

Funeral prayer offered F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The funeral prayer of the martyrs of the provincial government's helicopter, which met with an accident yesterday while en route to Bajaur for relief operations, was offered at the Civil Secretariat here Saturday. Members of the provincial cabinet, senior civil and military officials, and the families of the martyrs attended the ceremony.



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Worst destruction in KP areas Casualties reached to 227 in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: The death toll due to recent rains, floods and landslides has been reached 227 in which 186 bodies were recovered till midnight on Friday, while 41 more bodies were found on Saturday.

The worst destruction has been reported in the villages of Batai Darra, Bishonai and Kale in Tehsil Gaddizhi. A collective funeral prayer was offered for 43 martyrs in Batai Darra on Saturday, while a funeral prayer was offered for 55 martyrs in Bishonai at 12 midnight on Friday. More than 40 martyrs were offered in Chagharzi, while funerals of seven martyrs were offered in Daggar Gokand and Kalil.

It has been learned that the largest number of martyrs are children and women. The bad news is that many people from many unfortunate families are still missing. Search operations are ongoing and the number of martyrs may increase further, while the number of injured is also high.

There has been heavy loss of life and property in three tehsils of the district, Gadzi, Daggar, and Chagharzi. The district administration has declared an emergency there. Due to the high number of deaths in Gadzi, TCHQ Pach has been made a base camp and Daggar Hospital has also been made a base camp. Ambulance health personnel, male and female doctors and staff have reached there from Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi. Two mobile clinics have also arrived.

A large supply of medicines has been delivered. Cleanliness started with a big missionary in Pacha Bazaar. DC Kashif Qayyum, DPO Saud Khan, DHO Akhtar Nawaz and heads of other institutions were supervising. Pacha Hospital JMS, Dr. Imtiaz Ali Shah, doctors and staff worked day and night. On Saturday,

the Insaf Doctors Forum set up a camp at the hospital and maintained contact with the teams.

Meanwhile, heavy rains, devastating floods and severe winds and storms caused widespread destruction in Buner district. Dozens of houses in different tehsils were reduced to rubble, agricultural lands and infrastructure were severely damaged, while reports of casualties are also worrying. In Tehsil Gadzi, Bishonai, Malikpur, Balokhan and nearby areas were the worst affected, where more than 158 bodies have been recovered, while more than 850 people were rescued in time and shifted to safe places. In Tehsil Daggar, 28 people died in Gokand, Kot and other places, while more than 202 civilians, including women and children, were shifted to safe places.

In Tehsil Chagharzai, 19 people from the same house were buried under the rubble. In total, 41 bodies were recovered here, while 35 people were rescued and shifted to THQ Hospital Gulbandi in an injured condition.

Rescue 1122 Buner personnel are continuously engaged in search and rescue operations day and night in the affected areas. Rescue personnel from Swabi have joined the operation along with emergency vehicles, while special rescue teams from Peshawar are also participating in relief activities in the affected areas. However, houses have been destroyed in all three tehsils, especially in Gaddizi, and the losses to houses, huts, shops, markets and crops are in the billions.

The provincial government has immediately provided Rs. 150 million for the search for the martyrs and the treatment of the injured. While the PDMA has also promised to provide food and shelter and provide a martyrs package later.

8 more bodies recovered in Swat

F.P. Report

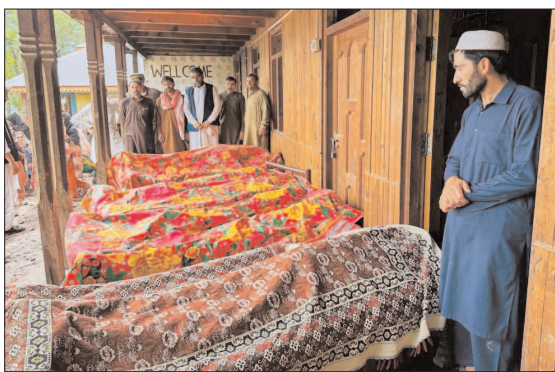
SWAT: The death toll here rose to 20 after eight more bodies were recovered from floodwaters in Bashbanr and Daewoo Adda areas on Saturday.

Rescue officials confirmed that four bodies were recovered from Bashbanr and another four from Daiwo Adda, Mingora. In addition, two people sustained injuries, while the search continues for four missing persons. Deputy Commissioner Saleem Jan confirmed the recovery of the bodies, raising the death toll in Swat to 20 following heavy rains and flash floods.

It is pertinent to mention that the floods have caused widespread devastation in Swat, with torrential rains sweeping away large parts of Mingora, Manglor, Matta, and Kokarai.

Power supply has been restored on 23 feeders in Swat, while repair work is underway on the remaining eighteen feeders, a spokesman of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) said here on Saturday.

He said PESCO Chief Akhtar Hameed Khan had directed the company's staff to complete the restoration work at the earliest, adding that floodwater had already been drained out from the Swat grid station the previous day. He said that due to the floods, electricity supply to 41 feeders in Swat was suspended. However, Malam Jabba has now been provided with electricity through an alternate route. He further said essential equipment, including poles, wires, and transformers, had already been delivered to Swat, while additional PESCO staff had also been deployed in the affected areas.



Death toll rises to 37 in Shangla due to floods

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: The death toll in the Shangla floods has risen to 37, with several people still missing. The provincial government has declared Shangla a disaster-affected district. Hundreds of residential houses have been destroyed due to the devastating floods.

According to details, key roads like Alpuri to Besham, Alpuri to Puran have been temporarily restored. However, work on restoring link roads has not yet begun. Kozpao, Choga, and Puran in Shangla have been hit the hardest. The atmosphere in other affected areas is also sorrowful. Funeral prayers for those who lost their lives in flash floods were held in various areas. The Chairman of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) visited the affected areas to assess the damage and directed to expedite restoration efforts.

Chief Minister's Visit: The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will visit the affected areas of Shangla on Sunday to assess the damage caused by the floods. According to

figures released on Saturday, the death toll in Shangla has exceeded 37. Many are still missing. Hundreds have been injured due to flash floods, lightning strikes, and landslides.

Moreover, several areas in Puran tehsil of Shangla have been severely affected, with significant damage to orchards, standing crops, and agricultural land. Dozens of bridges and link roads along various streams in Shangla have been washed away by floods.

Meanwhile, Provincial President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, visited Shangla on an emergency tour. He met with the affected people in the most hit areas of Tehsil Puran, including Kozpao, Choga, and Puran. Junaid Akbar expressed sorrow over the loss of precious lives and offered condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in various areas.

Support to Flood-Affected People: Junaid Akbar stated that PTI stands with the people in the damages caused by

floods in Shangla and across the province, and efforts will be made to compensate for the losses. He reviewed the Alpuri to Besham main road. He directed to raise the issue in the Public Accounts Committee regarding the use of poor-quality material by NHA and AMC in flood-affected Ranial.

Moreover, teams from the Health Department Shangla, along with medicines, have been dispatched to the flood-affected areas. Under the supervision of District Health Officer Shangla, Dr. Nazam Mohammad, the teams have been mobilized. Dr. Nazam Mohammad stated that the Health Department Shangla is making efforts to provide medicines and medical relief to the affected areas of Shangla on a priority basis. In Puran, all teams are providing uninterrupted medical facilities to the flood-affected areas. Dr. Nazam Mohammad, head of the Health Department Shangla, has proceeded to the affected sites along with his team to provide immediate and timely medical facilities to the affected people.

KP govt to fully compensate flood victims: CM

F.P. Report

BUNER: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Saturday visited flood-affected Buner district, where he chaired a meeting at the deputy commissioner's office to review the situation and ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts. Provincial cabinet members Syed Fakhar Jehan, Naik Muhammad, and Sohail Afridi, MNA Barister Gohar, MPA Riaz Khan, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, other concerned hugh ups and district administration officials attended the meeting.

The meeting began with prayers for those who lost their lives in the floods. Officials briefed the Chief Minister that torrential cloudbursts had damaged more than 5,380 houses across seven village councils in Buner. So far, 209 deaths have been reported, 134 people remain missing, and 159 have been injured. Rescue and relief operations are underway with the support of 10 excavators, 22 tractors, 10 de-watering pumps, five water bowlers, and 10 bulldozers. A total of 223 rescue workers, 205 doctors, 260 paramedics, 400 police personnel, 300 civil defense volunteers, and three battalions of the Pakistan Army are engaged in the operations. Affected families are being provided with food, tents, blankets, mattresses, and medical assistance. The meeting was told that key routes are being cleared: six kilometers of road in Pir Baba and 3.5 kilometers in Gokand have already been reopened, while debris from 15 landslide sites has been removed. Relief emergencies have been declared in Buner and seven other districts. A search operation is underway to trace those still missing, and 3,500 stranded people have been rescued to safety.

Speaking at the meeting, Chief Minister Gandapur praised the quick response of provincial and district administrations, saying their efforts in the face of disaster had been com-

mendable. He urged civil administration officials to show the same dedication in the rehabilitation phase and assured that no effort would be spared in restoring the lives of the affected people.

The Chief Minister directed that food, medicines, and other essential supplies be made available in sufficient quantities, and that compensation for victims' families and the injured be delivered without delay. He said the provincial government has already released Rs. 1.5 billion for this purpose.

Gandapur pledged that the provincial government would fully compensate people for their losses and prioritize their rehabilitation and resettlement. He added that damaged infrastructure would be restored on an urgent basis to ensure uninterrupted access to public services. The Chief Minister also expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and fellow chief ministers for reaching out and assuring cooperation during the crisis.

Earlier, the Chief Minister chaired an emergency meeting in Peshawar to review damages caused by cloudbursts, heavy rains, and flash floods across the province. The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, senior officials, and representatives of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).

The participants offered prayers for the officials who lost their lives in a helicopter crash in Bajaur while carrying out relief duties. Briefing the meeting, officials reported that 309 people have died and 23 have been injured in various rain- and flood-related incidents. Sixty-three houses were partially damaged, while surveys of losses to roads and other infrastructure are still underway. Work is being carried out to restore road links to cut-off areas, and medical teams, food, medicines, and essential supplies are being sent to the affected districts.

The meeting was informed that the provincial government has released Rs. 1.5 billion to PDMA for rescue, relief, and compensation, and another Rs. 1.5 billion to the Communication and Works Department for repair of roads and infrastructure. In addition, Rs. 500 million has been allocated to deputy commissioners for compensating the families of those who lost their lives. A flood and health emergency has been declared in the affected areas. Officials said rescue operations have largely been completed, and the focus has now shifted to relief and rehabilitation. While the federal government and the Pakistan Army are extending assistance, the provincial civil administration is leading the response.

Speaking at the meeting, Chief Minister Gandapur said the provincial government stands firmly with the people in this difficult time and will use all available resources for their rehabilitation. He expressed solidarity with the bereaved families and praised the provincial and district administrations for their swift response, saying their performance in the crisis had been commendable. He urged them to continue the same commitment in the relief and rehabilitation phase.

The Chief Minister directed that road connectivity be restored as quickly as possible, with helicopters used to deliver aid to inaccessible areas. He ordered that compensation payments be completed within two days, additional medical staff be deployed from neighboring districts, and food supplies be ensured so that no affected family faces shortages. He also instructed the Chief Secretary and PDMA to strengthen monitoring and coordination between federal and provincial agencies, mobilize heavy machinery for reconstruction, and immediately dispatch all available food and non-food items to the flood-hit districts.

PM overseeing rescue, relief operations

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is personally overseeing rescue and relief operations after heavy rains and flood situation in the upper parts of the country.

The Prime Minister is in constant touch with the Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to ensure the delivery of relief materials to the affected districts, transport people to safe places and to carry out the search operation for missing persons speedily and effectively.

On the special instructions of the Prime Minister, the Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan visited the flood-affected areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the whole

day and personally supervised the delivery of relief materials. The Prime Minister directed further speeding up of the rescue operation in the affected areas. He directed the provision of tents, medicines, immediate medical assistance and all related facilities to the flood victims on a priority basis.

He instructed the NDMA to provide advance weather information to the residents of the affected and adjacent areas and remain prepared for any possible emergency. He also directed the National Disaster Management Authority to further enhance coordination with the provincial disaster management authorities and the disaster management institutions of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan and provide them

with all forms of assistance. He ordered speedy action to immediately restore the roads closed due to rains and landslides. He has also directed to provide assistance to the passengers stranded on the closed highways as soon as possible.

Shehbaz wants Jinnah Medical Complex; a tertiary care center of int'l standards: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that Jinnah Medical Complex would be developed as a tertiary care hospital meeting international standards.

During a review meeting on Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Center, he directed that all the measures related to the construction of the complex should be completed within the stipulated period of time.

Son, two daughter of JUI-F leader shot dead

F.P. Report

MALAKAND: A domestic dispute turned deadly in Batkhela, Malakand, when the son of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) district chief and former National Assembly candidate, Mufti Kifayatullah, allegedly opened fire on his family.

Police and rescue officials said the accused, identified as Muhtasim Billah, exchanged harsh words with family members at their home in Naraypal Itedah Colony. During the altercation, he allegedly opened indiscriminate fire, injuring his father, two sisters, and his brother.

Rescue 1122 teams provided first aid on the spot and shifted the wounded to the District Headquarters Hospital in Batkhela. On the way, however, Mufti Kifayatullah's son, Constable Ismatullah Khan of the Levies Force, and one of his sisters succumbed to their injuries. The other injured daughter, who had been transferred along with Mufti Kifayatullah to a hospital in Peshawar, also died during treatment. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Mufti Kifayatullah remains under medical care in critical condition. Malakand Levies confirmed arrest of suspect along with weapon used in the crime. A case has been registered, and an investigation is under way. The incident has shocked the local community, where Mufti Kifayatullah is regarded as a prominent political and religious figure.

God made me this country's guardian: COAS

BRUSSELS: Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir has ruled out any change in the country's leadership, describing circulating rumours as completely false and against both the government and the establishment.

Speaking to senior journalist Sohail Waraich in Brussels, the army chief said, "God made me this country's guardian", adding that he has no desire for any other position. He emphasised that political reconciliation is only possible through genuine apologies from all parties involved.

"Field Marshal Asim Munir has never expressed any desire to become the president, nor is there any such plan in the offing," PM Shehbaz had said, while Naqvi called it a "malicious campaign" targeting President Zardari, the premier, and the army chief. During his interaction with the senior journalist, Field Marshal Munir also highlighted Pakistan's long-standing experience in maintaining balanced relations with China and the United States. He said: "We will not sacrifice one friend for the sake of another."

United States-Pakistan relations have started improving since US President Donald Trump took office. He recently host-

ed COAS Munir for lunch at the White House, a move that unsettled India and signalled a significant diplomatic shift. On international diplomacy, the army chief noted that US President Trump's desire for peace is genuine, which is why Pakistan was the first to support his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. He added that other countries are now following Pakistan's lead in supporting the nomination.

Regarding regional security, Field Marshal Munir warned that India should not attempt to destabilise Pakistan through proxies. The army chief praised Prime Minister Shehbaz for his dedication, including working 18-hour days during the war, and lauded the government and cabinet for demonstrating remarkable resolve during challenging times. India has escalated its proxy war against Pakistan following its defeat in "Marka-e-Haq" — the days-long military conflict between the two nuclear neighbours — and is using Fitna-al-Khawarj and Fitna-al-Hindustan to advance its nefarious designs. He also called on the Afghan government to halt policies that push the Taliban into Pakistan, and reaffirmed that the blood of every Pakistani is a responsibility the state must uphold. — Agencies



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah in meeting with an Ethiopian delegation led by Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, held at CM House. —PPI Photo

Behbud Association's Open House: A day of connection and community

Marya Haleema

KARACHI: The Behbud Association Karachi recently hosted a successful Open House at its Shirin Jinnah Complex in Clifton, welcoming a diverse group of leaders from various sectors of business, industry, and social organizations. The event served as a powerful showcase of the NGO's dedicated work in health, education, and vocational training.

The day began with a warm welcome from the President of Behbud, who set the stage for a compelling presentation on the organization's history and mission. Guests were given a firsthand look at how Behbud has transformed lives since its founding in 1970, offering a glimpse into its long-standing commitment to community empowerment.

Attendees were then taken on guided tours of the Behbud School, Clinics, and Skills training centers. The tour highlighted the comprehensive approach of the organization, including the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), which provides ongoing training for both internal and external teachers. Guests saw how the Mothers Club actively engages mothers in their children's education and witnessed students being ethically and



morally trained through a program called "Colors of Success." Students proudly displayed exhibits they had prepared, eager to share their learning experiences. Visitors also had the unique opportunity to meet the talented craftswomen of Behbud's vocational programs, witnessing their skilled workmanship and even trying their hand at block printing.

The event resonated deeply with all who attended, leaving them feeling connected to and inspired by Behbud's cause. They expressed their appreciation for the transparency and dedication of the team, and many reaffirmed their commitment to sup-

porting Behbud's mission.

Behbud Association Karachi extends its heartfelt thanks to all who attended, making the Open House a great success. This event once again proved that when people work together, the impossible can be achieved. We hope that this successful Open House will increase public cooperation with Behbud's work, and that together we will take further steps for the welfare of the underprivileged segments of society. We hope that Behbud will continue its vital work in this way, and as citizens, we will continue to do our part to contribute to its noble cause.

Punjab celebrates peaceful Chehlum of Imam Hussain (AS)

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister and Chairman Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, Khawaja Salman Rafique, has extended heartfelt congratulations to the provincial administration for the peaceful and successful organization of Chehlum Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and Urs Hazrat Ali Hajveri (RA). In a statement issued on Saturday, the minister praised the collaborative efforts of various institutions that ensured the events were conducted smoothly across Punjab.

The Pakistan Army, Home Department, Police, Health Department, Rangers, Rescue 1122, District Administration, Auqaf, Municipalities, Food Authority, Discos, Civil Defense, and other organizations played a pivotal role in maintaining peace and order. "By the grace of Allah Almighty,

both events have passed very peacefully across the province," said Khawaja Salman Rafique. He also acknowledged the significant contributions of Ulama and peace committees in fostering unity and harmony during the events.

He said that following the directives of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the message of peace and Muslim unity was effectively conveyed throughout the province. Robust security arrangements by the Police, Army, and Rangers ensured the safety of all gatherings and processions. Ulama, speaking from pulpits, emphasized the importance of unity among Muslims, further strengthening the atmosphere of solidarity.

Reflecting on the significance of the occasions, Khawaja Salman Rafique stated, "The sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions will be remembered forever. We

are committed to ensuring an atmosphere of peace and order in Punjab."

Punjab Home Secretary Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi also commended the administration, police, rescue services, health department, endowment, and other related departments for their exemplary teamwork. "By the grace of God Almighty and the coordinated efforts of all departments, the Chehlum and Urs were completed peacefully," he remarked. Dr. Qazi highlighted that comprehensive monitoring of gatherings and processions was ensured through camera surveillance, with officers and officials performing their duties commendably.

The successful coordination among relevant institutions ensured robust security and seamless arrangements, earning widespread appreciation for all involved.

Police campaign nets 109 arrests, cases filed

LAHORE (PPI): Under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's "Safe Punjab" program, Punjab Police continued its integrated campaign against illegal activities. During the crackdown on narcotics, authorities arrested 109 individuals, registered 109 legal cases, and seized a large quantity of drugs.

To ensure public safety, officers conducted 447 search operations, interrogated 13,660 individuals, and detained 42 people suspected of involvement in illegal activities. Police also arrested 71 individuals involved in electricity theft, causing losses to the national treasury, and registered 157 cases in this regard.

Taking action against dangerous kite flying, law enforcement agencies arrested three individuals, registered three cases, and confiscated 183 kites. Traffic officers took action against 27,313 motorcyclists, collected fines of 18 million rupees, and impounded 21 vehicles emitting excessive smoke. Simultaneously, they facilitated the issuance of 22,404 driving permits. Police service centers provided 14 integrated services to 12,803 citizens.

Anniversary of Baba-e-Urdu observed

KARACHI (PPI): A ceremony was held in Karachi to mark the 64th death anniversary of Baba-e-Urdu Maulvi Abdul Haq, Muhammad Aslam Khan Farooqi, Chairman of the Mohib Quomi Social Council (MQSC) Pakistan, presided over the event, and described Abdul Haq as a visionary scholar, linguist, educationist, and the founding figure of Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Urdu and the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology.

Farooqi highlighted Abdul Haq's lifelong dedication to the development and promotion of Urdu, and urged the government to take steps to promote the use of the language. He said that the widespread implementation of Urdu could solve many problems of society.

