor class Submarine

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The launching ceremony of submarine PNS/M MANGRO (Desig) was held at Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group Company Ltd., Shuangliu Base, Wuhan, China. Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Project-2, Vice Admiral Abdul Samad graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief Guest stressed the significance of maritime security amid region's current geo-strategic dynamics. He reaffirmed that Pakistan Navy remains fully committed to defend national interests while fostering a secure and cooperative maritime environment. Referring to HANGOR Class Submarines, he highlighted that their cutting-edge weaponry and advanced sensors would be instrumental in sustaining regional power equilibrium and



ensuring maritime stability. Commending the dedicated work of China Shipbuilding & Offshore International Company Ltd (CSOC), he expressed satisfaction over steady progress of the project and remarked that HANGOR Class Submarine initiative would bring a fresh dimension to the enduring, time-honoured partnership between Pakistan and China.

The Government of Pakistan signed an agreement with CSOC to acquire eight HANGOR Class submarines. Under the con-

tract, four submarines are being built in China, while the remaining four will be constructed in Pakistan at Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works Ltd (KS&EW) under Transfer of Technology (ToT) program.

The launching ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials from Pakistan and China, including representatives from Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group Company Ltd and China Shipbuilding & Offshore International Company Ltd.

## Wildfires sweep Spain, Portugal and Greece

MADRID: Firefighters in Spain, Portugal and Greece are battling fierce wildfires as scorching, dry, intense heat fuels blazes across the region, coinciding with major religious holidays, as global warming leaves its mark on Europe.

Spain faced 14 major fires on Friday, said Virginia Barcones, the emergency services chief, as temperatures were forecast to rise further over the weekend. "Today will once again be a very tough day with an extreme risk of new fires," Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez warned on Friday.

The State Meteorological Agency placed most of the country under extreme fire danger alerts, particularly in the north and west, where the largest blazes raged. The current heatwave, with temperatures topping 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) on several days this month, is expected to linger until Monday. In Galicia, fires shut down several highways and halted high-speed

rail services to Madrid. The EU's European Forest Fire Information System reported that wildfires in Spain this year have already burned 158,000 hectares (390,000 acres), an area the size of metropolitan London.

Friday marked the Feast of the Assumption in Spain and Portugal, a major Catholic holiday usually observed with family gatherings and processions. In Portugal, almost 4,000 firefighters battled seven active fires, as authorities extended a state of alert until Sunday. The government also sought European Union assistance under its civil protection mechanism. A day earlier, Spain received two Canadair water bomber aircraft from the European Union. The first time it had ever activated the bloc's emergency firefighting aid.

Elsewhere in Southern Europe, Greece continued to struggle with a major wildfire burning for four days on the island of Chios. Several overnight evacua-

tions took place as flames spread through the island's northern region. Two planes and two helicopters dropped water during calmer winds early on Friday. After devastating fires earlier this week in western Greece, the fire service remained on high alert outside Athens and in southern areas, where strong winds and high temperatures heightened the danger.

Across the Balkans and Southern Europe, demand for the EU's shared firefighting resources has soared this year. Bulgaria, Montenegro and Albania have all called for help in recent days as the system has already been deployed as often as during the whole of last year's fire season. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual head of the world's Orthodox Christians, expressed solidarity with wildfire victims during prayers for the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, one of the faith's most significant feast days. — Aljazeera

## UK rights watchdog warns police to avoid policing of Gaza protests

LONDON: Britain's human rights watchdog has urged ministers and police chiefs to avoid "heavy-handed" tactics when policing demonstrations over the war in Gaza, saying that such actions risk creating a "chilling effect" on the right to protest, it was reported on Friday.

In a letter to Home Secretary Yvette Cooper and Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley, the Equality and Human Rights Commission chairman Baroness Kishwer Falkner said the "right to protest is a cornerstone of any healthy democracy" and any interference "must be lawful and assessed

case by case."

Her intervention follows reports of individuals facing police action at recent demonstrations despite not expressing support for any banned organizations. The EHRC cited the case of Laura Murton, who in July was threatened with arrest under the Terrorism Act by Kent Police in July for holding a Palestinian flag and signs reading "Free Gaza" and "Israel is committing genocide" during a demonstration in Canterbury.

Murton told officers she did not support any proscribed groups but was reportedly warned that her actions were linked to

Palestine Action — which in July was banned by the government. Membership of or support for the group is a criminal offence under the Terrorism Act, carrying a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

"Heavy-handed policing or blanket approaches risk creating a chilling effect, deterring citizens from exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and assembly through fear of possible consequences," Falkner said. "This concern extends beyond those directly affected by police engagement to the broader health of our democracy. — Arab News

## Senate passes resolution reaffirming resolve to protect sovereignty of Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Friday unanimously passed a resolution, reaffirming the resolve to protect the sovereignty of Pakistan, preserving its democratic ethics and building a prosperous future for generations to come.

The resolution moved by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar in connection with Independence Day, pledged to strive for sustainable development, economic empowerment and national unity. Honoring the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the resolution paid homage to all those whose sacri-

fices made Pakistan a sovereign and independent state.

The resolution acknowledged and commended the armed forces and security institutions for their unmatched valour and sacrifices in defending the nation. It paid tributes to the martyrs and Ghazis, pledging to preserve and uphold their legacy for future generations. The resolution paid special tribute to the parliamentarians, who framed the constitution of Pakistan and advanced democratic reforms, while reaffirming the commitment to preserving the parliamentary democracy, constitutional supremacy and rule of law.

The resolution also expressed commitment to promoting peaceful co-existence, regional stability and constructive engagement with neighboring countries. It also expressed commitment to address the shared challenges including climate change, economic inequalities, terrorism and public health crisis while safeguarding Pakistan's sovereignty. The resolution called upon the citizens, particularly the youth to work beyond personal and political differences and to contribute actively to nation building through education, innovation, civic engagement and service to humanity.

The Senate today unanimously

passed a resolution urging the federal and provincial governments to celebrate the 1500th Eid Milad-un-Nabi Sallallahu Alaihe Wa Alhi Wasallam at a high level through national programs, Milad-un-Nabi Mahafils, media campaigns, welfare initiatives and illumination and decoration of the government, semi government and private buildings and highways. The resolution, moved by Irfan-ul-Haque Siddiqui, emphasized that all public and private departments including educational institutions, businesses and media houses should promote the message of peace, harmony and brotherhood in accordance with

the teachings of Hazrat Muhammad Rasool Allah Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Sallallahu Alaihe Wa Ala Alayhee Wa Ashabehi Wassalam.

The House expressed the resolve to promote the Sunnah and Seerat of Hazrat Muhammad Rasool Allah Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Sallallahu Alaihe Wa Ala Alayhee Wa Ashabehi Wassalam. It appealed the entire nation to celebrate the sacred occasion of Eid Miland un Nabi Nabi Sallallahu Alaihe Wa Alhi Wasallam with utmost reverence and unity and solidarity.

Responding to a Calling Attention Notice, Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan,

told the House that a five year Strategic Trade Policy Framework has been prepared to enhance Pakistan's export competitiveness. He said the policy framework focuses on export diversification. The Minister said details negotiations were held with the stakeholders on the framework. He said duties have been reduced on three hundred items in the national tariff policy to facilitate the businesses. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry laid before the House The Federal Prosecution Service Amendment Bill, 2025. Later, the House was adjourned to meet again on Monday at five pm.