Ethiopian Embassy holds green legacy dialogue with Sindh govt

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad Saturday hold an Ethio-Pakistan Green Legacy Dialogue in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Minister of Sindh, aiming to exchange knowledge and expertise to tackle the climate change, land degradation and deforestation.

The forum was held at the Chief Minister of Sindh and presided from both sides by Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of Ethiopia Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula with Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah.

Dr. Adefires Worku Gizaw, the Chair of Green Legacy Technical Committee, shared insights into Ethiopia's roadmap in promoting afforestation, reforestation, food security and job creation in the country besides soil and water

management under the Green Legacy Initiative of Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

From Pakistan side, Zubair Ahmed, Secretary of the Environment and Climate Change, gave presentation on the climate change policy and Green Initiatives taken by the Government of Sindh. Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador said Ethiopia is leading climate agenda not only in Africa but across the world to promote green and sustainable development across the globe.

He highlighted the adverse impacts of climate change which is not only taking a toll on lives and livelihoods but also disrupting the socio-economic development achieved by the developing countries.

The Ambassador stressed on the need on strengthening cooperation between

Ethiopia and Pakistan under the Green Legacy Initiative of Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

He invited the Government of Sindh to send its delegation to Ethiopia for their participation in the Africa Climate Summit taking place in Addis Ababa from September 8-10, 2025.

The Chief Minister, on the occasion, appreciated the Ambassador for taking the initiative of holding the Ethio-Pakistan Green Dialogues to promote bilateral cooperation for exchange of knowledge and expertise for environment conservation and food security.

He said the Government of Sindh would send its delegation to Ethiopia for the Climate Summit to further strengthen environment cooperation between the two countries.

CM for timely completion of all development projects

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has emphasized the need to strictly adhere to deadlines and maintain high construction standards in all ongoing and upcoming development projects across the province.

Chairing a special meeting, the chief minister reviewed progress on several key initiatives, including clean drinking water supply, water filtration plants, and the Model Village Project. The meeting also reviewed the Lahore Development Project and schemes across the province.

CM Maryam was

briefed on the Model Village Project and examined proposals to install water pumps in remote areas. She set a deadline of June 30, 2026, for the completion of water filtration plants, directing officials to ensure timely and efficient delivery.

Expressing dissatisfaction over delays in certain projects, the chief minister instructed departments to expedite road construction and repair works under the Lahore Development Project. She also reviewed beautification projects planned for all major cities of Punjab.

As per the plan, a total of 550 beautification proj-

ects will be executed in various divisions including Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Multan, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bahawalpur, Gujrat and Sahiwal.

Maryam Nawaz reaffirmed her government's commitment to resolving public complaints about drinking water shortages.

She announced the development of a systematic approach for the construction, repair, and maintenance of water filtration plants, and reiterated that all projects must be delivered on time and without compromising quality.

FIA nabs proclaimed offender wanted in visa fraud case

LAHORE (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Saturday has successfully conducted a major operation, arresting a proclaimed offender involved in human trafficking and visa fraud. According to the FIA spokesperson, the accused has been identified as Syed Rehan Ali, who was wanted for defrauding innocent citizens by promising overseas employment.

The suspect allegedly extracted Rs. 6.5 million from a victim under the false pretense of arranging a Canadian work visa.

However, he failed to fulfill the promise and subsequently went into hiding after collecting the money.

The accused had been on the run since 2024 and was wanted by the FIA in multiple cases. He was apprehended in a targeted raid conducted in Lahore. FIA officials have confirmed that an investigation has been initiated following the arrest.

PFA fines Rs 1m, seals beverages factory

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) enforcement team fined six well-known food industries Rs1 million and sealed a popular beverages factory during a grand operation here on Saturday.

Under the directions of PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid, food safety teams inspected a beverages industry, an ice cream factory, coffee and cake production units and an oil mill. During the operation, teams also discarded two maunds of honey, spices and chemicals found unfit for human consumption. The DG said that unhygienic conditions were observed in the storage and processing areas, where flies, lizards, rats, fungus-infested walls, dirty floors, broken tiles and lack of pest control measures were found.



KARACHI: Police officials barricade protesters when they try to move towards the red zone area during the protest demonstration of All Sindh Lawyers Action Committee for acceptance of their demands.

Murtaza lays foundation stone of development projects

KARACHI (APP): Mayor of Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab laid the foundation stone of various development projects in Korangi District here Saturday. Deputy Mayor of Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Deputy Parliamentary Leader in City Council Dil Muhammad, members of the City Council, chairmen and vice-chairmen of various UCs, other party officials, and a large number of citizens were present on the occasion.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Mayor Wahab said that the construction of modern and sustainable roads for the people of Korangi will continue. In UC-35, Wards 1 and 2, the work of laying CC tough concrete blocks will be completed swiftly at an estimated cost of 237 million rupees. Under this project, 300,000 square feet of pure blocks are being laid to provide quality travel facilities to the public.

He said that the installation of 5,000 running feet of curb blocks will further improve the quality of roads. RCC pipes of various sizes

are being laid for drainage of rainwater, while the construction of 110 new manholes will bring significant improvement to the sewage system. The Mayor of Karachi stated that public convenience and urban development are their top priorities. Korangi's infrastructure is being developed along modern lines, and more projects will soon be launched to provide quality facilities to the public.

"These are the same resources, but the leadership is different. That's why Karachi is changing," he said. "Today's Karachi is Bilawal Bhutto's Karachi, and the public is expressing full confidence in the Pakistan Peoples Party. We are serving without discrimination or bias. We don't care which UC belongs to whom; if there are Karachiites living there, then Bilawal Bhutto's party will certainly deliver services. We see serving the people of Korangi as an opportunity and are passionate about it."

Mayor Wahab said that those who dragged the city into ethnic politics and gunny bag bodies in the past

are now witnessing us deliver real work. "If our work makes someone jealous, let them be. We will work across Karachi and prove it."

He remarked that in the past, promises of 162 billion and 1,100 billion rupees were made, but nothing materialized. "We did not just make promises we've taken practical steps. Tenders for development projects in Korangi have been issued, and all work will be completed within this fiscal year." He said that Korangi belongs to the Pakistan Peoples Party and will remain so, and all work will be done transparently. This fiscal year, 2.5 billion rupees will be spent to install over 850,000 square feet of pure blocks to pave previously unpaved streets.

He continued, "We have already started the work, and the public will see it happening. 110,000 running feet of sewage pipes will be replaced, and 2,646 million square feet of road carpeting will be carried out. Work is being done fearlessly and without bias. Has this scale of work ever happened in the past in this area?"

Mayor Wahab further said, "This is the same Karachi that has been continuously subjected to negative propaganda. Despair is being sold, and certain groups use that despair to exploit the public."

He highlighted that after 22 years, an improvement was finally made to Karachi's water infrastructure with the completion of the new Hub Canal, inaugurated by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. "This revolutionary step is a slap in the face of those who only made promises." "Now, your jiyala mayor and deputy mayor have completed the new Hub Canal, which is improving water supply for citizens. We have also begun work on the parts of the K-IV project assigned to our government."

The Mayor Karachi pointed out that the 16,000-foot-long road, which was never constructed before, was completed during his tenure as administrator. "This is a major road, and now the PPP is also carrying out development work in inner streets."

25 truckloads of encroachment goods seized

LAHORE (APP): The district administration of Lahore, in a major anti-encroachment operation, seized encroachment goods loaded in 25 trucks and cleared more than 600 encroachments from across the city. The teams also removed over 5,000 banners, posters, streamers, and other material causing visual pollution.

The operation was carried out on Ferozepur Road, The Mall, Bhatti Chowk, Lorry Adda, and Circular Road, along with other busy localities. Metropolitan Officer Regulation Kashif Jaleel, who is supervising the cam-

aign, said the drive aims to provide citizens with wider, cleaner, and obstruction-free roads.

MO Regulation Kashif Jaleel said anti-encroachment drives are being conducted daily in various parts of Lahore, and any attempt to reoccupy public spaces will be dealt with strictly.

Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza said that the campaign will continue until Lahore is completely free from encroachments, stressing that reclaiming public spaces and ensuring smooth traffic flow is essential for public convenience. He added that the operation is being carried out under

the special directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Meanwhile, DC Syed Musa Raza reviewed development work at Sagian Wala Bypass Road, where WASA is installing a 12-inch sewerage line to improve drainage. The project will be completed within seven days.

The DC directed officials to maintain traffic flow and safety during construction, stressing quality and durability of work. He said the administration is committed to delivering timely, high-standard infrastructure projects to resolve citizens' core issues.

JUP calls for rehabilitation of families displaced by floods

KARACHI (PPI): Sahibzada Abulkhair Muhammad Zubair, leader of Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Pakistan and Milli Yakehti Council, expressed deep sorrow over the loss of life and devasta-

tion caused by the recent torrential rains and floods in KP. He expressed condolences and prayed for the forgiveness of the victims and their families and emphasized national unity and coopera-

tion for the assistance of the victims. Zubair demanded that the government expedite relief operations, take steps to rehabilitate the displaced people and provide financial assistance.



PESHAWAR: NDMO handed over relief consignments to PDMA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for flood affected areas.

Aleem, KP CM discuss flood damage; NHA ramps up road, bridge restoration

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Saturday held a telephonic conversation with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Ali Amin Gandapur to discuss the recent situation arising from torrential rains and floods in the Province and the extensive damage caused to roads and bridges.

Abdul Aleem Khan expressed his deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives and property in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a press release.

He stated that the National Highway Authority (NHA) is fully mobilized and all its resources are available for the people of KPK. He assured that immediate measures are

being taken to alleviate the hardships of the masses.

The minister said that repair and reconstruction work on damaged roads and bridges had already begun round the clock and wherever required machinery and workforce from NHA Punjab and Sindh Offices are also being deployed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He assured the Chief Minister KP as per the requirements of Provincial Government NHA would be at its service. Moreover, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan was briefed by the Federal Secretary Communications, currently in Gilgit-Baltistan, and by the Chairman NHA from KP.

They informed him that acting on the Minister's directions, NHA teams had

immediately commenced restoration work on Friday as a result of which the Mansehra-Naran-Jhal Khund Road (MNJ) had been opened for traffic while road is also clear from Balakot to Babusar Top.

Abdul Aleem Khan directed that NHA officers shall remain in the field until the last road and bridge is restored and no negligence will be tolerated. He expressed satisfaction over the prompt response of NHA in this difficult situation and instructed that the restoration operation should continue day and night with all available resources.

It is noteworthy that soon after the emergency reports were received on Friday, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul

Aleem Khan directed the Secretary Communications to proceed to Gilgit-Baltistan and the Chairman NHA to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Five high-level operational teams were formed and work began immediately in the northern areas and KPK to restore roads, remove landslides and take other necessary measures, there.

In the report presented to the Federal Minister, the Chairman NHA noted that bridges on the Karakoram Highway and Jaglot-Skardu Road have collapsed and will take some time to reconnect; however, traffic has been restored from Balakot to Karlat, Kawai and Shogran where the Federal Secretary Communications is personally supervising the restoration work.

Pak-Afghan journalists meet for constructive journalism approach

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A three days workshop for Pak-Afghan journalists on Constructive Journalism with Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools to enhance media professional capabilities and improve networking in the global village era, on Saturday.

The workshop will cover wide range of topics from current state of journalism in Pakistan, news and negativity, inspiring from stories from both communities, perception vs reality, consequences of negative reporting and Introduction to constructive journalism.

Moreover, use of AI for constructive journalism, AI tools for story development, applying constructive journalism approach to local stories, overcoming resistance to constructive journalism, constructive journalism story flow and structure as well as techniques and practices in constructive journalism.

Meanwhile, introduction to solution journalism, elements of solution journalism, constructive vs solution journalism and story pitch development workshop should be discussed in upcoming days during the workshop.

The trainer Nighat working as journalist gives lecture on role of media professional during workshop and stressed upon personal safety with prioritizing public interest issues to bring positive change society as opinion leader.

Although, constructive journalism is an emerging approach that focuses on providing solutions-oriented and fact-based reporting. It aims to empower audiences by highlighting positive developments, innovative solutions, and community-driven initiatives.

However, media professionals play a crucial role in

promoting constructive journalism by: focusing on solutions rather than just problems, highlighting community-driven initiatives and success stories, providing fact-based reporting and analysis, encouraging critical thinking and discussions, promoting media literacy and critical consumption of information.

In nutshell, by adopting a constructive approach, media professionals can help shape public discourse, promote positive change and empower audiences to make informed decisions.

Minister decides to keep Govt Colleges open for relief activities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi, has decided to keep all government colleges open in flood-affected areas to facilitate relief and reha-

bilitation activities.

As per the Minister's directives, the principals and staff of government colleges will remain on duty to ensure timely assistance to the affected population.

He emphasized that every possible cooperation

and support will be extended in relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Meena Khan Afridi further instructed that the concerned staff must provide full support to the district administration and, upon request, deploy manpower in rehabilitation activities,

surveys, and the distribution of relief goods.

The Minister for Higher Education reiterated the government's commitment, stating that the provincial government will leave no stone unturned in the rehabilitation of flood-affected communities.

Provincial Minister chair emergency meeting

— Control Room established to record agricultural losses, Task Force formed for farmer's relief and rehabilitation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An emergency meeting chaired by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Major (Retd) Sajjad Barqwal, was held at the Directorate General of Agriculture Extension. Secretary Agriculture Ambar Ali Khan and senior officials also attended the meeting, which reviewed in detail the damages caused to the agricultural sector due to recent heavy rains and flooding.

The meeting began with special prayers for those who lost their lives in the helicopter crash and devastating floods, while heartfelt condolences and sympathy were extended to the bereaved families.

Participants expressed grave concern over the heavy losses inflicted on

crops, particularly rice, maize, orchards, and vegetables, which have severely affected farmers and landowners across the province.

Provincial Minister was briefed that a control room has been established at the Directorate General of Agriculture Extension to compile comprehensive records and assessments of agricultural and land damages caused by the rains and floods.

It was also decided that the provincial government and Agriculture Department will set up a special task force which will remain active in flood-affected areas until rehabilitation is completed, ensuring maximum facilitation for farmers.

Sajjad Barqwal directed officials to prioritize relief

measures for affected farmers and landowners so that timely support could be extended to them.

He emphasized that the department stands shoulder to shoulder with farmers and practical steps are being taken to address their difficulties.

He noted that most of the damages were sustained by crops, water channels, protective embankments, and agricultural land, and assured that the department would take robust measures for their rehabilitation.

During the session, Provincial Minister held a video link meeting with the directors of flood-hit districts including Swat, Bajaur, Buner, and Nowshera, and reviewed the on-ground situation in detail. He instructed all field officers to remain

present in affected areas, conduct accurate damage assessments, and maintain close contact with farmers.

He further ordered the cancellation of all staff leave in the Agriculture Department to ensure uninterrupted relief operations.

Major (Retd) Sajjad Barqwal added that he, along with the Secretary Agriculture, and would personally visit the affected districts to meet farmers directly and listen to their problems.

He also announced that flood-hit areas would be given priority in both ongoing and new development projects, while microfinance schemes would also be introduced to provide loans to disaster-affected farmers, enabling them to resume their agricultural activities.

Governor expresses grief over loss

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the tragic firing incident at the residence of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's district chief Mufti Kifayatullah in Batkhela, Malakand, in which his son and daughter lost their lives.

In a condolence message, the Governor extended heartfelt sympathies to Mufti Kifayatullah and his family, praying for the eternal peace of the deceased and patience for the bereaved family.

He also prayed for the swift recovery of Mufti Kifayatullah and his wife, who sustained injuries in the incident.



PESHAWAR: A fruit vendor taking nap near stall along roadside at Saddar locality.

Student honoured with award

PESHAWAR (APP): Nouman Khan, a final-year medicine student from Peshawar, has been honoured with the Prime Minister's Youth Excellence Award on International Youth Day.

According to details, Nouman was one of only 10 nominees selected for this prestigious award, a testament to his exceptional dedication and hard work.

As a youth activist and change maker, Nouman Khan has made significant contributions to youth development and empowerment.

His notable achievements include training 5,000 students through the Social Skills Development Programme, founding KPK's first AI-Integrated Climate School, and establishing the KPK's first International Model United Nations Simulation Organization.

He has also represented Pakistan at prestigious international conferences and serves as an AI Integration Consultant for different schools across the country, promoting innovative technology integration in education.

PHC directs authorities to consider Depury DHO case

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the relevant authorities to consider the case of Dr. Ikramullah Safi, Deputy DHO Mardan, for promotion to Grade 19.

PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Khurshid Iqbal issued order while hearing a petition filed by Dr. Safi challenging

ing his exclusion from the list of officers eligible for promotion.

The lawyer Rahim Ullah Jadoon argued that the petitioner is facing an inquiry related to his registration with the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), which was not relevant to his administrative role. The lawyer pointed out that the PMDC rules do not require registration for administrative posi-

tions.

PHC observed that since Dr. Safi had already filed an appeal against the inquiry before the Chief Minister, his name could not be excluded from the promotion list at this stage. The court cited several judgments of the Supreme Court and Peshawar High Court, emphasizing that no one can be denied promotion solely on the basis of an ongoing inquiry.

Power supply restored on 23 feeders: PESCO

PESHAWAR (APP): Power supply has been restored on 23 feeders in Swat, while repair work is underway on the remaining eighteen feeders, a spokesman of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) said here on Saturday.

He said PESCO Chief Akhtar Hameed Khan had directed the company's staff to complete the restoration work at the earliest, adding

that floodwater had already been drained out from the Swat grid station the previous day.

He said that due to the floods, electricity supply to 41 feeders in Swat was suspended. However, Malam Jabba has now been provided with electricity through an alternate route.

He further said essential equipment, including poles, wires, and trans-

formers, had already been delivered to Swat, while additional PESCO staff had also been deployed in the affected areas.

The spokesman said that fallen poles and transformers were being repaired, and trees that had fallen on power installations were being removed. He added that the PESCO control room was monitoring the restoration efforts round the clock.

Renowned pashto anchor, GM AVT Khyber Network, Jamshaid Ali Khan, announced as only KP recipient of Presidential Award

Sajjad Muhammad Khan

In the world of arts and media, those individuals live forever who leave indelible marks on the hearts of people through their character, sincerity, and style. Among such shining personalities is Jamshaid Ali Khan, the distinguished representative of the Pashto language and a celebrated television host, compere, and broadcaster from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His unmatched services spanning four decades have now been recognized with the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence. This honor is not only a testament to his professional achievements but also a recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the promotion of Pashto language and culture.

Early life and education

Jamshaid Ali Khan was born on March 12, 1963, in Swabi. He completed his F.Sc. at Islamia College Peshawar, earned an engineering degree from the University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar, and later obtained an MBA. His strong educational background played a vital role in shaping his confidence and distinguished personality.

After completing his education, Jamshaid Ali Khan started his media career in 1985 with Pakistan Television (PTV). He rose to fame as the host of the popular Pashto entertainment show Abasin, where his unique style and captivating presence won the admiration of audiences. His distinguished hosting elevated the program's popularity to new heights. He dedicated fifteen valuable years to PTV,



establishing himself among the most prominent anchors of his time.

Services at AVT Khyber Network

After PTV, he joined AVT Khyber Network in 2006 as a General Manager

and anchorperson. For the past two decades, he has been a vital force in highlighting the culture and traditions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, not only within Pakistan but also abroad. Under his leader-

ship, grand cultural shows were organized in Afghanistan, Dubai, Malaysia, Indonesia, the UK, Qatar, Oman, and Nairobi, receiving immense appreciation.

Jamshaid Ali Khan also

served as a Cultural Advisor to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during Expo 2022 in Dubai, where 146 countries showcased their culture, traditions, and music. He has also hosted the Lok Mela on multiple occasions, where the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Night always stood out with grandeur among other provinces.

The writer also had the privilege of working with Jamshaid Ali Khan as a colleague at Khyber TV. As a Marketing Officer, I had several opportunities to collaborate with him during live programs and recordings, particularly of the Khyber Show. His grace, professionalism, and guidance left a lasting impression on me and made me realize that he is truly not just a great artist, but also an inspiring men-

tor. Working alongside him has been a matter of great pride for me.

On social media, Jamshaid Ali Khan once shared a heartfelt tribute about his late father, Mr. Wazir Muhammad Khan, describing him as "a story of success and patience for his family, both as a father and a grandfather." Today, his own success and recognition stand as a continuation of that very story—an emotional testament that his father's values and legacy have blossomed through his son's remarkable achievements. This profound connection adds yet another dimension of respect and admiration to his award.

In recognition of his artistic brilliance and efforts to promote Pashto culture, the President of Pakistan announced on Independence Day, August

14, 2025, that Jamshaid Ali Khan will be honored with the Presidential Award for Excellence. The award will be conferred on him during the central awards ceremony on Pakistan Day, March 23, 2026.

Notably, this year, this honor has been bestowed solely upon Jamshaid Ali Khan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which stands as a matter of immense pride not only for the province but for the entire nation.

Jamshaid Ali Khan's four-decade-long artistic journey and outstanding contributions prove that sincerity, dedication, and passion never go unrewarded. His life and work are a source of pride not only for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but for the entire nation. Indeed, he is a national treasure, whose legacy will continue to inspire future generations.



In brief

Secy Tourism visits Galiyat F.P. Report

GALIYAT: Secretary Tourism and Culture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Abdul Samad conducted a detailed inspection of the sewage systems of various hotels from Galiyat to Bara. The visit was carried out in light of the orders of the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in which officers of the Galiyat Development Authority were also present. He said that the provincial government is taking vigorous steps to restore and improve the natural environment at tourist destinations as per the instructions of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Advisor on Tourism and Culture, and Chief Secretary. The Secretary of Tourism directed the Galiyat Development Authority that various events are being organized in Galiyat. He appreciated the performance of the Galiyat Development Authority and assured all possible cooperation.

JI offers govt full support F.P. Report

MINGORA: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman telephoned Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday and expressed deep grief and shock over the loss of lives and properties in KP, Kashmir and the country's northern areas due to floods. The JI Emir, on the occasion, assured the government of his party's complete support for the rehabilitation of those affected by floods. "The Al-Khidmat Foundation will assist the government in rescue and relief operations," he said, and added, "The JI stands with the government in this hour of grief." Naeem urged the government to assist the affected people irrespective of their party affiliations. He told the premier that the JI had already started rescue and relief work in the affected areas.

Naran entry points inspected F.P. Report

KAGHAN: Director General Kagan Development Authority (KDA), Shabbir Khan, conducted a surprise inspection of Naran's entry points and surrounding sensitive areas on Friday night in view of heavy monsoon rains and possible flash floods. During the visit, he examined makeshift settlements and temporary tent sites where tourists often stay. He warned tent owners at the Naran entry point to avoid accommodating tourists in view of the prevailing weather conditions and potential risks. The DG also reviewed sensitive locations prone to flooding, assessing the flow and drainage of water in the area. He directed KDA staff to remain alert and ensure immediate response mechanisms in case of emergencies, emphasizing precautionary measures to safeguard both locals and visitors from possible flash flood hazards.

Seminar held F.P. Report

GUJRAT: The Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology, University of Gujrat, organised a one-day seminar titled 20 years of constructive cooperation in Pakistan initiatives for peace and development in a competitive region at Hafiz Hayat Campus. Renowned German botanist Prof. Dr. Andreas Bürkert from Kassel University served as the keynote speaker, highlighting Pakistan's ecological diversity, the importance of trees for balanced environments, and the need for global scientific collaboration to address environmental challenges.



CHINIOT: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh, talking to media persons.

Chehlum in Kohat observed peacefully

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The Chehlum-2025 of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A) was peacefully observed without any untoward incident across the Kohat Division, including Kohat, Hangu, Orakzai, and Kurram districts. Commissioner Kohat Division, Syed Motasim Billah Shah, highly appreciated and commended the district administrations, Police, Pak Army and all other concerned institutions for ensuring strict and fool-proof security measures throughout the division.

Commissioner remained actively engaged on the day and accompanied by the Regional Police Officer

Kohat Abbas Majeed Marwat, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Rahimullah Mehsud, District Police Officer Dr. Zahidullah, Officers of the district administration and Pak Army, visited the Control Room 15 where the Senior officers were actively reviewing the administrative arrangements through live electronic monitoring of the processions via CCTV cameras. Later, the Commissioner also inspected the mourning processions personally and declared the security arrangements satisfactory.

During the observance, procession routes were repeatedly scanned while special checkpoints were

established inside and outside the city as well as on the streets leading towards the main routes. The main bazaar remained completely sealed and no one was allowed entry without thorough checking and frisking.

As a result of these effective and comprehensive security arrangements, the mourning processions of Chehlum passed peacefully through their traditional routes in Kohat and across the division, concluding without any unpleasant incident. The administration, police, and all security and supporting institutions are indeed worthy of appreciation for their efforts, Commissioner Kohat declared.

25 arrested for bathing in floodwater

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Charsadda ordered action against individuals bathing in floodwater channels, resulting in the arrest of 25 people. The detainees have been shifted to Mardan Jail under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO).

According to district administration officials, several residents were seen entering deep floodwaters to collect wood and other items, putting their lives in serious danger. The DC warned that strict measures will be taken against anyone endangering their own life or public safety.

The warning comes as heavy rains and a cloud-burst in Swat have caused water levels in Charsadda's rivers and streams to rise significantly. Authorities have cautioned that entering such water bodies could be life-threatening.

The district administration has urged the public to stay away from rivers and streams, and to prioritize their safety amid the ongoing flood situation. "People must ensure their own safety and avoid risky behavior during this critical time," DC Azmatullah Wazir stated.

Chehlum observed

F.P. Report

LARKANA: On the occasion of Chehlum Imam Hussain (R.A), DHO Larkano organized a first-aid medical camp under the supervision of Focal Person Dr. Farman Ali Abro at Nazam Muhalla Larkano, on Thursday.

The medical team, comprising consultants, surgeons, medical officers of Imamia Medical International, and old warriors Covid Staff Nurses of DHO office Larkano, and provided essential medical services to the mourners during the procession.

The medical team treated over 1,600 individuals, offering first-aid therapy, including: Dressing and stitching medication and other necessary treatments. The collaboration between DHO Larkano and IMI ensured that the medical needs of the Azadaran were met, reflecting the importance of community service and healthcare during significant religious events. Kudos to Dr. Shoukat Ali Abro, Dr. Farman Ali Abro, and the entire medical team for their efforts in providing medical care and support.

Muqam visits flood hit areas of Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: Federal Minister and President of Pakistan Muslim League-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, visited various flood-affected areas of District Buner here Saturday. "I am visiting the flood-affected areas on the instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif" Engineer Amir Muqam said, adding Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is personally overseeing the relief activities.

Engineer Amir Muqam met with affected families and offered condolences. Amir Muqam assessed the damage caused by the floods and reviewed the relief activities in the affected areas. Federal Minister said this is not the time for politics rather the

entire nation stands with the victims in this hour of difficulty.

Rescue operations in Buner are being carried out with the participation of the administration, Pakistan Army, and FC personnel. Several villages in districts across the province, including Shangla, Swat, Buner, and Bajaur, have been completely destroyed due to recent torrential rains. "Priority should be given to the immediate recovery of missing persons in Buner, Shangla, Swat, and other districts," said Amir Muqam.

Medical camps have been established in the affected areas. He said the federal government will provide all necessary resources and will not leave the victims alone. Amir Muqam said after the earth-

quake of 2005 and the floods of 2010 and 2022, this is a major natural disaster and efforts are underway to restore temporary routes in Buner. Several bodies have been recovered during the rescue operations, while the search for missing persons continues, he said, adding Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will soon visit the affected districts.

The Federal Minister prayed for the elevation of the ranks of those martyred in the recent torrential rains. On this occasion, the Commissioner of Malakand Division, Deputy Commissioner of Buner, district administration, DPO, and senior officials from federal departments including PESCO and PTA were also present.

Officials stress investment in date palm industry

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: A high-level delegation of the Agriculture Extension Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa visited the food Technology Section of the Agriculture Research Institute (ARI) Dera Ismail Khan to review ongoing research and technological innovations in the date palm sector.

The delegation included Dr. Hanif Zahid Khattak, Director Plant Protection; Dr. Murad Ali Khan, Director Horticulture; and Dr. Muhammad Anwar Khan Bhattani, District Director Agriculture Extension, DIKhan.

During the visit, Dr. Shahzada Arshad Saleem Saddozai, PRO and Head

of the Department, briefed the visitors on the institute's research work, particularly on date palm fruit ripening and drying technology. He highlighted that the Hybrid Solar Tunnel Drier (STD), a locally developed innovation, had reduced the traditional Dhakki date drying process to only three to four days. It was informed that 47 units of the Solar Tunnel Drier had already been installed in different villages, providing direct benefits to farmers.

The system has gained wide acceptance due to its dust-free, hygienic, and uniform drying process. The technology not only protects crops from monsoon damage but also works effectively for fruits,

vegetables, and other agricultural produce.

The officials were told that the drying system was particularly significant for Dera Ismail Khan, where Dhakki dates ripen during the rainy season and face a high risk of spoilage. The innovation is seen as a game-changing, income-boosting solution that improves product quality, reduces losses, and supports exports.

The delegation lauded the quality of research being carried out at the institute and emphasized the need for greater investment in training and infrastructure to promote sustainable agricultural development and strengthen the date palm industry in the region.

University of Turbat launches new programs

F.P. Report

TURBAT: The University of Turbat (UoT) is set to expand its academic offerings with the introduction of new postgraduate and undergraduate programs in the social sciences. The decision was made during the second Board of Faculty meeting of the Faculty of Social Sciences held on Saturday, according to a university statement. The meeting, chaired by Dean Dr. Muhammad Tahir Hakeem, approved the launch of M.Phil programs in Sociology and Political Science, along with

Associate Degree programs in International Relations, Social Work, and Development Studies.

The board also reviewed and approved minutes from the departmental boards of studies for Political Science, Sociology, and Education. Discussions focused on the advancement of each department, addressing challenges and strategies to improve academic quality. Preparations for the fall 2025 semester and the 2026 academic year were also reviewed, with each department chair presenting an overview of their respective areas.

Dr. Hakeem stressed the significance of academic achievement and encouraged collaborative efforts to elevate educational standards across all disciplines. Attendees included Dr. Muzaffir Hussain, Dean, Faculty of Law; Dr. Muhammad Yasin, Chair, Department of Sociology; Dr. Mahnaz Aslam, Chair, Department of Education; Mr. Changiz Ahmed, Chair, Department of Political Science; Mr. Bahadin, Lecturer, Department of Political Science; and Mr. Jeand Ibrahim, Lecturer, Department of Natural and Basic Sciences.

Dhakki date season opens

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The sweet aroma of freshly harvested Dhakki dates has once again filled the orchards of Dera Ismail Khan as the harvesting season for this world-renowned variety gets underway. Known as the pride of the district, Dhakki dates have won worldwide acclaim for their impressive size, thick pulp, and unmatched flavor.

The Dhakki variety, originally cultivated in the Dhakki area of DI Khan, holds the honor of being the first fruit in Pakistan to secure the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) status, officially registered by the Agriculture Research Institute (ARI), Dera Ismail Khan. Dr. Shahzada Arshad Saleem Saddozai, senior scientist at ARI, praised the relentless

efforts of the institute's research teams in achieving this milestone. "It is a matter of pride for Pakistan, and especially for DI Khan, that Dhakki has gained global recognition," he remarked.

This season, fresh date processing is being carried out at ARI's Food Technology Laboratory under Dr. Saddozai's supervision. He said the Hybrid Solar Tunnel Dryer, an innovation developed locally, is making a big difference for farmers. The system uses solar energy and controlled airflow to dry dates hygienically, preserving their natural flavor, color, and quality while extending their shelf life.

"This technology is especially valuable for Dhakki dates, which are vulnerable to heavy losses during the rainy season," Dr. Saddozai noted. He added that the dry-

ers have so far been installed at 47 different sites, allowing growers to reduce losses, enhance market value, and improve earnings. Local farmers also expressed optimism about the new season. Tajamul Hussain of Mianwada village said the Dhakki date is a blessing for the area and has the potential to change the fortunes of farmers if given proper support. "We hope the government and ARI will continue to help us so we can get fair returns for our hard work," he added.

Another grower, Abdul Latif from Paharpur, said that Dhakki dates are known across the world and deserve more attention from authorities. "If farmers are provided better facilities and marketing support, this crop can bring prosperity not only to our families but also to the region," he remarked.



to solve climate change. Our generation will be the most affected through climate change. We are at the frontline of this issue and it's not too late to help!

Climate change is not a problem that can be solved overnight or by one person. We need unity to solve it and luckily many people are trying to do that and we should support them. So, let's all come together, parents, students, scientists and let's solve this global issue.

Youth torture to death old enmity

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A young man was brutally tortured to death in Toba Tek Singh. According to details, Rana Hammad Zafar, son of Rana Zafar Iqbal, Senior Vice President of the International Human Rights Movement District Toba Tek Singh,

was returning home from Chak No. 294 GB Toba Tek Singh last night after flooding the crops.

On the way, Umar, Zeeshan Sabir, Rana Naseer and Ramzan stopped him on the way and brutally tortured him with sticks, axes and hospital axes, severely injuring him. He succumbed to his

injuries and died in the hospital.

A First Information Report (FIR) under sections 302 PPC and 34 PPC was registered against the accused at Rajana police station. The FIR number is 1088/25. Police arrested three accused on the spot, while the fourth fled accused the scene.

M. Moiz Butt

ABOUT Author: M. Moiz Butt is a passionate young writer who writes about world issues. Driven by a deep concern for the planet, Moiz uses his voice to raise awareness about climate change, children's issues and the role students can play in building a sustainable future. He believes that education, unity, and action are the keys to solving the world's greatest environmental challenges.

According to the United Nations Environmental Programme, every day about 2000 trucks of garbage are thrown into oceans, lakes, and rivers. In recent years most people have neglected the importance of protecting Earth's climate. We heavily rely on the environment and all of its natural resources, such as oil, wood and water. Without the help of nat-

ural aid we would have to close down many influential industries and businesses from agriculture to manufacturing. In this article we will answer the following questions: What is causing the environment to fall, how are we currently coping with the issue, and how can you help too?

The major drive for climate change is the burning of fossil fuels. As of the year 2000 fossil fuel emissions have skyrocketed. When these greenhouse gasses are released into the atmosphere they stay in the atmosphere and create a thick blanket over Earth, leading to extreme heat, droughts and melting ice caps. The greenhouse gases above Earth can trap in heat, and harm animals who are used to icy temperatures. Humans are devel-

oping sustainable energy resources that do not release greenhouse gases, such as hydro or solar power. The best way we can help is through planting. Trees and flowers inhale carbon dioxide and produce oxygen-the gas we breathe. So let's start being sustainable.

Now we'll talk about an issue that affects the sea, and risks billions of humans and marine species' lives, water pollution. It occurs when waste or plastic is thrown into bodies of water. Water pollution can take months or even years to clean. A harmful result of this is waterborne diseases. A report from The Lancet, has shown that 1.8 million lives have sadly been lost due to waterborne diseases. Throwing waste into the sea can make sea animals think that

they are edible. When they eat it they become sick and can potentially lose their lives. A huge proportion of pollution in water is caused because of overseas transport, or industries. Several times large oil ships travelling to deliver goods cause huge oil spills that could take months, or even years to clean. One of the most notable oil spills was The Deepwater Horizon spill. The Deepwater Horizon spilled over 100 million gallons of oil, near the Gulf of Mexico. You can contribute through different ways. You can help by disposing of non-biodegradable plastic properly, or try to use less plastic. Another way you can help is by donating to local water facilities.

An addition to climate change is a problem you can't see but is right in

front of you, air pollution. It's caused by wild fires, or fossil fuel emissions. Fossil fuels, like carbon dioxide or methane, need to be burnt to generate electricity. When they are burnt they create smoke which hurts the Ozone layer and the air quality index. Air pollution has become so hazardous people are afraid of going outside their homes because of its health threats, such as lung cancer. This takes a toll on students like me, because when the air quality index worsens schools have to be closed due to how harmful the outdoor air can get. You can use air purifiers to increase your air quality. You can try to use less energy and sometimes use transport, like public travel.

We students are the greatest hope to solve climate change. We have the knowledge and education

Our climate is calling for help!



MANILA: Filipino activists shouting slogans as they condemn the killing of Palestinian Al Jazeera journalists and media workers in a recent Israeli air strike in Gaza, during a protest in Quezon City, the Philippines.

Searchers seek missing after deadly Italy migrant shipwreck

SICILY (AFP): Italian authorities searched for migrants missing at sea after two crowded boats sank off the island of Lampedusa, killing at least 27 people. As many as a dozen or more people are still unaccounted for following disaster, according to testimony from among the 60 survivors, mostly from Somalia.

Three minors, including a newborn baby, and seven women and 13 men were among the dead, according to the prosecutor's office in Agrigento, on Sicily. Post-mortem examinations confirmed that those 23 died of drowning, according to the ANSA news agency. UN officials said 27 people were confirmed dead so far. The two boats had left Tripoli, Libya, Italy's coastguard said. It is believed one of the boats started taking on water, causing people to climb onto the other boat, which then capsized. At Lampedusa's cemetery, where many of the bodies are being kept, some women came and left flowers, and prayed for the dead. "It seemed fitting, at least to stop by and say a prayer for these people who were seeking a better life," said Donata, a holidaymaker visiting the island who declined to give her family name. "They did nothing, and they died," she told AFP. An Italian helicopter had spotted a capsized boat and sev-

eral bodies in the water about 14 nautical miles off Lampedusa. One Somali woman lost her son and husband, according to an account reported by the Corriere della Sera newspaper. "I had my son in my arms and my husband beside me. I don't know how, but we found ourselves in the water. The waves took them both away from me," she said. Lampedusa, just 90 miles (145 kilometres) off the coast of Tunisia, is often the first point of arrival for people trying to reach Europe in leaky or overcrowded boats.

But it is also a tourist hotspot, famed for its white sand beaches. It was filled with holidaymakers visiting for Ferragosto public holiday, with pleasure boats using the same port as the vessels searching for the missing. Two of the survivors were taken by helicopter to Sicily for treatment, while the other 58 were being cared for in the reception centre on the island, according to the Red Cross. Twenty-one of them are minors and "generally in good health", said Imad Dalil, the Red Cross official who runs the reception centre. He said the majority of the survivors are Somali, with a few Egyptians. Around 95 people were on the boats, UN officials reported initially, but ANSA said it appeared there may have been more,

perhaps 100 to 110 people. Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, had earlier confirmed the toll of 27 dead.

"Over 700 refugees and migrants have now died in 2025 in the Central Mediterranean", which the UN judges to be the world's deadliest maritime migrant crossing, he wrote on social media. "All responses -- rescue at sea, safe pathways, helping transit countries and addressing root causes -- must be strengthened," he said. Despite the tragedy laying bare the risks, the migrant boats kept coming. Four others were intercepted off Lampedusa overnight, according to the Red Cross, while more migrants arrived during. More than 260 people were being held in the reception centre waiting for processing, ANSA said. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni offered her "deepest condolences" to the victims and vowed to step up efforts to tackle migrant traffickers. Her hard-right government took office in 2022 vowing to cut the number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe.

More than 38,500 people have arrived on Italian shores so far this year, according to interior ministry figures. This is slightly up on last year but well below the 100,000 reported by the same time in 2023.

Pro-Palestinian tourist ship protests irk Greek govt

ATHENS (AFP): A series of pro-Palestinian protests targeting an Israeli cruise ship around Greece have irritated a conservative government walking a diplomatic tightrope with Middle Eastern powers during the Gaza war. At the crack of dawn at the port of Piraeus outside Athens, dozens of riot police armed with truncheons, tear gas and shields sealed up a cruise terminal from hundreds of demonstrators.

Their ire was directed at the "Crown Iris", a hulking Israeli tourist ship that has attracted protests at each of its stops in the country since last month. Tourism is a pillar of the Greek economy, but pro-Palestinian activists say the visitors "whitewash" Israel's devastating war in Gaza that was sparked by the unprecedented 2023 Hamas attack. According to the All Workers Militant Front (PAME), a communist-affiliated union that called the rally, the Crown Iris was carrying Israeli soldiers.

"We cannot tolerate people who have contributed to

the genocide of the Palestinian people moving amongst us," protester Yorgos Michailidis told AFP in Piraeus. "We want people everywhere to see that we don't only care about tourism and the money they bring," the 43-year-old teacher said. For Katerina Patrikiou, a 48-year-old hospital worker, the visitors "are not tourists -- they are the slaughterers of children and civilians in Gaza". Greece traditionally maintained a pro-Arab foreign policy, but governments of different political stripes have in recent years woven closer ties with Israel in defence, security and energy. Athens has carefully tried to protect both relations during the war, accusing the left-wing opposition of undermining the strategic Israel alliance aimed at counterbalancing the influence of historic rival Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean. "The useful idiots for Turkey have been in our ports, where their extreme actions seriously damage Greece's image in Israel," Health Minister Adonis Georgiadis wrote on

X last month. "We must protect this alliance as the apple of our eye and isolate these fools... Those who exhibit antisemitic behaviour act against Greece's interests."

Before joining the ruling conservative party in 2012, Georgiadis was a prominent member of far-right party Laos, which had a history of anti-Semitic statements. When first named health minister a year later, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) had urged the government to reconsider, noting that Georgiadis had made "troubling remarks" about Jewish people and had promoted an anti-Semitic book. In 2017, he publicly apologised for having "coexisted with and tolerated the opinions of people who showed disrespect to my Jewish compatriots". Several protests each rallying hundreds of people attempted to prevent the Crown Iris from docking at Mediterranean islands including Rhodes, Crete and Syros last month, with occasional scuffles between demonstrators and police. According to The Times of

Israel, the ship's owners decided to skip Syros after 200 people protested as the vessel approached.

Israel's ambassador to Greece, Noam Katz, condemned an "attempt to harm the strong relations between our peoples, and to intimidate Israeli tourists" in Syros. Greece's Minister of Citizen Protection Michalis Chrisochoidis has said that anyone who "prevents a citizen of a third country from visiting our country will be prosecuted" for racism. PAME accused the government of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis of using antisemitism allegations "to whitewash the crimes of the murderer state, suppress any reaction, and any expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people". "Nobody is racist, nobody has a problem with Jewish identity... Our problem is the people who support genocide," Michailidis said at rally. The October 7, 2023 attack on Israel by Gaza's Hamas rulers resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of official figures.

War crimes likely committed by both sides in Syria coastal violence: UN

NEW YORK: War crimes were likely committed by members of interim government forces and fighters aligned with former President Bashar al-Assad during an outbreak of sectarian violence in Syria's coastal areas in March, according to a United Nations report. Some 1,400 people, mainly civilians, were reported killed during the violence that primarily targeted Alawite communities, and reports of violations have continued, according to the report released by the UN Syria Commission of Inquiry. "The scale and brutality of the violence documented in our report is deeply disturbing," said Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, chair of the commission, in a statement.

Torture, killings and

inhumane acts related to the treatment of the dead were documented by the UN team, which based its research on more than 200 interviews with victims and witnesses, as well as visits to mass grave sites. "The violations included acts that likely amount to war crimes," the UN investigators said.

Alawite men were separated from women and children, then led away and killed, the report found. "Bodies were left in the streets for days, with families prevented from conducting burials in accordance with religious rites, while others were buried in mass graves without proper documentation," the commission said. Hospitals became overwhelmed as a result of the killings.

The commission found that even while the interim government's forces sought to stop violations and protect civilians, certain members "extrajudicially executed, tortured and ill-treated civilians in multiple [Alawite] majority villages and neighbourhoods in a manner that was both widespread and systematic". However, the report said the commission "found no evidence of a governmental policy or plan to carry out such attacks". It also found that pro-Assad armed groups had committed "acts that likely amount to crimes, including war crimes" during the violence. "We call on the interim authorities to continue to pursue accountability for all perpetrators, regardless of affiliation or

rank," Pinheiro said. "While dozens of alleged perpetrators of violations have reportedly since been arrested, the scale of the violence documented in our report warrants expanding such efforts." The incidents in the coastal region were the worst violence in Syria since al-Assad was toppled last December, prompting the interim government to name a fact-finding committee. The committee in July said it had identified 298 suspects implicated in serious violations during the violence in the country's Alawite heartland. The committee's report then stated there was no evidence that Syria's military leadership ordered attacks on the Alawite community. — Aljazeera

Germany sacks rail chief with train network in crisis

BERLIN (AFP): The German government sacked the embattled head of Deutsche Bahn as it seeks to overhaul the ailing public rail network after years of criticism about deteriorating services. Once widely admired for its punctuality and efficiency, Germany's rail service has worsened dramatically in recent years owing to what critics say is chronic underinvestment.

Passengers now often complain of long delays and cancelled trains in Europe's biggest economy - last year, almost 40 per cent of long-distance services were late. Richard Lutz, who took the helm of the publicly owned institution in 2017, will leave his chief executive post two years before the end of his contract, the government confirmed. "The situation at Deutsche Bahn is dramatic, if you look at customer satisfaction, punctuality figures or profitability," Transport Minister Patrick Schnieder told a press conference to announce Lutz's departure. "The company must become faster, leaner, more effective and also more economical."

The 61-year-old will stay on until a successor is found, with the government saying the hiring process would start immediately. Karl-Peter Naumann from rail passenger association Pro-Bahn warned that changing the boss would not solve Deutsche Bahn's problems. The situation would only change if policies improved and funding was increased, he told AFP. "All previous transport ministers have more or less failed and have contributed greatly to the railways being in the situation they are in today," he said. Lutz's days had seemed numbered since a new coalition under Chancellor Friedrich Merz took power in May. Schnieder had publicly complained earlier this month about the railways' poor punctuality and suggested he was looking at personnel changes. Workers on the railways -- Deutsche Bahn has some 220,000 employees -- had also spoken out against Lutz, with the GDL train drivers union calling in July for him to be sacked. The transport minister also said he would present a major plan to fix the network in late September. The government's is seeking to fix crumbling infrastructure more broadly, establishing a 500-billion-euro fund. Deutsche Bahn has already embarked on a push to renew parts of the network but it is likely to take years to complete. It has seen falling profits in recent years and is also saddled with more than 20 billion euros in debt.

Aggression only leads to defeat: Taiwan

TAIPEI (Reuters): Aggression only leads to defeat and as authoritarianism once again gathers strength, it is important that freedom and democracy prevail, Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said marking the end of World War Two, in a pointed message to Beijing. Taiwan has this year sought to cast the war as a lesson to China, which views the democratic island as its own territory, to show how aggression will end in failure, and to remind the world it was not the government now in Beijing that won the war.

The Chinese government at the time was the Republic of China, part of the US, British and Russian-led alliance, and its forces did much of the fighting against Japan, putting on pause a bitter civil war with Mao Zedong's Communists whose military also fought the Japanese. The republican government then fled to Taiwan in 1949 after finally being defeated by Mao, and Republic of China remains the democratic island's official name.

Late on, Taiwan said it had banned government officials from attending next month's military parade planned by Beijing to mark the end of World War Two, along with former senior defence, intelligence and diplomatic officials, though that does not include ordinary members of the public.

US and Philippines discuss more missile system deployments

MANILA (AP): The United States is discussing the possible deployment of more missile launchers to the Philippines to strengthen deterrence against aggression in the disputed South China Sea and other Asian security hotspots, but no final decision has been reached by both sides, Manila's ambassador to Washington said.

The US military delivered a mid-range missile system called the Typhon, a land-based weapon that can fire the Standard Missile-6 and the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile, to the northern Philippines as part of joint combat exercises in April last year. That was followed by the transport by the US military of an anti-ship missile launcher in April this year to the northernmost Philippine province of Batanes, just a sea border away from Taiwan.

Beijing strongly protested the installation of the US missile systems, saying they were aimed at containing China's rise and warning that these would threaten regional stability. China has asked the Philippines to withdraw the missile launchers from its territory, but officials led by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had rejected the demand.

Ambassador Jose Manuel Romualdez said without elaborating that the possible deployment by the US of more Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System or NMESIS missile

launchers "was being discussed for consideration by both sides." The anti-ship missile systems could be installed along Philippine coastal regions facing the South China Sea and outlying regions to beef up deterrence against aggression, he said. "This is part of the strong US and Philippines defense partnership," Romualdez told The Associated Press.

Romualdez spoke on the sidelines of a trade and investment conference in Manila, where he and Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro encouraged major US companies to invest in a wide array of industries - from energy and telecommunications to infrastructure and navy shipbuilding - in the Philippines, the oldest treaty ally of the US in Asia. "When US companies invest here, it's not just about returns on capital - it's about returns on alliance," Romualdez told US business executives at the conference. "A stronger Philippine economy means a more capable and reliable defense partner for the United States."

"At a time when America is diversifying supply chains and rethinking global strategy, we are a natural choice - and a strategic necessity," Romualdez said. "I ask you to carry this message to the Trump administration: Every US dollar invested in the Philippines strengthens America's position in the Indo-Pacific." US

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth flew to Manila in March in his first visit to Asia and said the Trump administration would work with allies to ramp up deterrence against threats across the world, including China's increasingly aggressive actions in the South China Sea. The US was not gearing up for war, Hegseth said then, but underscored that peace would be won "through strength."

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the resource-rich and busy waters, but confrontations have spiked between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and naval forces in recent years. The US briefly deployed two warships in what it called a "freedom of navigation" operation off the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea where two Chinese navy and coast guard ships collided earlier in the week while trying to drive away a smaller Philippine coast guard vessel. The high-seas accident sparked alarm among Asian and Western countries. "Freedom of navigation is essential for the trillions of dollars worth of commerce that passes through these waters," the US ambassador to the Philippines, MaryKay Carlson, told reporters on the sidelines of the Manila investment conference. "It's about commerce. It's about lives and livelihoods."

‘China not influencing diplomatic decisions’

SOLOMON ISLANDS (AFP): Solomon Islands defended its move to bar some partners from an influential summit of South Pacific leaders, brushing aside claims of a looming split or that China is influencing its decisions. China, the United States and Taiwan have all been barred from the annual Pacific Islands Forum in Honiara next month, an event they usually attend.

China counts the Solomon Islands among its closest partners in the South Pacific and signed a secretive security pact with Honiara in 2022. It has been accused of agitating behind the scenes to see Taiwan excluded from attending the Forum as an observer. The Pacific bloc's top diplomats met in Fiji to discuss the Forum's agenda, and Solomon Islands Foreign Minister Peter Shanell Agovaka said his nation was not influenced by China. "Our focus is not on China or Taiwan. Our focus is on the (Pacific) region," Agovaka told AFP. He expressed frustration and blamed the Forum secretariat for the ban because it was yet to agree on "dia-

logue partners". Agovaka added that the Forum was "all over the place". New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters had earlier warned that "outsiders" interfering with Forum decisions threatened to split the bloc.

Peters did not mention China by name, but said the issue would be raised during the foreign ministers' meeting. "We've got to make sure that every outsider comes here with respect for those of us who are inside the organisation," he said. Agovaka defended the presence of such observers at Forum meetings. "They enhance our meetings," he said. Communist China has never ruled Taiwan, but Beijing insists the island is part of its territory and has threatened to use force to bring it under its control. China and Taiwan have long vied for diplomatic influence in the South Pacific and elsewhere, with Beijing spending hundreds of millions of dollars building sports stadiums, presidential palaces, hospitals and roads in Pacific island nations.

Peters later described

Agovaka's comments as "very perplexing". "At this point in time, when aid from another source or other countries is desperately needed and we're out there trying to get it, if the message is we're not interested in seeing you, how's this going to fall?" he said. Chinese officials described accusations they were agitating behind the scenes as "misinformation". "China has participated in every Forum dialogue, and remains committed and looks forward to continuing such engagement," a spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in the New Zealand capital said. The annual pre-Forum meeting of foreign ministers is typically a light-hearted affair, although the gathering in Suva was noticeably more tense. Several countries did send ministers and others did not engage fully. Nauru's representative left, smoking a cigar, after only one morning session. "We're going to sort things out... we'll get things back on an even keel," Peters said. The Forum will be held in Honiara from September 8-12.

Sister of N Korean leader denies removal of front-line speakers

SEOUL (AP): The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed South Korean claims that the North is removing some of its loudspeakers along the inter-Korean border, mocking the government in Seoul for clinging to hopes of renewed diplomacy between the war-divided rivals.

South Korea's military said over the weekend that it had detected the North removing some of its loudspeakers, days after the South dismantled its own front-line speakers used for anti-North propaganda broadcasts in a bid to ease tensions. Kim Yo Jong reiterated previous North Korean statements that it has no immediate interest in reviving long-stalled negotiations with Washington and Seoul, citing an upcoming joint military exercise between the allies as proof of their continued hostility toward Pyongyang.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff did not disclose where it spotted the North removing some of its speakers. The North Korean speakers that have

been visible from civilian-accessible border areas in the South were still seen by Associated Press photojournalists after the military's announcement. During a Cabinet meeting, South Korea's new liberal President Lee Jae Myung described the North's alleged steps as a "reciprocal measure" and expressed hope the Koreans could "gradually reopen dialogue and communication." Kim accused Lee's government of misleading the public, saying that North Koreans "have never removed loudspeakers installed on the border area and are not willing to remove them." When asked about Kim's comments, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson, Col. Lee Sung Joon, maintained that the South's military had confirmed the removal of some North Korean speakers and cautioned against "being easily swayed" by North Korean statements with political intent.

"It has always been the case that North Korea often makes claims that aren't true," he said. South

Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said in a statement that Seoul will continue to pursue "sustained steps" to improve relations but acknowledged that the process will require patience. Kim Yo Jong also dismissed South Korean media speculation that the North may use this week's planned meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump to convey a message to Washington via Moscow.

"Why should we send a message to the US side," she said, adding that the North has no interest in talks with the Americans. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, North Korea has made Russia the priority of its foreign policy and has sent thousands of troops and large supplies of military equipment, including artillery and missiles, to help fuel Russia's war. North Korean and Russian state media said that Kim Jong Un and Putin held a phone call to discuss their deepening ties and war efforts against Ukraine.

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Climate security energy security

FOR all the uncertainties generated by Donald Trump's administration over the past six months, one thing is clear: "climate" technologies are out and "energy" technologies are in. But while going along with this rhetorical shift may appease some, it should be recognized for what it is: a change in wording. The fundamental economic and technological forces that are pushing the world away from oil, coal and gas and toward low-carbon, high-efficiency technologies have not abated. Over the past two decades, climate change has been a leading item on the global agenda, driving efforts to deploy technologies that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Those efforts are now facing headwinds, and not just in the US. Geopolitical developments elsewhere, like Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, have called attention to the importance of energy affordability and security over other considerations.

Policymakers in the US, Europe and elsewhere initially responded to the war by doubling down on the shift from fossil fuels, and for good reason. Oil, coal and gas are commodities whose prices will always be linked to geopolitical vagaries (that goes for not only global oil markets but also regional gas markets, which are increasingly linked by trade in liquefied natural gas). As a case in point, the summer of 2022 brought massive inflation, largely driven by fossil fuel price spikes. Europe's gas prices peaked at 10 times their long-term average and US gas prices at around triple their long-term average. While the US Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 is widely considered a misnomer, history will judge the name kindly: The only permanent way to address such bouts with "fossilflation" is to stop using fossil fuels.

Though the blowback against climate policies has been particularly strong at the federal level in the US, Europe, too, has undergone a retrenchment. This is somewhat understandable, even if it is shortsighted. Germany, Europe's largest economy, has been in a recession for more than two years, with high energy prices a chief culprit. Climate technologies that are already commercially viable could help, of course. But taking full advantage of the lower prices of solar, wind and (increasingly) batteries requires a willingness to reform power markets and pass these savings to households and industrial consumers. It also calls for more upfront public investment, an area where climate priorities compete with other priorities like national security that are often perceived to be more immediate. In grappling with these trade-offs, the EU delivered the kinds of efficiency measures that Trump's "Department of Government Efficiency" had promised but failed to achieve. For example, Europe dialed back its carbon border adjustment mechanism by requiring 90 percent fewer companies to comply.

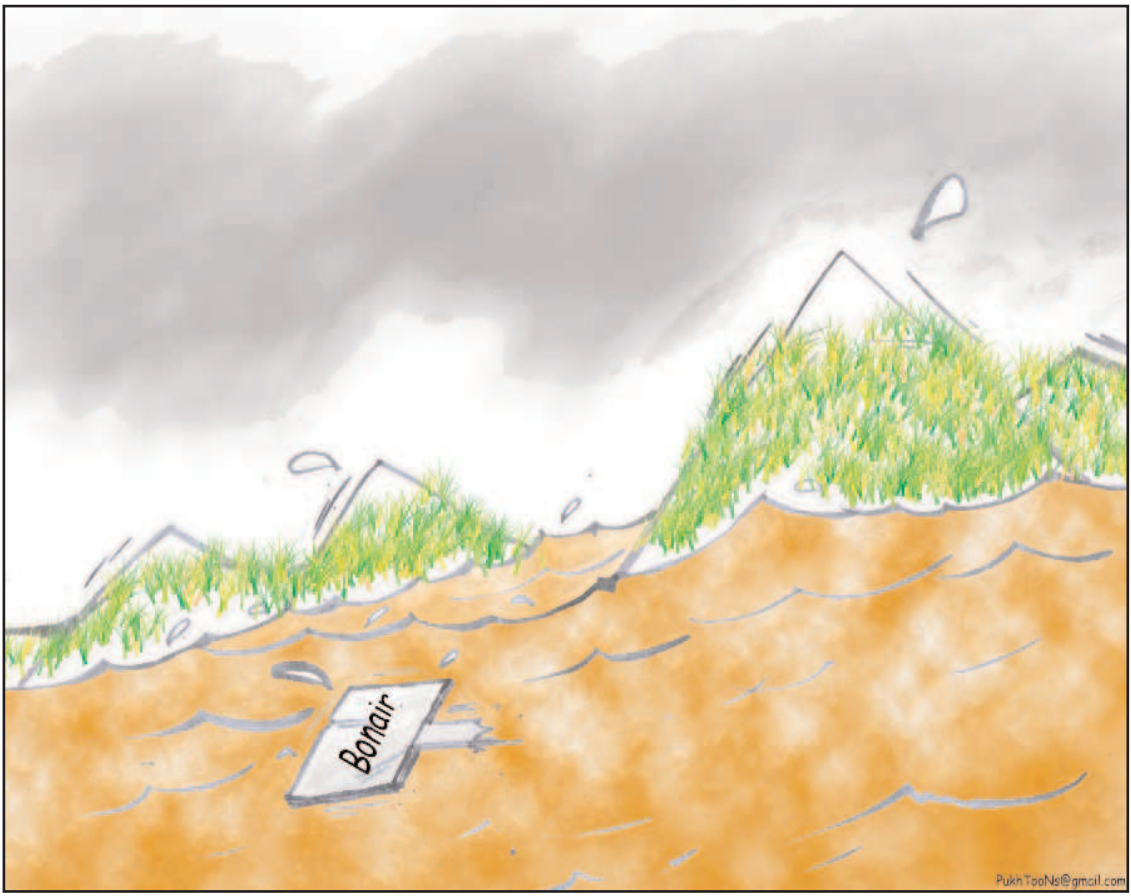
On the surface, this seems like a decisive blow to the goal of establishing a carbon tariff for imports, commensurate with Trump's DOGE hatchet. But unlike Trump and Elon Musk, the EU ensured that the remaining 10 percent of importers still accounted for more than 90 percent of emissions. This outcome is far from ideal when viewed solely through a climate lens. But viewed from a broader climate-economic perspective, it is exactly the kind of surgical intervention that DOGE promised but never delivered. Still, fiddling at the climate policy margins ignores the bigger picture. While Europe and America are taking steps back, China is leaping forward. It alone accounted for more than 40 percent of the record \$2.1 trillion of global investment in the energy transition last year - more than the EU, the UK and the US combined. The balance is even more lopsided for specific clean-energy technologies. China produces about 75 percent of the world's solar panels and 80 percent of its lithium-ion batteries. That dominance is the result of a concerted green industrial policy, in which innovation plays a key role. The claim that China only manufactures and assembles is woefully outdated. China's electric vehicles, for example, are second to none, BYD, the country's leading carmaker, recently unveiled a groundbreaking charging system capable of adding 470 km of range in just five minutes, putting the company in a league of its own globally. China's dominance extends to technologies that are not yet competitive without price support. LONGi, one of the world's top solar manufacturers, formed LONGi Hydrogen in 2021 to pursue green hydrogen production. It now leads the world in electrolyzer manufacturing capacity.

These are not isolated examples. China's ambitious industrial policy has helped lift five other Chinese hydrogen companies into the global top 10. Have Europe and the US already lost this race for the future? While the US now seems hellbent on turning itself into a petrostate, the EU has a chance to revive its clean energy fortunes. It is even starting with a significant policy advantage: a carbon dioxide price hovering at about \$100 per tonne means that most low-carbon technologies - from clean electrons and electrification to clean molecules like biofuels - are already economically viable. Others, like green hydrogen, will need further support to help climb the learning curve and slide down the cost curve. According to Bernd Heid, a senior partner at McKinsey & Company who leads its Platform for Climate Technologies, about 90 percent of climate technologies will be in the money by 2030 with a \$100 carbon price.

While China dominates with six top-10 global players, three of the others are European. The Swedish startup Stegra is building the world's first low-carbon steel plant using electrolyzers made by ThyssenKrupp Nucera, in which the German steelmaker has a majority stake. Despite recent political developments, the US, too, has shown that rapid change is possible. Although breaking China's solar manufacturing dominance will be difficult, the US has made significant inroads over the past three years. Earlier this year, it exceeded 50 gigawatts of panel manufacturing capacity, a fivefold increase since 2022. These 50 GW in panel supply roughly matched US demand. True, onshoring the solar supply chain comes with costs that can be justified only by priorities other than the climate, such as national security or promoting domestic manufacturing. But that is the point. If political conditions require stronger emphasis on technologies like geothermal and nuclear, and if technologies formerly known as "climate tech" must be relabeled as the more neutral-sounding "energy tech," then so be it. The larger forces propelling us toward decarbonization remain the same.

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Japan must face up to its wartime past

Jin Ding

THIS year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War. Japan should learn from its past and desist from rebuilding its military. In an interview with Li Huixian for Dialogues with Thinkers, China Daily's high-end interview program, Fang Ke, a Japanese affairs expert at the National Defense University of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, said Japan should face up to its history, and stressed that Japanese right-wing forces should not distort history and mislead ordinary Japanese people, especially the younger generation. Excerpts follow:

Question: Aug 15 marks the 80th anniversary of Japan's unconditional surrender in World War II. How should Japan behave now?

Answer: Japanese invaders in China and other Asian countries killed and wounded millions of people, leaving a trail of destruction across much of East and Southeast Asia. For Japan, adopting a right view of history is imperative. Only by facing up to history can Japan truly atone for its atrocities before and during World War II. Facing up to history is a litmus test of its political sincerity.

Also, Japan must adhere, both in letter and spirit, to the four political documents it has signed with China. It is equally crucial for Japan to enhance communication with China to build strategic mutual trust and better understand each other's legitimate concerns.

Amid growing economic turbulence fueled by the United States' tariff war, China and Japan, as the Asia-Pacific's leading economies, have every reason to deepen economic cooperation, because it would not only mitigate economic risks but also bolster regional stability. Effective crisis management is critical, too, for Japan to improve relations with China and other countries in the region. So it should respect Beijing's core interests. Rather than exacerbating tensions, it should adopt a constructive approach to fostering

regional stability, particularly bilateral relations with China.

Q: To what extent will the far-right forces in Japan continue to influence the country's policies?

A: Ever since the Meiji Restoration, militarists and far-right forces have been influencing, to various degrees, Japan's policies, even dragging it into the abyss of war. After World War II, the international community's oversight and the US-engineered democratization reforms temporarily marginalized these elements, even stripped them of political power.

However, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 prompted a US policy reversal. By remolding Japan into an anti-communist linchpin in East Asia, the US helped rehabilitate convicted war criminals and dismissed wartime officials, some of whom became part of Japan's power structure.

Consequently, Japan has never truly atoned for its wartime crimes nor has it fully abandoned its militarist views. Although these elements' capacity to fundamentally alter Japan's domestic or foreign policy is constrained, they can still shape public views, especially influence young minds.

Q: What sort of impact did the Chinese people's humanitarian act of adopting Japanese war orphans after the end of World War II have on the development of Sino-Japanese relations?

A: The sort of treatment Japanese orphans got from kindhearted Chinese people has long been a testament to the friendship between China and Japan. After Japan's defeat in World War II, an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 war orphans were left behind in China. The older generation of Chinese leaders, including Chairman Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, treated them with kindness, as did ordinary Chinese people in Northeast China.

This shows that China distinguishes between Japan's militarist clique and the Japanese people. By launching the war, the militarists not only dragged all the Japanese people into World War II but also made them victims of the war.

After returning to Japan, those orphans acted as a bridge between China and

Japan. Many of them formed organizations, revisited their adoptive families in China, and fostered goodwill between the two countries. Their story shows that a genuine people-to-people bond rooted in compassion and mutual understanding is irreplaceable.

Q: Will Japan's labeling of China as the "greatest strategic challenge" in its recent defense white papers harm bilateral relations?

A: Postwar Japan has oscillated between pursuing strategic autonomy to enhance its defense capabilities and relying on the US for national security. Yet by calling China the "greatest strategic challenge", Japan is fabricating stories to justify its militarization and rally domestic public support for it. Japan plans to increase its defense spending beyond 2 percent of GDP by 2027.

The Japanese government argues that its "low defense spending" is inadequate to sustain its status as a major power or counter what it calls "diversified threats", whether from China or other sources. To this end, it seeks to increase defense budgets, expand offensive weapons capabilities, and procure advanced military hardware - all of which require securing public support to ensure smooth approval in both houses of the Diet when these policies are formally proposed.

On the other hand, with the US advancing its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, Japan is concerned about its diminishing role in the alliance due to the US' growing diversified partners. For decades, Tokyo has followed Washington's lead, but it has been working to exercise greater influence and autonomy within the alliance.

By calling China as such a "threat", both countries gain justification to deepen alliance integration, enabling Tokyo to harness US strategic weight for expanded regional influence and leadership. Japan also believes this will make it an indispensable ally of the US in the Asia-Pacific. But Japan should realize that in today's world, national security cannot be safeguarded by hyping up nonexistent threats. And clinging to the beggar-thy-neighbor approach will not help Japan win the support

of its neighbors or the wider international community either.

Q: Is Japan's strategy of boosting security and the economy sustainable?

A: At the end of 2024, Japan was China's fifth-largest trading partner, third largest among individual countries, while China was Japan's largest trading partner and primary source of imports. Sino-Japanese trade has been mutually beneficial for decades. It is the US that has been trying to destabilize the global economic order by launching the tariff war.

It is essential for China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, as major economies in the Asia-Pacific, to deepen cooperation, especially in fields such as cutting-edge technologies and infrastructure development, to ensure the region's continued development. Japan's approach to China is inherently contradictory. Despite continuing to align with the US in matters of security and defense, Japan has been enjoying the economic gains from Sino-Japanese trade.

Q: How should we respond to certain US and Japanese politicians' frequent hyping of the Taiwan question?

A: This is a matter of serious concern. We should continue to make efforts to achieve the reunification of Taiwan with the motherland, and avoid making the mistake of "strategic overreach".

Ineffective crisis management could turn a friction into conflict, potentially dragging other countries into it. To prevent this, China and Japan have established effective multi-tier, multi-channel crisis management mechanisms, including hotlines at the defense minister level.

In recent years, through a series of military exercises and demonstrations of advanced weapons systems, China has showcased the modernization of its defense forces, as well as its resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and achieve national reunification. It will again do so at an opportune moment and location to demonstrate its military capabilities to deter hostile forces, and prevent them from exploiting sensitive issues.

The China Daily

Trump's DC takeover a move of staggering hypocrisy

Rebecca Solnit

ONE of most violent days in the history of Washington DC, was 6 January 2021, and the instigator was Donald J Trump, who this week has endeavored to seize control of the nation's capital, after reports that a former employee of the "department of government efficiency" (Doge) was assaulted in the city.

In a sense the new event echoes the old; both are illegitimate power grabs made on the basis of lies. In 2021 it was a lie about the outcome of the 2020 presidential election; in the summer of 2025 it's lies about crime levels. Reliable sources - including the Biden Department of Justice in January - have noted that violent crime there is at a 30-year low. Five people died as a result of that 2021 attack on Congress, and dozens of law enforcement officers were injured, some gravely, by the mob Trump incited. On his first day in office in 2025 he pardoned 1,500 of the convicted criminals who stormed the capital, some of whom went on to commit more crimes.

The hypocrisy is obvious, or it would be if most discourse about contemporary events wasn't so contemporary that events before last month get left out. Of course hypocrisy and double standards are a key element of the rightwing commitment to inequality, and their violence imposes their version of order, even when it breaks bones and the law. As Wilhoit's law famously put it: "Conservatism consists of exactly one proposition, to wit: there must be in-groups whom the law protects but does not bind, alongside out-groups whom the law binds but does not protect."

The former Doge employee who was attacked is 19-year-old Edward Coristine, AKA Big Balls. As long as we're talking about violence, this spring the medical journal the Lancet estimated that Doge's dismantling of USAid could result in more than 14m deaths, a third of them children, by 2030. When it comes to sheer numbers, that's like killing everyone in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, or if you prefer everyone in Denmark, Norway and Estonia, but these deaths from disease, malnutrition and hunger will be largely out of sight for most Americans. Of course there's been a lot of direct violence by the Trump administration on display in the United States this year too, including mothers dragged away from their children by heavily armed men in masks and immigrants brutalized in gulags in El Salvador.

The attempt to take over the capital fits with rightwing and authoritarian agendas in so many ways. Modern conservatives love to hate cities because cities are places where diversity and inclusion thrive, where immigrants, people of many ethnicities, queer and trans people, nonconformists, bohemians, independent women and progressives tend to concentrate. A political map of the US mostly shows an archipelago of blue islands in a sea of red, and those islands

are blue because they're also Democratic strongholds.

They are threats to the right electorally - and because they are hotbeds of tolerance and of cultural, religious, racial and sexual diversity, and most have high immigrant populations. By flourishing, they disprove the rightwing theory that if these things are permitted all hell will break loose. But it is more fun for the right to pretend that these cities are dangerous because they are cesspits of crime and depravity.

That notion that cities or ethnic neighborhoods or progressive movements are out of control justifies harsh law enforcement and violations of rights in the name of getting them under control. In other words, it justifies authoritarianism, which claims to be protecting some of us while attacking lots of us. Something that's also been part of rightwing discourse lately is able-bodied adult men claiming to be afraid to walk down the street in American cities. All through the years when my town, San Francisco, was being demonized by rightwing and some mainstream media, conservative tech dudes would claim to be afraid to take a stroll here, which comes across to normal city dwellers as astonishingly fragile and cowardly.

Most recently the professional provocateur and pundit Charlie Kirk tweeted: "Was just in NYC all weekend with our family. Never felt safe. So many people in the city who don't belong. Praying for all involved." Who doesn't belong in a city? The answer would be: Kirk doesn't if he's unable to feel safe amid a diverse population.

New York has long been a great city of immigrants, the most linguistically diverse city on Earth with 800 languages, including many endangered ones, spoken there, and a city whose tourism and convention bureau estimates 68 million apparently unafraid visitors will come to New York in 2025. Another rightwing pundit and social-media personality, Benny Johnson, just made lurid allegations about crimes he witnessed and suffered (but apparently failed to report at the time) in Washington DC, including his house being set on fire. Not to be outdone Senator Markwayne Mullin declared on Wednesday night on Fox News that he doesn't wear a seatbelt when driving through DC so he can flee in a hurry if he's carjacked.

Authoritarians are at war with cities because they are at war with our rights and our diversity. It behooves us all to defend them - cities, rights, diversity, including by fending off the lies and propaganda that are themselves weapons in this war. And of course Trump is concocting a drama in DC, with the national guard being turned into an army of extras, because, speaking of violent crime, he would like us to really stop talking about the Jeffrey Epstein files and his long and close association with that child trafficker and rapist.

It looks like Trump will sell Ukraine out

Leigh Turner

THE images of Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump's envoy, shaking hands with President Vladimir Putin on Aug. 6 in Moscow were familiar. High-ceilinged rooms, gilded everything, warm handshakes, smiles. Afterward, there were familiar noises: a Kremlin spokesman said the talks had been "constructive." Russian state media announced that Putin had "conveyed some signals to the United States on the Ukrainian issue," with Trump sending a similar message.

As Witkoff left Moscow, Trump announced an additional 25% tariff on India in response to its continued purchase of Russian oil. The language in the White House fact sheet announcing the decision was important: "The Russian Federation's actions in Ukraine," it said, "pose an ongoing threat to US national security." President Trump's

announcement of additional tariffs on India, linked to Russia's actions in Ukraine, appeared to be a U-turn in US policy, marking the first time since January that Washington announced measures to punish Moscow.

Many observers have said for years that Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatened US as well as European security. The title of the fact sheet, which explicitly said the Kremlin posed a threat to the United States, made it look like Washington was finally taking the situation seriously. The problem was that Trump's foreign policy team had consistently taken Russia's side in the conflict for months. In February, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Ukraine would never regain its pre-2014 borders or join NATO - bowing to key Russian demands before negotiations even started.

The same month saw Trump calling President Volodymyr Zelensky of

Ukraine a "dictator" and the slow-motion car crash shouting match with Zelensky in the Oval Office. Meanwhile, the US refused to condemn Russia at the United Nations for invading Ukraine, voting alongside Russia and North Korea. As Russia ramped up its bombing campaign and refused to implement a ceasefire, Trump began to express frustration with Putin, eventually threatening to walk away from efforts to bring about a peace deal. First, he argued that this was a European problem, then he rubbished European efforts to put in place a military force to guarantee Ukrainian security after any deal.

July brought more signs of a change of heart from the US president. Trump said he would impose 100% secondary sanctions on Russia's trade partners if a peace deal was not reached by Sept. 1. He also said he would "mas-

sively supply" Ukraine with arms. Then, unpredictable as ever, he brought the tariff deadline forward to Aug. 8. The fact that the deadline has now passed without action recalls Douglas Adams' famous quote: "I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by."

It would also drive a coach and horses through nuclear nonproliferation efforts. The clear message would be: unless you get nuclear weapons, your nuclear-armed neighbour can do whatever the hell they want. Every country - including in Europe - would need to massively boost its defense budget to be able to deter future aggression. As Margus Tsahkna, Estonia's foreign minister, said, "If borders can be changed by force, none of us are safe ... Sovereignty and territorial integrity are the cornerstones of global stability."

The announcement of a Putin-Trump summit makes it likely the US will try to negotiate a deal over Ukraine's head. The US has done nothing to impose new tariffs on Russia. But there are plenty of things Washington could do: action against Russia's shadow fleet; secondary sanctions on banks and oil refineries in other countries that facilitate trade in Russian oil; and providing more weapons to help Ukraine turn the tide of the war. None of this has happened. Rather, the risk is that Trump will "agree" with Putin a deal that requires Ukraine to give up land. If Ukraine declines to do so, the US may put pressure on Ukraine to agree. The US has done this several times since January already - cutting off arms supplies to, and intelligence cooperation with, Ukraine - without ever putting pressure on Russia.

No wonder Ukraine has been saying that it will not accept any agreement made

without it - especially one that legitimizes Russia's occupation of its sovereign territory. No wonder Zelensky has been calling European leaders, seeking to firm up support for that line. They should support him - in the interests of both European and US security. Putin has an impressive history of getting everything he wants from Trump every time they talk. The announcement of an in-person bilateral summit on US territory, sadly, makes it look likely that the Russian president has again wound his US counterpart around his little finger - and will achieve his war goals without making any meaningful concessions. I hope I will be proved wrong. Because if that happens, the costs to the rest of the world will be high. It will also - as the White House fact sheet implied - compromise the security of the United States itself.

Ukraine has lost. Britain must now prepare for Russia’s next onslaught

IT is time to put outrage, passion and wishful thinking aside and face facts: in what may well go down in history as the West's gravest foreign policy failing of the 21st century, Ukraine has lost the war against Russia. The conflict is likely to come to an end sooner rather than later - and on terms that favour Putin. Britain must accept that the Ukraine war is all but over - and prepare for an even bigger brewing conflict.

Tomorrow's Alaska talks between Trump and Putin have scandalised European opinion. British defence sources have vented to me their disgust at the free world's leader sitting down with the most ruthless authoritarian ruler alive to carve chunks out of a country that has fought heroically for the liberal, democratic principles upon which America was founded - principles that are fading from a US foreign policy that is increasingly transactional. That Trump hopes to seal the deal by granting Putin access to Ukrainian rare minerals has added a neocolonial whiff to the stench of betrayal. Europe's righteous indignation is tinged with hypocrisy. Ukraine has been burned not only by Trump's unsparing America First policy, but by Europe's disastrous refusal to invest in its own defence. An end to the war is imminent - and it will plunge Europe into its most perilous moment since 1939.

The geopolitical dynamics that have enabled Ukraine to hold the line against Russia have shifted. The Biden administration was content to keep the war in permanent stalemate. The hope was that the West could sap Russia's power over time, while minimising the risk of a nuclear confrontation. But the Trump administration, far from wanting to slowly destroy Russia, seeks to nurture Moscow as an ally, as it scrambles to contain the biggest threat to US supremacy - a rising China. As Moscow becomes ever more reliant on Beijing's oil purchases and investment, Washington fears that a cash-strapped and isolated Russia risks becoming a satellite state of China.

Sherlle Jacobs

There is now a strategic logic for both Kyiv and Moscow to end the war. With the West unwilling to decisively ramp up support, Ukraine knows that the longer the war continues, the more calamitous it will be for Ukraine economically, demographically and - in a country with shallow democratic roots - also politically. Washington's leading Russia experts such as Thomas Graham, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, believe that Russia is on the cusp of a bankable win: "If the Kremlin were to reach a negotiated solution right now, they would get most of what they want. Ukraine is

As Moscow becomes ever more reliant on Beijing's oil purchases and investment, Washington fears that a cash-strapped and isolated Russia risks becoming a satellite state of China. There is now a strategic logic for both Kyiv and Moscow to end the war. With the West unwilling to decisively ramp up support, Ukraine knows that the longer the war continues, the more calamitous it will be for Ukraine economically, demographically and - in a country with shallow democratic roots - also politically.

not going to join Nato. The Russians aren't going to be pushed out of the territory that they occupy in Ukraine. The issue of discrimination against Russian speakers ought to be resolved because most of those Russian speakers live in territory occupied by Russia at this point."

Trump allies are quietly confident that Putin has come to realise that his more grandiose ambitions risk backfiring: the longer a war intended to protect Russian greatness drags on, the more the country risks slipping down the great power rankings. Trump will get his deal, even if the Alaska talks come to naught. Instead of denouncing Trump, Britain should put all its

energy into getting ready for a new high-stakes epoch.

Even Trump allies voiced to me their fear that the President could draw up a slapdash agreement that dismembers Ukraine - and strangles Europe by threatening to block the Continent from gifting Kyiv with US-obtained weapons and technology in Ukraine. Putin will be emboldened by the deal that is inevitably coming. He will focus on replenishing his army and mulling over other expansionist plans against Moldova and Georgia. It is not unthinkable that a full-scale Europe-wide conflict could break out within the coming

decade. The best way to prevent such a scenario is to build up Europe's military power to a degree that deters Putin. Yet this challenge will be all the more fiendish particularly in light of America's effective withdrawal from the region. Britain in particular needs to get its finger out. In its determination that we should remain a great military power, the political class dodges the question of which lethal capabilities to focus on. The UK needs to decide whether it can best serve Europe by building up its land army or playing to its naval and air-based strengths.

Some in defence circles want us to focus on defending the Arctic North, where Russia's shadow fleet threatens critical infrastructure like undersea cables, and wargaming how the RAF could lend cover to expanded German and Polish land powers in the event of a world war. A decision must be made either way - and it must be made soon. The time has also come for Britain to prepare for a new era of hybrid warfare. According to Russia expert Mark Galeotti, Moscow is moving away from big ticket cyber attacks towards sabotaging crumbling services in a way that contributes to our sense that "everything is broken".

As a result of what Galeotti has dubbed this the "weaponisation of inconvenience", the result might be that we find streaming a film at night impossible, or that we cannot book a train ticket because the online platform is down. Galeotti tells me: "The essence of the Russian approach to warfare is to try and paralyse us, to get us so disillusioned with our system that we are so busy thinking that nothing works and questioning the fundamentals, that we are unable to muster any kind of organised obstacles to Russian activity."

Britain is dangerously ill equipped for dealing with this unfamiliar, powerful new kind of conflict. Russia will take particular pleasure in targeting us. The Kremlin harbours a surreal enmity towards Britain; earnest Anglophilia bleeds into unhinged Anglophobia. Russian elites tend to view Britain as a nation of high intellectuals, regarding UK education as the absolute pinnacle and even romantically reckoning that British police stations are staffed by Sherlock Holmes geniuses.

By the same logic, the Kremlin tends to see the British as the most brilliantly sneaky of Western antagonists. The Kremlin is convinced that Britain gave America the idea of spurring Ukraine's Orange Revolution - and is preparing to mete revenge. As a new dark age descends on Europe, there is little time for reproach and regret. Our world is becoming more dangerous; we need to be ready.

Trump is doing Putin a favor - and abandoning his allies

Ruth Deyermond

THE Trump-Putin summit on Friday is stirring up anger, anxiety and, in some quarters, hopes of a breakthrough. The prospect of the president of the United States welcoming Vladimir Putin, a war criminal with an outstanding International Criminal Court arrest warrant, to an American state that used to be Russian territory, is a shocking confirmation of Washington's pivot away from its traditional allies and toward Moscow.

But to understand just how significant the event will be, even if it produces no agreement on Ukraine, it needs to be placed in the history of meetings between US and Russian (or Soviet) leaders. That context shows that Friday's summit is an extraordinary signal of the realignment of US foreign policy under Trump and of the way that the administration's lack of expertise and understanding is creating unprecedented advantages for the Kremlin.

Before the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, it was standard for new US and Russian presidents to meet early in their terms to try to improve bilateral relations and address issues of concern to Washington. As the vastly more powerful state, the US set the agenda. This was the case even when relations were poor, as has been the case at the start of every US presidency since 2001.

When summits were held in periods of significant tension between Washington and Moscow, they took place on neutral ground in third-party states. This was true for Cold War meetings such as the 1986 Reagan-Gorbachev Helsinki summit; when George W. Bush and Putin met for the first time in Slovenia; and, most recently, when Biden and Putin met in Geneva in mid-2021.

Less high-profile, but still consequential, meetings often took place in the margins of multilateral events such as the G8 (before Russia's 2014 expulsion) and the G20. Trump and Putin had their first official meeting during the 2017 G20 in Hamburg, in which Trump raised eyebrows by telling Putin it was "an honor" to meet him. Later, he held a second unofficial meeting with him without any US officials present - something he repeated the following year at another G20 summit.

US-Russia summits that take place in the US or Russia have special significance. Where they are held in Russia, they are seen as conferring American recognition on the Kremlin. This was the reason that Clinton's 1995 visit to Moscow, at the height of Russia's murderous Chechen war, was so controversial.

But the summits that most strongly signal Washington's intentions of recognition and friendship are the ones in which the United States president plays host. They convey important information to observers about the relationship - underscoring the end of hostilities or the strength of US support for the Russian government.

The image of Gorbachev and George H. W. Bush playing horseshoes at Camp David in 1990 was a powerful symbol of the end of Cold War tensions, while the Clinton-Yeltsin meetings in 1994 and 1995 were designed to show support and respect for the beleaguered leader of the new Russian Federation.

George W. Bush's hosting of Putin in Texas in November 2001 and Medvedev's 2010 visit to Washington signaled the renewal of US-Russia relations through strong personal ties between the presidents. The 2010 meeting was the last event, outside multilateral events such as the UN or APEC, to take place on US soil. After Russia's annexation of Crimea, 2016 election interference, and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the idea of the president of the United States hosting Putin became unthinkable.

That changed with the reelection of Donald Trump. By inviting Putin to the US, the Trump administration is making clear its desire to have good relations with Russia, seemingly at any cost. It is the clear-

est sign yet of the realignment of the US under the Trump administration away from allies and toward the Kremlin, a move that Trump has been signaling for many years.

Trump has been sensitive about his relationship with Russia since his first term, dwelling obsessively on the so-called "Russia hoax," and claiming that "nobody has been tougher on Russia" than him. Despite these longstanding attempts to play down the issue, Trump's affinity for Russia in general and Putin in particular has been one of the most consistent elements of his approach to foreign affairs, stretching back to the period before his election in 2016.

Since he returned to the White House in January, his administration has moved sharply and brutally away from support for Ukraine and - despite attempts to paper over the cracks - from 80 years of alliance with Europe. In contrast, despite occasional expressions of disappointment and recent vaguely

about its purpose is another indication that the event has not been well-organised. It strengthens the impression that its announcement was an attempt to deflect attention from awkward questions about the administration's failure to sanction Russia - and perhaps even more uncomfortable news stories such as the Epstein scandal.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who was a strong critic of Russian aggression before joining the Trump administration, has said that "for President Trump, a meeting is not a concession". If Trump - a man preoccupied with his own status and recognition - genuinely does not understand the significance of inviting the Russian president to the US, then that is in itself a worrying indication of how far Trump is out of his depth in his dealings with Moscow.

It is also likely to be a consequence of the implosion of his administration's US foreign policymaking, having hollowed out the State Department and the National Security Council, removed or sidelined

The 2010 meeting was the last event, outside multilateral events such as the UN or APEC, to take place on US soil. After Russia's annexation of Crimea, 2016 election interference, and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the idea of the president of the United States hosting Putin became unthinkable. That changed with the reelection of Donald Trump. By inviting Putin to the US, the Trump administration is making clear its desire to have good relations with Russia, seemingly at any cost. It is the clearest sign yet of the realignment of the US under the Trump administration away from allies and toward the Kremlin, a move that Trump has been signaling for many years. Trump has been sensitive about his relationship with Russia since his first term, dwelling obsessively on the so-called "Russia hoax," and claiming that "nobody has been tougher on Russia" than him.

worded threats, the Trump administration has avoided taking any action against Russia. Instead, they have indicated that they want a wide-ranging reset of relations. Combined with the threats against Canada and Denmark, the withdrawal of support for Ukraine and the (at best) uncertainty over the solidity of Washington's commitment to NATO, it represents a realignment of the US away from its democratic partners of 80 years and toward an aggressive, authoritarian Russia.

But while the summit is a clear signal of the shift in US foreign policy, it is also an indicator of the way that foreign policymaking has collapsed into chaos and incompetence since Trump's return to office. One of the strangest things about the Alaska summit is its impromptu character. Typically, summits are the end result of many months of planning and negotiations. No details are left to chance or the last minute; the agenda and the wording of a summit communiqué are finalised long before the leaders meet. None of that seems to have happened here.

In July, Trump threatened Russia with "very severe tariffs" within 50 days. He then revised that deadline to 10-12 days, finally fixing on a seemingly hard deadline of Aug. 8, for Russia to make some kind of vaguely outlined move to end the war - although what he expected Putin to do remained vague. Despite the absence of any positive moves by Russia, the White House used the day they were expected to punish the Kremlin to announce the Alaska summit.

The last-minute nature of the meeting is clear from the fact that many of its details, including its location, were unspecified at the time of announcement. The fact that the White House is already downplaying the summit and has become even more vague

experts and replaced them with well-connected individuals with no background in diplomacy and little understanding of the sensitive and complex tasks they are being asked to perform. Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff, in particular, is widely seen as out of his depth. Recent reports make highly embarrassing claims about his failure to understand the details of negotiations with Russia.

The chaos and incompetence of Trump's foreign policy - sometimes optimistically, but wrongly, badged as an unpredictability doctrine - presents an extraordinary opportunity for Russia. Even if Trump does not understand the significance of inviting Putin to the US for talks, the Kremlin certainly does. Since 2014, and especially following his 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Putin has been denied the recognition that comes from big diplomatic events with Western states. Now, having repeatedly tried and failed to persuade other leaders to readmit Russia to the G8, Trump has provided Putin with one of the most prestigious of all diplomatic platforms.

The weakening of Washington's foreign and security expertise, combined with the administration's pro-Russia orientation, puts the Kremlin in a stronger position than it has ever been before in relation to the White House. US-Russia summits have traditionally signaled the lessening of tensions and laid the foundations for a more stable and secure environment. That will not be true in this case. The US's humiliation in Alaska should be a final wake-up call for those NATO members reluctant to confront the reality of the changed nature of relations with Washington. Recognizing that could be the basis for building stronger ties with Ukraine and defenses against the threat from Russia.

The Moscow Times

Germany must resume humanitarian assistance for Russians and Belarusians

THE German Foreign Ministry's program for providing humanitarian support to Russians and Belarusians has been suspended since the end of July. But instead of despairing, we need to take the opportunity to call for its reinstatement. For most people, paragraph 22.2 is just an obscure clause of the German Residence Act. But it is precisely under this provision that I, along with other political prisoners exchanged from Russia, have remained in Germany. It provides the legal basis for a key mechanism that helps those who have suffered from repression continue their resistance.

Formally, the program has not been closed but frozen. But the effect is the same: without a new budget - which will be discussed soon - nothing will function. There is also good news. The largest organizations involved in rescuing protesting Russians and Belarusians - NxT, Equal, InTransit, Horizons Exithilfe, the German chapter of Reporters Without Borders, Quarteera and Libereco - have joined forces. Thanks to them, more than 2,000 people have already been saved. Journalists, public figures, and I myself have joined in.

It is important to understand that the suspension of aid is not the arbitrary decision of officials, but a political decision based on the stance of voters. This is why simple slogans will not work; a measured, well-argued approach is needed. Our task is to convince

Andrei Pivovarov

Germany's political leadership that this program is not a burden on the country's budget but an essential tool for supporting allies - people who are fighting for democracy, for human rights and against war and dictatorship. This is literally a matter of saving lives.

The case of activist Leonid Melekhin proves this: he was deported from the United States to Russia and immediately charged with treason there. He now faces a minimum of 12 years in prison. Meetings and discussions are already underway, and texts are being prepared. It is important to get involved - through publications, letters, and appeals. Here, these efforts can be heard.

We need to speak clearly and to the point - not for self-expression, but to give German politicians solid grounds to defend this program. Right now, we are very much in need of your help. If you are ready to join, write to 22catchteam@gmail.com, briefly introduce yourself and your activities and we will include you in our working discussions. If you are not currently able to participate actively, you can still play a role in explaining to influential people why it is so important to restore specifically the Russian-Belarusian part of this program and what makes it unique. Share them at least with social media readers and, better yet, with journalists and officials - anyone you can reach.

This is not about those of us

who are already safe, but about those who are at risk and in need of our help right now. Germany's political stance is one of opposing the regime in Russia, and Chancellor Friedrich Merz has articulated this very clearly and effectively. This means it is important to support those who resist. If they have nowhere to flee, there will be less resistance; they are, in effect, locked inside the country and forced to survive in silence. Paragraph 22.2 is Germany's soft power - a promise of support and protection for those who continue to resist. Not many people have come to Germany under this program. Since it began, 2,700 people have arrived - fewer than 1,000 a year. This is not a large number that would harm Germany's budget. A similar annual quota would be acceptable in the future as well. We do not expect tens of thousands of people; 1,000 per year is quite a reasonable number.

Paragraph 22.2 is separate from Germany's asylum process. Its description clearly states that it is based on Germany's political interest and protection under it is granted to those who represent such an interest to the country. Germany's interest lies in supporting resistance in Russia, which is partly coordinated by those who have already left. Most of those who have left are highly educated, well-integrated, learning German and paying taxes. Some remain on benefits, in part because they continue working with Russian NGOs

or in activism - supporting Russian resistance networks, working on volunteer projects to counter the current authorities in the Russian Federation.

The program itself is very well designed and structured, with reliable oversight - especially compared to the political asylum process. Serious case checks are conducted while the person is still in Russia or in a transit country outside the EU. Not a single German euro goes toward the applicant's living costs during the application process - there is no need to finance a camp, housing, or food, nor to provide security or deportation in case of refusal. Paragraph 22.2 has significant restrictions: applicants must have long-term connections with German organizations, documented proof of risk of staying in Russia and years of opposition activity, which are carefully verified by multiple agencies. The existence of such restrictions itself guarantees successful case outcomes and integration into European life.

For the Russian opposition, paragraph 22.2 is of enormous importance. It is considered a model program in other European countries. It is also part of the reason why Germany has become a center for the Russian opposition, with the most important opposition forces coordinating from Germany, maintaining contact with German politicians. Right now, we urgently need to mobilize and help save this program!

Even Italy is richer than Starmer’s socialist Britain

Daniel Johnson

NOT only do Italians enjoy better food, warmer weather and la dolce vita, they're now richer than us too. Adjusted for the cost of living, Italy's GDP per capita has overtaken the Britain's for the first time this century, according to the World Bank. Though the gap in living standards is small - the Italians and the British both have GDP per capita of just over \$60,000 (£44,000) - the symbolism is huge. Back in 1987, when Italy's economy briefly overtook the UK's in size for the first time, the news prompted an outpouring of patriotic sentiment and became known as il sorpasso - "the surpassing". It hasn't always been plain sailing for our Mediterranean rivals. After 1945, Italy's weak coalitions became a byword for political instability.

For decades, the country has struggled with demographic decline and fiscal debt crises. In 2011 there was national humiliation when the then prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, was effectively removed from office by Brussels, which threatened to force Italy out of the eurozone. Today, however, Italy seems to have achieved an enviable stability. Under Giorgia

Meloni's tough-minded conservative leadership, Italy is now among the most desirable domiciles in Europe, not least for millionaires fleeing the Labour Government's tax raids.

In Italy the inheritance tax rate for spouses and children is a tenth of the UK's 40 per cent: just 4 per cent, with an £860,000 exemption for each child as well as spouse. Even if an estate is left to a non-relative, the rate is only 8 per cent. Overall, Italy's generous tax regime provides strong incentives to move there. For example, pensioners who live in southern regions at risk of depopulation pay a flat tax of just 7 per cent on their income.

What Giorgia Meloni has grasped - but Sir Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves have not - is that if you keep tax rates low, people have less incentive to avoid paying them. This is especially important in Italy, where much of the population used to keep their savings in cash, often literally under the bed, in order to escape the taxman. Thanks to a populist prime minister of humble origins who knows her compatriots well, that culture is rapidly becoming a thing of the

past.

Ms Meloni has an instinctive sympathy for the small businesses, self-employed workers and farmers who are still the backbone of the Italian economy. She hopes to recreate the post-war economic miracle, known as il boom. That miracle was unleashed by the free-market policies of Luigi Einaudi, with annual growth rates of up to 10 per cent. While Italy's economy is now much less dynamic, living standards are rising. Here in Britain they are stagnant, partly due to low-skilled mass immigration.

Ms Meloni has managed to cut the number of illegal arrivals from North Africa, which fell from 157,000 in 2023 to just 66,000 last year. Admittedly her deal with Albania to deport asylum seekers to processing camps there has run into trouble with the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. This is the EU court to which Starmer is keen to hand over jurisdiction under the trade deal he struck with Ursula von der Leyen at Lancaster House in May. Italy still has a bigger debt burden than Britain's: about 130 per cent of

GDP compared to just under 100 per cent here. But Britain is paying higher interest bills than Italy, mainly because about a quarter of UK gilts are linked to inflation, compared to just 12 per cent in Italy.

The British government is shelling out more than £100bn per annum to service its debts, while Italy pays substantially less in interest. Of course there is still plenty of poverty in Italy's perennially depressed southern regions. But the poorest parts of the UK now suffer from a welfare dependency culture for which the Labour Party has just abdicated responsibility.

There is no equivalent in Naples or Palermo for the British phenomenon, visible in cities like Birmingham, of entire communities claiming mental health benefits and giving up on work. Giorgia Meloni has little in common with Nigel Farage, who at best might become the British Berlusconi. The only politician here who - with her no-nonsense intolerance of idleness and entitlement - resembles Meloni is Kemi Badenoch. But will she get the chance to pull this country up by its bootstraps, as Meloni has done for Italy?

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In brief

Australia stun South Africa

JOHANNESBURG (AFP): Captain and No 8 Harry Wilson scored two tries as Australia staged a remarkable comeback to stun South Africa 38-22 in the 2025 Rugby Championship opener in Johannesburg on Saturday. Trailing by 22 points after 19 minutes, the Wallabies scored 38 unanswered points for a first victory over the Springboks in the South African economic capital since 1963. Backs Dylan Pietsch, Joseph Aukuso-Suaali, Max Jorgensen and Tom Wright were the other Australian try scorers and veteran James O'Connor converted four. Kurt-Lee Arendse, Andre Esterhuizen and captain Siya Kolisi crossed the line for the defending champions. Manie Libbok converted twice and slotted a penalty. Record four-time Rugby World Cup winners South Africa were unstoppable in the early stages on a grey evening at Ellis Park with scrum-half Grant Williams playing a key role. His perfectly weighted box kicks allowed the Springboks to establish an aerial advantage and the power of the forwards had the visitors reeling. When Kolisi crossed for the third try it was hard to imagine what was to follow in the first game of the southern hemisphere championship. The first hint that a stunning revival was imminent came on 29 minutes when Pietsch scored. He was forced to retire injured soon after following a collision with Kolisi. Australia dominated the second half, helped by endless basic errors from South Africa. When Wilson scored his second try on 64 minutes, Australia took a 24-22 lead.

O'Sullivan makes two 147 breaks

JEDDAH (Agencies): Ronnie O'Sullivan compiled two 147 breaks in his 6-3 victory over Chris Wakelin in the semi-finals of the Saudi Arabia Masters - becoming the oldest player to make a maximum in the process. The seven-time world champion produced a stunning exhibition of cue-ball control to register the 16th maximum of his career in the opening frame - and his first in competition for seven years. 'The Rocket', who will now face Neil Robertson in Saturday's final, then repeated the feat in the seventh frame, again knocking in 15 reds with 15 blacks before dispatching all the colours. In doing so he received the acclaim of all those in the arena in Jeddah - including his opponent Wakelin, who called him the greatest player of all time, adding: "That was special. What a player," on social media., external "I've never played that well in a match," O'Sullivan told the World Snooker Tour., external "I think you've got to get playing well, cueing well and the mind right and be focused. That's what I felt against [Kyren] Wilson [in the last eight] - I had to really knuckle down and focus and I wanted to take that same attitude into tonight." At 49 years and 253 days, O'Sullivan is the oldest player to achieve snooker perfection and earns a £147,000 bonus for making two maximum breaks across snooker's big four tournaments - the Saudi Arabia Masters plus the Triple Crown events - the UK Championship, Masters and World Championship. He had not previously recorded a competitive 147 since the 2018 English Open. He is only the second player to make two 147s in the same match, after Welshman Jackson Page achieved the feat in qualifying for the Worlds in April.



CAIRNS: Australia get their hands on the series trophy.

PCB launches nationwide talent hunt for women cricketers

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is set to launch a nationwide talent hunt for the next generation of women cricketers. The trials, aimed at identifying promising U19 and Emerging players, will commence on August 21st and span eight cities across Pakistan. The two-week program will scout players for upcoming U19 and Emerging squads.

Players born on or after September 1, 2006, are eligible for the U19 trials, with the minimum age set at 12. There are no age restrictions for Emerging

players. The chosen U19 cricketers will participate in a four-team tournament scheduled for September and October.

This competition will serve as a platform for selecting the Pakistan U19 squad for a tour of Bangladesh later this year.

The selection process begins at the Hanif Mohammad High-Performance Centre in Karachi on August 21st, moving to Lahore's LCCA Ground on August 25th. Rawalpindi and Peshawar will host trials on August 26th and 27th,

respectively. Simultaneous trials will occur in Mardan and Quetta on August 28th. Multan and Bahawalpur will conclude the talent hunt on September 2nd and 3rd, respectively.

Former Pakistan women's cricketer Batool Fatima and ex-Test cricketer Asad Shafiq, members of the national women's selection committee, will oversee the trials, assisted by regional coaches. Aspiring participants must provide a B-form, CNIC, or NADRA-issued birth certificate for age verification.

Former Australia captain Simpson dies aged 89

SYDNEY (Agencies): Former Australia Test captain and coach Bob Simpson has died aged 89. Simpson played 62 Tests for Australia between 1957 and 1978, scoring 4,869 runs - including 10 centuries - at an average of 46.81.

He also took 71 wickets with his leg spin and was renowned as one of the best slip fielders in the game.

After initially retiring from playing in 1968, Simpson made an extraordinary comeback as Test captain in 1978 at the age of 41, after several Australian players joined the breakaway World Series Cricket competition.

"Bob Simpson was one of the greats of Australian cricket, and this is a sad day for anyone fortunate to have watched him play or who benefited from his wisdom," said Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird. "As a brilliant opening batter, incredible slip fielder and handy spin bowler, Bob was a mainstay of a very strong Australian team in the 1960s, and he became a leader across the game as Australian and New South Wales captain and as a coach. "Bob's decision to come out of retirement to successfully lead the Australian team during the advent of World Series Cricket in 1977 was a wonderful service to the game, and his coaching set the foundation for a golden generation of Australian cricket."

When Simpson took over as Australia coach in 1986, the side had not won a Test series for three years, but he oversaw a dramatic revival that saw them become one of the best teams of all time. A new-look team captained by Allan Border and featuring the likes of Steve Waugh and David Boon won the 1987 World Cup and secured Test series victories over England and West Indies. In the early 1990s, Simpson oversaw the introduction of players such as Mark Waugh, Shane Warne, Justin Langer, Matthew Hayden, Glenn McGrath and Ricky Ponting - setting the platform for an era of Australian dominance. After stepping down in 1996, he had short spells coaching Leicestershire, Lancashire and the Netherlands, as well as a consultancy role with India.

Glenn Maxwell steers Australia to T20 series win over South Africa in thriller

CAIRNS (Agencies): Australia's Glenn Maxwell produced an unbeaten half-century in a tense chase to help the hosts edge out South Africa by two wickets in the third and final T20 international in Cairns on Saturday. Maxwell's unbeaten 62 off 36 balls helped Australia chase down 173 with one ball to spare at the Cazalys Stadium, completing a 2-1 series victory in style.

After 18 overs, it was a run-a-ball target for Australia with Maxwell in the middle. The South African bowler Corbin Bosch (three for 26) claimed two wickets and kept Maxwell away from the strike. Needing 10 off the last over from Lungi Ngidi, Maxwell took six from the first four balls before reverse-sweeping for four to seal Australia's

dramatic victory.

"It was a little bit nerve-racking," Maxwell said after being awarded player of the match. "I probably had to do the majority of the striking but it was nice to get a couple out of the middle right near the end." Put in to bat, South Africa overcame a top-order wobble to post a competitive 172 for seven with Dewald Brevis (53) top-scoring. The tourists were 49 for three inside seven overs, but Brevis looked unfazed and hit Aaron Hardie for four sixes in an over.

Brevis raced to a 22-ball fifty but Maxwell took a brilliant running catch near the rope to dismiss him off the bowling of Nathan Ellis, who took three for 31. Tristan Stubbs contributed 25 and Rassie van der Dussen made 38no down the order.

Captain Mitchell Marsh (54) led Australia's reply, dominating his 66-run opening stand with Travis Head (19). Kagiso Rabada floored a return catch from Marsh when the batter was on 26 and Aiden Markram gave a similar reprieve to Head off his own bowling. Head could not capitalise on it though, falling in the same over.

Bosch bowled Josh Inglis for a first-ball duck before South Africa's teenage left-arm quick, Kwena Maphaka, dismissed Marsh and Cameron Green (nine) in the same over to turn the match on its head.

Rabada also produced a two-wicket over, dismissing Tim David (17) and Hardie but Maxwell stayed calm to guide Australia home. The three-match one-day international series between the sides begins in Cairns on Tuesday.

Nolberto Solano begins new chapter with Pakistan football as head coach

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) welcomed Nolberto Solano, former Peruvian international and seasoned coach, as the new Head Coach of the Pakistan Men's National Team and the U23 squad.

Solano arrived at Football House, Lahore, where he was warmly received by Acting General Secretary Muhammad Shahid Niaz Khokhar and met with PFF staff, said a press release issued on Saturday. "I'm very honored to be in Pakistan as the Head Coach of the U23s and Senior team," said Solano. "We believe in the talent of our players, and I'm here to show what we can achieve together."



Looking ahead to Pakistan's upcoming international commitments, Solano emphasized the importance of unity and discipline. "It's no easy job, but we must work hard on and off the pitch. Our immediate focus is the AFC U23 qualifiers in Cambodia. We need to be strong mentally, bring our best players, and play with purpose. It would be a great

moment for the country to qualify." Solano also extended his gratitude to the PFF president. "I want to thank Syed Mohsen Gilani for this opportunity. I'm looking forward to contributing to the growth of football in Pakistan."

PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani shared his confidence in the new coach: "Coach Solano brings great experience and a strong vision. We believe he can help take Pakistan football forward and build a competitive team." Acting General Secretary Muhammad Shahid Niaz Khokhar added, "This is a big step for us. With Coach Solano on board, we're committed to building a stronger football structure."

Lahore Qalandars cricket trials in twin cities a resounding success

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) talent hunt cricket trials, powered by Lahore Qalandars, concluded successfully in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, drawing thousands of passionate young cricketers from the twin cities.

The two-day trials witnessed an overwhelming response, with boys and girls turning up in large numbers to demonstrate their cricketing skills and passion for the game, said a press release. Following extensive assessments by qualified coaches and Lahore Qalandars' dedicated staff, one team each of boys and girls was selected from both Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The initiative

not only highlighted the depth of cricketing talent in the region but also reaffirmed the government's vision to empower youth through sports.

Speaking on the occasion, Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana lauded the enthusiasm and commitment of Islamabad and Rawalpindi's youth, who thronged the venue in their thousands. He described the trials as "a remarkable success" and expressed his delight at the discovery of top cricketing talent from the twin cities.

Atif Rana extended his heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan and the Higher

Education Commission (HEC) for their great support in making the nationwide trials possible. He asserted that such initiatives were instrumental in building a stronger sporting culture in Pakistan.

The selected players, brimming with excitement, also shared their joy and appreciation. They thanked the Prime Minister, PMYP, and Lahore Qalandars for providing them with such a unique and prestigious platform, which they described as a dream opportunity to excel at the highest levels of cricket. They vowed to work hard, represent Lahore Qalandars with pride, and bring international recognition and glory to Pakistan.

Mayenda sparks stunning Sunderland start to increase Potter's West Ham pain



LONDON (Agencies): Advertising hoardings dotted around Sunderland are adorned with inviting images of long, local, sandy beaches and invite visitors to embark on adventures in "our city by

the sea". It is all part of an £80m project intended to reinvent and regenerate the post-industrial riverside area around the Stadium of Light but West Ham had evidently not bargained for this rejuvenation extending

to the football team.

As the second half unfolded, an exhilarating afternoon that exceeded the wildest dreams of even the most optimistic Sunderland fans became not so much an adventure as an ordeal

by the North Sea for West Ham's manager.

"Disappointed with that," said Graham Potter. "We have to learn the lesson that it's difficult to win matches. It's one game but we have to bounce back. We have to be better. We have to make it happen."

In marked contrast, Régis Le Bris looked as if he was struggling to stop smiling. "I'm happy for the fans," he said. "We just have to enjoy this. West Ham are a strong team who maybe didn't play their best football today."

Right from the start a counter-attacking Sunderland, featuring seven summer signings, looked quick, agile and nimble-footed. While an array of new faces including the excellent Habib Diarra and Granit Xhaka shone, it was three of the old boys, Eliezer Mayenda, Dan Ballard and Wilson Isidor, who scored the goals.

Although West Ham, with Jarrod Bowen looking dangerous, held their own in the opening half they were restricted to two chances. Then, in the course of a chastening second period featuring some assiduous man-to-man marking, the visitors folded.

They had perhaps failed to heed the warning delivered when Diarra, the club-record £30m midfield recruit from Strasbourg, showed off an impressive change of first-half pace as he executed a slick one-two with Mayenda. The heart of defence was pierced and only a decent save from Mads Hermansen kept the score goalless.

For all Diarra's fleet-footed probing, Noah Sadiki's snappy tackling and the way the deep sitting Xhaka showed why Bayer Leverkusen were so reluctant to part with him, West Ham were still not exactly out of things. It took a slid-

ing, last-ditch clearance on Ballard's part to prevent El Hadji Malick Diouf shooting the visitors ahead.

One of football's little mysteries revolves around the failure of one of the so-called "elite" clubs to poach Bowen. Goodness knows where West Ham would be without him.

Robin Roefs, Sunderland's new Netherlands Under-21 goalkeeper, who was preferred to the playoff hero Anthony Patterson, showed off some nifty footwork and had not been overexerted.

Nordi Mukiele must have felt reassured he was making the right choice in swapping Paris Saint-Germain for Sunderland. That move is poised to be confirmed on Saturday with the full-back becoming summer signing No 12.

When Omar Alderete, the Paraguayan centre-half making his home debut as a substitute, hooked a cross into

the area, Mayenda, a scorer at Wembley in May, backed into his marker before contorting his body into a position from where he headed Sunderland into the lead.

If Potter looked unhappy with that piece of defending he appeared furious as the unattended Ballard guided a tremendous header beyond Hermansen after meeting Aningra's deep cross.

Hermansen will not want to watch replays of the third goal, curled in superbly by the substitute Isidor who, having connected with Xhaka's delivery, ran at the defence before unleashing an effort that seemed to go through the former Leicester goalkeeper en route to the far corner. Given that this particular Sunderland side had never played together before it is small wonder Wearsiders are convinced Le Bris really is a special one.



In brief

Waqar expresses solidarity with flood victims F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Director of the Belt and Road Initiative for Sustainable Development (BRISD) Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate has expressed deep sorrow and solidarity with the people of Malakand Division, particularly in Swat and Buner districts, who have been severely affected by the recent cloud burst and floods. The devastating floods have claimed over 200 precious lives, displaced countless families, and caused unimaginable destruction to homes, shops, livestock, and infrastructure. Sardar Waqar Shahzad has appealed to the international community to come forward and support the affected communities in this darkest hour. "I urge everyone to stand together in support of the people of Malakand Division," said Sardar Waqar Shahzad. "Every small act of kindness count, and together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of those affected."

18 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police teams from Sumbal, Khanna, Humak, Bhara Kahu, and Shahzad Town police stations have arrested 11 accused involved in various criminal activities. A police official told APP on Saturday that the police teams also recovered 3,139 grams of Ice, six pistols with ammunition, and a dagger from their possession. He said cases have been registered against the arrested individuals while further investigations are underway. He said that during a special campaign launched to nab proclaimed offenders and absconders, different police teams also arrested seven criminals. Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the ICT Police continues its effective crackdown against crime and criminal elements to ensure peace and tranquility in the federal capital.

50 ASI probationers pass out

RAWALPINDI (APP): A passing out parade of the ASI Probationer Class Course of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir was held at Police College Sihala on Saturday. Inspector General (IG) Gilgit-Baltistan Afzal Mehmood Butt graced the occasion as the chief guest. A total of 50 ASI probationers completed their basic training, including 48 from Gilgit-Baltistan and 2 from Kashmir. The chief guest Inspector General (IG) Gilgit-Baltistan inspected the parade and congratulated the young officers, their families, and the college administration. He praised the role of Police College Sihala and thanked Commandant Ashfaq Ahmed Khan for providing modern training facilities in line with the vision of IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar and Additional IGP Training Muhammad Tariq Chauhan. Speaking on the occasion, Commandant Ashfaq Ahmed Khan said Police College Sihala, established in 1959, is the country's largest police training institution where more than 100,000 officers have been trained. He said that the training program was designed to meet the practical needs of the force, with focus on discipline, character building, legal studies, policing methods and physical fitness. The trainees were also given specialized training in VVIP protection, anti-riot management, rescue operations with the support of Rescue 1122, computer skills, mobile forensics, and the Punjab Police communication system (POLCOM).

NA Speaker mourns loss of lives in KP floods

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Saturday expressed profound sorrow over the tragic loss of lives caused by monsoon rains and flash floods across several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Buner, Battagram, Hazara, Swat, Bajaur, and Malakand. In his condolence message, the Speaker conveyed heartfelt sympathy for the victims and affirmed his solidarity with the bereaved

families. He said his heart is grieved over the devastation and expressed complete support for the people and government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during this challenging time.

"The flood situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a test for the entire nation," he remarked, calling upon all citizens to come together in support of their affected brothers and sisters. He urged the public—particularly the youth—to actively

participate in relief efforts to assist those in need.

The Speaker said he stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and shares in the grief of the families who lost their loved ones. He added that he fully understands the pain and hardships faced by the affected communities. He prayed for the swift recovery of the injured and said, "May Allah grant patience and strength to the grieving families."

Rubina visits Abbottabad Office, vows to strengthen women's empowerment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, visited the BISP District Office Abbottabad Saturday to review its operations and reaffirm the programmes role in empowering women across the country.

During the visit, she inspected the Dynamic Registry Centre, overseeing registration processes and staff performance.

Interacting with beneficiary women, she urged them to remain vigilant about their entitlements.

"Always verify and receive your full payment, and report any unauthorized deductions immediately," she advised, reminding them to visit payment centers only after receiving official 8171 messages.

Senator Rubina Khalid encouraged women to draw strength from the legacy of Shaheed Mohtarman Benazir Bhutto, calling on them to embrace dignity, resilience, and positivity. She emphasized that investing in children's education was the surest path to a brighter future.

Addressing complaints, she directed staff to resolve beneficiaries' issues promptly and assured that matters requiring higher-level intervention would be taken up at the policy level.

She also called for awareness campaigns to ensure eligible women are not left behind during recertification. Noting the challenges posed by the current office location, the Chairperson ordered that the BISP Abbottabad office be relocated to a more accessible site to facilitate beneficiaries.

FGP partners with tech experts to build climate-resilient communities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP), a non-profit organization, convened a high-level session with leading digital communication experts to foster tech-driven solutions for strengthening climate-resilient communities in undeserved and climate-vulnerable regions of Pakistan.

The aim was to integrate cutting-edge technology with locally led adaptation strategies that deliver tangible social and environmental benefits, said a press release on Saturday.

The discussion featured Dr. Muhammad Rafiq, Member of the Pakistan Climate Change Authority, who emphasized the need to bridge national climate policies with community-level realities to ensure that interventions remain both

relevant and sustainable.

Asad Rafi, a digital communication specialist, along with his team, presented innovative AI-based concepts ranging from predictive analytics for disaster preparedness to localized climate-risk mapping and AI-powered advisory tools for vulnerable groups.

FGP's CEO, Muhammad Anwar, reaffirmed the organization's commitment to bringing climate knowledge, early warning systems, and resilience strategies directly to those most at risk.

"Our goal is to transform technology into a community asset — enabling people to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate," he remarked.

The session also underlined the importance of

community ownership, equity, and local relevance in all AI-driven adaptation efforts. Plans were discussed to ensure that initiatives are co-designed with local stakeholders, promote inclusive participation, and are supported by strong governance and risk-mitigation measures to address technological, social, and environmental concerns.

By combining grassroots knowledge with advanced AI applications, scalable and replicable models can be developed to strengthen food security, enhance health systems, and improve disaster response capacity. Special focus will be placed on empowering women, youth, and rural communities to become active agents of climate resilience.

PR embarks on plan to revive non-functional routes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has launched an ambitious plan to restore several non-functional railway routes across the country, aiming to enhance connectivity and stimulate commercial activity in various regions. According to an official documents, the Sibi-Harnai section, which has been closed since 2006, has already been restored.

The Ministry of Railways has conducted a comprehensive survey to assess the feasibility of reviving seven additional routes, including Mari Indus-Lakki Marwat-Bannu, Mandra-Bhaun, and Faisalabad-Jaranwala, Kat al Amara, Tando Adam-Tharu Shah, Mirpur

Khas-Nawabshah, and Bostan-Zhob. A detailed feasibility study has been prepared to evaluate the practicality and potential success of these projects.

In addition to restoration, plans are underway to construct new railway links, such as connecting Thar coal mines to Chhor railway station to support energy and industrial transportation needs. A Ministry of Railways official emphasized that any future expansions will be strategically planned, aligning with commercial needs and national logistics objectives.

To meet growing demands from the industrial and energy sectors, Pakistan Railways is also planning to outsource 200 freight wag-

ons to the private sector. The outsourcing process is in its final stages, building on the railways' existing freight operations nationwide.

The Ministry is also pursuing new rail connectivity projects, including a link with Afghanistan through the Kohat-Thal-Kharlachi route, and a new rail link from Gwadar to Nok Kundi. Land acquisition is underway for these projects.

Pakistan Railways is undergoing a transformative phase, driven by a comprehensive reform agenda focused on public-private partnerships, outsourcing services, and transparency. These initiatives aim to modernize the railways and enhance its contribution to the national economy.

Rana Mashhood expresses sorrow over flood deaths

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, on Saturday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives in the disaster, stated, "We stand with the affected families in this difficult time." According to the press release, he said the government has sprang into action to provide relief to the victims of the devastating floods in Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He informed that the Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif received a briefing from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and directed immediate measures to support those affected.

The government is working tirelessly to relocate victims to safe areas, with young volunteers instructed to make every possible effort for relief. "The Government of Pakistan always stands with its people," Khan said, echoing the PML-N's commitment to supporting those in need.

As the nation mourns the

loss of lives, prayers are being offered for the deceased and the injured. He further said the collapse of bridges and difficulties in adjacent areas of Kashmir are concerning, but the government remains committed to providing aid.

All Pakistanis are urged to remember the victims in their prayers. He said the government's swift response and commitment to relief efforts have brought hope to the affected families, and the nation stands united in this hour of need.



ISLAMABAD: An elderly vendor waits for customers to sell household items at his roadside. —APP Photo

PPP lawmaker pushes for swift eviction bill implementation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) lawmaker Dr Sharmila Faruqi on Saturday pushed for the prompt implementation of a proposed Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025, that seeks to safeguard women from unfair eviction by their spouses or other household members.

In an exclusive interview with a local news channel, Sharmila strongly called for the criminalization of such actions to secure women's rights and safety within their homes.

She explained that the proposed Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2025, introduces key amend-

ments to Section 498D and Schedule II, aimed at preventing the unlawful eviction of women from their homes and safeguarding their rights within marital relationships.

Farooqi emphasized that after extensive discussions, the bill was carefully drafted to ensure women's safety and dignity, especially in cases of forced eviction or mistreatment by spouses or other household members.

She expressed hope that the swift passage and implementation of the bill would secure fundamental rights for women, offering them much-needed legal protection in the face of

ongoing societal challenges.

Farooqi emphasized that after extensive discussions, the bill has been presented as a necessary legal measure to safeguard women from unjust treatment within their homes.

She expressed hope that the bill would soon be enacted, securing women's fundamental rights and ensuring they are protected from being unfairly removed from their residences.

Farooqi stressed that the implementation of this bill would be a major step toward securing women's dignity and safety, particularly in marital relation-

ships, where their rights often go unrecognized.

Responding to a query, Sharmila Farooqi mentioned that in many cases in recent years have seen husbands have evicted women from their homes, leaving them feeling insecure. She pointed out that women often face a lack of legal protection in such situations, which increases their vulnerability.

She added that once the bill is implemented, perpetrators will face severe penalties and be subjected to strict legal procedures, ensuring justice for women who have been unfairly evicted from their homes.

Eight held over 32 kg of drugs seized

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) carried out six major operations in different cities, arresting eight drug suppliers and recovered more than 32 kilograms of drugs worth over Rs3.2 million from their possession.

According to an ANF spokesman, the biggest recovery was made near Chenab Toll Plaza, Gujrat, where 8.4 kg of drugs was seized from a vehicle and the accused was arrested.

In another operation at the same location, 6 kg of drugs was recovered from a vehicle, and two drug suppliers were taken into custody.

In Lahore, the ANF team recovered 6 kg of drugs and 1 kg of ice from a vehicle near a petrol pump on Shahpur Multan Road following the arrest of a drug smuggler.

Similarly, 6 kg of drugs was confiscated from a rickshaw near Chenab Toll Plaza in Gujrat, leading to another arrest.

In Karachi's Machar Colony, two men riding a motorcycle were caught with 4.4 kg of drugs.

Meanwhile, in Peshawar, 500 grams of heroin was recovered from a motorcyclist near Jamil Chowk on Ring Road.

The cases have been registered against all the accused under the Narcotics Control Act and investigations are underway.

Farah Naz leads PML-N Women's Wing in Independence Day gathering



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League (N) Women's Wing Islamabad, under the leadership of its President, Farah Naz Akbar, held a spirited gathering to mark Independence Day, celebrated this year as the "Marka-e-Haq" — the day of truth and sacrifice.

The gathering was held here on Saturday, drawing a large number of women workers and supporters who participated with great patriotism and a renewed commitment to Pakistan's future. The audience waved national flags as patriotic songs (Milli Naghmas) played, creating a spirited and unified atmosphere, said a press release.

Addressing the participants, Farah Naz Akbar highlighted that this year's Independence Day was not merely an occasion for festivity but a reminder of the Marka-e-Haq, which grant-

ed a decisive victory to Pakistan over enemy.

She recalled that this homeland was born under the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, inspired by the philosophy of Allama Iqbal and made possible by the blood and devotion of countless martyrs, underscoring that the struggle for Pakistan did not end in 1947, but continues today in defending the nation's sovereignty, protecting its dignity and standing firm for the freedom of Kashmir.

She praised Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's historic decision on May 28, 1998, to conduct nuclear tests which made Pakistan's defense invincible and brought pride to every Pakistani.

She also lauded Field Marshal Asim Munir for his bold and clear message to the enemy that "This is

Pakistan, and it will always remain Pakistan."

Highlighting the vision and dedication of present leadership, she paid tribute to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, calling him a leader who believes in action, not words and whose vision and hard work are steering Pakistan towards stability, development, and international respect.

She further recalled the struggle of Begum Kulsom Nawaz in 2002, who revived PML-N during the most difficult political times, and praised Maryam Nawaz Sharif for carrying that legacy forward by inspiring women to actively participate in politics and social service.

Farah Naz Akbar reaffirmed that the Women's Wing is the heart and soul of PML-N, saying that women workers have always stood as a strong wall in support of their leaders and pledged that under the PML-N flag, they would continue to honor the sacrifices of martyrs, empower youth and women, protect minority rights and contribute to building a prosperous, stable and dignified Pakistan.

The gathering concluded with passionate slogans of "Marka-e-Haq Zindabad," "Pakistan Army Zindabad," and "Pakistan Zindabad."

NADRA upgrades FRC process, secures women's rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): NADRA spokesperson and Director, Syed Shabhat Ali, on Saturday, revealed that the process for obtaining the Family Registration Certificate (FRC) has been made easier with a focus on including daughters, wives, and mothers in the process while eliminating the need to travel to distant cities, as local NADRA offices are now equipped to handle the procedures.

During an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, he further explained that NADRA is making the process more accessible by encouraging people to use the PAK-ID mobile application for seamless biometric verification. This digital tool is

designed to simplify the process and save valuable time for citizens, he added.

He also stressed that the ease of access and streamlined services are part of NADRA's ongoing efforts to enhance convenience and provide better service to the public, ensuring that more people can complete the necessary formalities without unnecessary delays. Spokesperson emphasized that the revised FRC process ensures that women's names are included in property distribution, addressing a critical gap where women were often overlooked.

This step is seen as a significant move towards safeguarding women's rights, ensuring they have

a recognized claim in family matters and property ownership, he added.

Responding to a query, he further explained that individuals residing in Islamabad who own property in other cities can now access local NADRA office services, eliminating the need to travel to their property's location for official procedures.

This new system allows for greater convenience, enabling citizens to complete essential tasks related to property and family registration without unnecessary delays or travel, he said, adding, the initiative is part of NADRA's ongoing efforts to make services more accessible and efficient for the public.

He also highlighted that

biometric verification has been made easier for women through the use of the NADRA mobile app.

This app allows women to complete biometric processes from the comfort of their homes, ensuring both convenience and security, he said, adding, by streamlining this process, NADRA aims to enhance accessibility and encourage more women to utilize digital services, further promoting their rights and participation in official procedures.

In his concluding remarks, he praised the government's efforts in digitizing NADRA services, highlighting how the shift to digital platforms has greatly improved efficiency and accessibility for the public.

Rahmani wins silver

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghan athlete Tamim Rahman Rahmani has won a silver medal at the World Taekwondo Open Championship in Kazakhstan, defeating three opponents, the Afghanistan Taekwondo Federation said on Saturday. The federation wrote on its Facebook page that Rahmani secured second place in the 48-kilogram weight category after victories over competitors from Kazakhstan and the UAE.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Safar 21, 1447 — Sunday, August 17, 2025

2 youths drown in Kapisa

MAHMOOD RAQI (Pajhwok): Two young men drowned and lost their lives while swimming in a river in Sayad Bridge area of central Kapisa province, an official said on Saturday. Police spokesman Abdul Fatah Faiz told Pajhwok that the incident occurred on Friday afternoon in Sayad Bridge area. Faiz identified the victims as 22-year-old Nasirullah and 21-year-old Sajid, who were original residents of Nawabad village of Kapisa province and currently lived in Kabul.

Four years of IEA rule: Girls' education remains an unresolved puzzle

KABUL (TOLONews): With the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) return to power now reaching its fourth year, schools and universities above grade six remain closed to girls. Although four years have passed since the IEA regained control, the gates of schools and universities are still shut to female students. In the past year, restrictions have even expanded to include medical education institutes for girls. Shabana, a midwifery student, says: "Please! The entire focus should not be only on girls' education. There are other areas that need attention too. If only girls' education is suspended and postponed indefinitely, this will bring a major catastrophe. My request is that this decision be reversed." The decision has sparked waves of reactions both domestically and internationally. Special envoys for Afghanistan from Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Turkey, the UK, and the United States, as well as the United Nations, Médecins Sans Frontières, Pakistan, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), UNICEF, the Swedish Committee, France, Australia, and former Afghan president Hamid Karzai, have all voiced concern over the ban

on Afghan girls' medical education. The OIC stated: "The Secretary-General of the Organization is fully hopeful that through committed and constructive engagement with the authorities in Kabul, positive steps will be taken in line with the OIC resolutions and women's rights in Islam to remove all restrictions on Afghan women and girls' access to education." Indrika Ratwatte, the UN Deputy Special Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan, said: "For example, 36,000 midwives were in training and 3,000 nurses. If medical institutes are closed, this number will not graduate. This means they will not be able to help women and girls in society, and it will directly impact their health and well-being." The issue of girls' education and higher studies has drawn global reactions, with regional and international actors stressing the right of Afghan girls to education. In addition to regional meetings held over the past year, on September 13, 2024, during its ninth consultative meeting, the OIC expressed concern over the situation of Afghan women, particularly the bans on girls' and women's education and work. Meanwhile, IEA officials have voiced different views on the matter.

The acting Minister of Higher Education, Neda Mohammad Nadeem, said: "The scholars' research is ongoing. If it is proven in their findings that women's education in this form is permissible, the belief is that in that case permission will be granted." Similarly, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Abbas Stanakzai, stated: "Today, among a population of 40 million, we are being unjust to 20 million people. On the Day of Judgment, will we not be gathered in this way too? All paralyzed. We have deprived them of all rights; they have no right to inheritance, no say in determining their husbands' rights, we sacrifice them in exchange, they are not allowed to study, not allowed to attend mosques, the gates of universities and schools are closed to them, and even entry to religious madrasas is denied." It has now been more than 1,427 days since schools above grade six have been closed to girls, and since December 20, 2022, universities have also remained off-limits to them. Despite repeated IEA assurances that schools would reopen, four years later the gates of schools and universities remain closed to girls. Afghan girls are still waiting for clarity on their future, a future that remains uncertain and obscure.

IEA faced massive waves of returnees

KABUL (TOLONews): In the fourth year of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) rule, the country witnessed two major waves of Afghan refugee deportations from Pakistan and Iran. Although deportations of Afghan refugees from neighboring countries had been ongoing in previous years, during the fourth year of IEA's rule, both Pakistan and Iran launched large-scale operations to expel Afghans. At the beginning of the current solar year, deportations from Pakistan surged to unprecedented levels. Alongside the mass deportations, reports of mistreatment and harassment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan also increased. Fareedullah, one of the returnees from Pakistan, said: "This is not how neighbors should act; they took our belongings, money, and everything else there and then expelled us." At the start of the return process, Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Administrative Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, stated: "The Islamic, neighborly, and human rights of Afghan refugees must not be violated. Our neighbors are obliged under Islamic and international law not to harass Afghan refugees. Their property, belongings, and residences must be respected." In early summer of this

year, Iran also began mass and forced deportations of Afghan refugees following a twelve-day conflict with Israel. On July 5 and 6, local officials in Herat said nearly 100,000 Afghan refugees were expelled through Islam Qala alone by Iranian authorities. At the same time, reports emerged from inside Iran of harassment and even killings of Afghan refugees. Shamsuddin, a deportee from Iran, told TOLONews in July: "They expelled me and my family and withheld my money. They took all the money I had with me. I have nothing left, not even money for transport. So what should I do?" Beyond Pakistan and Iran, nearly 5,000 Afghans have been deported from Turkey, and according to UN figures, about 1,600 Afghans were expelled from Tajikistan in the past year. These waves of deportations by neighboring and regional countries have triggered serious concerns among international organizations about the worsening economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) warned, pointing to the decline in international aid, that Afghanistan is not prepared to absorb such large numbers of returnees. Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, said: "The International Organization for Migration

has urgently called for international support, as Afghanistan is facing one of the largest waves of deportations in modern history. Since September 2023, more than 4 million Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan, of which more than 1.5 million have been registered in 2025 alone." In addition to neighboring countries, Germany also deported 81 Afghan asylum seekers on July 17. Recently, a number of Swiss politicians and lawmakers called for direct talks with IEA officials to facilitate the forced return process of Afghan asylum seekers. Germany's Interior Minister, Alexander Dobrindt, said last month: "The first flight has now taken place. I am grateful that this was done in close cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, and the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as with the participation of strategic partners. Qatar helped make this possible." The IEA begins its fifth year in power while deportations from Iran and Pakistan continue at an intense pace. According to available figures, more than 4 million Afghans have been expelled from these two countries so far, while the number of Afghan refugees still living in Iran and Pakistan is estimated at around 6 million.

Gold, gas prices down; petrol, diesel up in Kabul

KABUL (Pajhwok): The price of gold and liquefied gas declined while that of petrol and diesel increased during the outgoing week in Kabul, market sources said on Saturday. Fuel prices A worker at the Ahmadyar pump station told Pajhwok the price of one litre of petrol surged from 67afis to 70afis and diesel from 65afis to 67afis. Mohammad Jan Amin, a liquefied gas seller in Doha-i-Bagh locality, said the rate of one kilogram of the commodity fell from 50afis to 48afis. Food items Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders' Association, said the prices of essential food items remained unchanged during the week. The price of a 49-kilogram sack of Kazakh flour stayed stable at 1,400afis, a 49-kilogram bag of Indian sugar cost 2,450afis, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice stayed stable at 2,600afis, a 16-litre bottle of Malaysian cooking oil remained unchanged at 1,600afis, one kilogram of Indonesian green tea at 350afis and the rate of a kilogram of African black tea at 380afis. Hamid Sufizada, a retailer at Dahna-i-Bagh market, put the retail price of a 49-kg bag of Kazakh flour at 1,450 afis, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice at 2,650afis and a 49-kg sack of Indian sugar at 2,500afis. A 16-litre bottle of cooking oil accounted for 1,650afis, one kilogram of black tea for 430afis and the same quantity of green tea for 400afis, he added. Gold prices down Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold went down from 6,000afis to 5,900afis and the same amount of the Russian variety from 4,750afis to 4,700afis. Haji Mohammad Husain, owner of the Sadaqat Money Exchange Service, said one US dollar traded at 68.30afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees at 235afis. During the previous week, one US dollar consumed 68.20afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees 235afis.

6 Afghan bodybuilders to compete in Asian C'ship

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Afghanistan Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation has announced that six members of the national team will participate in the Asian Bodybuilding and Fitness Championships in Thailand. In a statement posted on its Facebook page on Saturday, the ABFF said the athletes will compete in the 57th edition of the championships and are scheduled to depart for Thailand on Monday. The six athletes representing Afghanistan are Naib Mubarez, Waisuddin Noori, Yaser Samir Ahsan, Baitullah Jadran, Haroon Soltani and Milad Mirzada.

No one allowed to violate Afghanistan's sovereignty

N A N G A R H A R (TOLONews): Local officials in Nangarhar state that the Islamic Emirate will not allow anyone to violate or interfere in Afghanistan's territory. Abdul Hakim Nezami, Deputy Commander of the 201st Khalid bin Walid Army Corps, said during a ceremony marking the fourth anniversary of the Islamic Emirate's rule in Afghanistan that any foreign incursion or attack by neighboring countries will be met with a strong response. He stated: "Unlike the past, our mountains, valleys, villages, and people are no longer being bombarded or shelled by neighboring countries. If such actions are taken, the Islamic Army and the forces of the Islamic Emirate will deliver a crushing response, and they will not be allowed to pursue their sinister goals." Local Nangarhar officials also said that since the Islamic Emirate's return to power, Afghanistan has breathed a sigh of relief. According to them, American generals have admitted their defeat in Afghanistan. Azizullah Mostafa,



Deputy Governor of Nangarhar, said: "They acknowledge suffering a humiliating defeat in Afghanistan, which damaged the reputation of the United States. Follow Trump's speeches, there's hardly one that doesn't mention Afghanistan." Zabiullah Noorani, Director of Information and Culture in Nangarhar, said: "The Khawarijes inflicted immense suffering on the people of Nangarhar. With the return of the Islamic Emirate, an Islamic and

centralized system has been established in Afghanistan." Residents of Nangarhar have expressed satisfaction with the nationwide security but are urging government officials to implement large-scale development projects and create job opportunities. Hasiullah, a resident of Nangarhar, said: "After many years, peace has returned to Afghanistan. There are no more explosions or killings. We ask the government to focus on

reconstruction so our country can compete with the rest of the world." Another resident, Rafiullah, stated: "Our country endured decades of war. Now that peace has been established, there's a need for reconstruction in all sectors." Four years ago, on August 15, 2021, with the fall of Kabul, the Islamic Emirate came to power, and on August 30 of the same year, Chris Donahue, the last American soldier, left Afghanistan.

Achievements, challenges as fifth year of Islamic Emirate rule begins

KABUL (TOLONews): The fifth year of the Islamic Emirate's rule arrives as the caretaker government faced serious challenges in both domestic and foreign policy over the past year. The fate of the constitution and the formation of a permanent cabinet remain unclear, while efforts for the recognition of this government also continued. Despite these challenges, the Islamic Emirate managed to establish good relations with some countries in the world. Russia was the first country to officially recognize the caretaker government, a move widely welcomed by current officials. Dmitry Zhimov, Russia's ambassador to Kabul, said: "This decision, which was made in principle by the President of Russia at the suggestion of the Foreign Minister, demonstrates our sincere desire to establish a full partnership with Afghanistan. More than 100 years ago, Russia was the first country to recognize Afghanistan's independence. All this testifies to our friendly relations with the people of Afghanistan." Zabiullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, also said: "We call on other countries to fulfill their responsibilities in developing relations with Afghanistan and to cooperate with Afghans in general. They should recognize the system and the government for stability, economic growth, connectivity, and the creation of interactions." Over the past four years, officials of the Islamic Emirate have consistently sought to expand diplomatic

relations with countries in the region and the world. Amir Khan Muttaqi, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that in the past year, Afghanistan's diplomatic missions in China, the UAE, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Russia, and Pakistan were upgraded to ambassador level, and diplomats were also appointed to Germany, Norway, India, and Indonesia. The number of active political representations of the Islamic Emirate abroad reached more than 40, and the number of other countries' representations in Kabul approached 20. Muttaqi added: "Kazakhstan has promised to accept an ambassador of the Islamic Emirate, who will be introduced in the near future, and last year we appointed diplomats to four new countries." Over the past year, Kabul hosted senior officials from the United States, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, the Republic of Tatarstan (Russia), as well as the head of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). At the same time, more than twenty senior officials of the Islamic Emirate, including Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Amir Khan Muttaqi, traveled to over twenty regional and extra-regional countries. Muttaqi said: "In the past nearly four years, we have succeeded in ensuring nationwide security, ending the threats of Daesh and other disruptive elements, abolishing the feudal system and drug cultivation, and reducing administrative cor-

ruption to zero." The Islamic Emirate also took part in several regional meetings, including, for the first time, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) meeting, the Russia security meeting, the Kazan Forum, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Termez Dialogue. In June 2024, Kazakhstan became the first country to remove Islamic Emirate officials' names from its list of terrorist groups. Then, Kyrgyzstan also removed the Islamic Emirate from its list of banned organizations. Subsequently, the Russian Supreme Court announced the suspension of the name "Taliban" from its list of banned organizations. Zamir Kabulov, Russia's special representative for Afghanistan, said: "This decision is an important step for all state institutions of the Russian Federation. Now, a major legal obstacle to the expansion of political, economic, and other official cooperation with the Afghan government has been removed. We will not stop here, and further measures are on the way." Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, said: "The statement issued yesterday by the President of Kazakhstan regarding the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was a just and proper decision, and our request is that other neighboring and regional countries also take similar actions. We want good relations with everyone." Over the past year, three American citizens, Ryan

Corbett, Phy Day Hall, and George Glezman, were also released from prison by the Islamic Emirate as a "goodwill gesture" toward the United States. Faye Hall, released American citizen: "Mr. President, I voted for you twice. I'm so glad you're in the office. It's the new era and in this situation, I'm glad you're the president. And thank you for bringing me home. And I've never been so proud to be an American citizen." The caretaker cabinet continued its work without a final decision on its status, but some changes were made in its composition; among them, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Deputy Political Prime Minister, was appointed as acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation. Zabiullah Mujahid said regarding this: "The reshuffle in the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and the appointment of respected Mawlawi Abdul Kabir as acting Minister of Refugees is a normal process and has been done to improve affairs. This is not something new for Islamic Emirate officials." The fourth year of the Islamic Emirate's rule was a year between consolidating power internally and seeking legitimacy externally. On one hand, there was official recognition from Russia, upgrading relations with regional countries, and participation in international meetings; on the other, the continued uncertainty over the formation of a permanent cabinet and the fate of the constitution.

Returnee women find hope in Jawzjan sewing workshop



S H E B E R G H A N (Pajhwok): A woman entrepreneur in Sheberghan City, the capital of Jawzjan, has established a sewing workshop for dozens of returnee women from Iran, providing them with employment opportunities. She says that with support, she plans to expand

the workshop to employ even more women. In Banovan-i-Watan-dost (Women of the Patriotic Workshop), women are busy sewing—women who were forcibly expelled from Iran and returned to their homeland amid poverty and uncertainty. Now, with needle in

hand and hope in their hearts, they have decided to rebuild their lives. Fareshta Mohammadi, the head of this workshop, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the workshop was established to support women expelled from Iran and women in need. According to her, 60

women are currently working in the workshop in sewing, beadwork and embroidery. Mohammadi has called on international organizations and partner institutions to cooperate with and support her in expanding this workshop and creating more job opportunities for returnee women. She added: "I have personally witnessed many women struggling to make a living due to lack of income. I decided, with the little capital I have, to do something that will both help them and allow us to preserve our traditional and artistic skills." Several women and girls working in this workshop share similar stories: the pain of expulsion, loss of property and now their efforts to rebuild their lives. Mina, a 15-year-old girl who was expelled from Iran with her six-member

family, says she lost her home, education and schooling in a single day after living in Iran for years. She added: "Now, sitting behind the sewing machine with hope for a new future, I want to rebuild my life. In Iran, I was in grade eight, and in one day, I lost everything. We returned to the country empty-handed, but now I want to learn a trade and become self-sufficient." Expressing happiness about the creation of this employment opportunity in Sheberghan, she said that although she returned to the country empty-handed, she hopes that through sewing and beadwork, she can at least help meet her family's basic needs. Meanwhile, Zuhail, another 23-year-old woman working in the sewing workshop, says: "Before coming to this

workshop, I was idle at home. Now, I am grateful to be working. Learning a trade in these circumstances can make us girls self-reliant and give us a bright future." She added that having suffered from unemployment and economic hardship, she had developed depression, but now her economic problems have also decreased. She calls on aid organizations and the government to provide more opportunities for women and supply them with raw materials so that their production can double. Similarly, Zainab, one of the instructors in the sewing workshop, welcomed the establishment of the workshop and said she can now earn a lawful living for her family through this work. Having recently

returned from Iran and having faced economic challenges, she considers the creation of this workshop a positive step toward improving the lives of impoverished families. She added: "I am a housewife with seven children, and I contribute to the household economy. I am very happy and satisfied with my work. Through this, I can support my husband, and I ask the Islamic Emirate officials to allow other women to work as well. Through sewing, I earn a little income that I spend on the house and my children." She added: "Most of the women in this workshop are returnees from Iran who are widows and impoverished. We need modern machines and raw materials. If provided, we can double our production and enroll more students in this workshop."

Meanwhile, Latifa Sarwarzada, head of the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Jawzjan province, reports a significant increase in women's workshops in the province. She says the chamber, in coordination with government institutions, is working to develop women in trade and investment. She states that currently, about 200 workshops are active in the city and districts of Jawzjan, with 100 workshops registered under the Women's Chamber of Commerce, employing around 3,500 women. These workshops operate in sewing, carpet weaving, agriculture, livestock, and cooking. She believes that expanding these initiatives will not only improve family economies but also highlight the role of women in society.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a review meeting on Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Centre.

Trump-Putin summit yields no deal on ending war in Ukraine

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (Reuters): A highly anticipated summit between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin yielded no agreement to resolve or pause Moscow's war in Ukraine, though both leaders described the talks as productive.

Fox News interview, Trump also suggested a meeting would now be set up between Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, which he might also attend. He gave no further details on who was organizing the meeting or when it might be. Putin made no mention of meeting

and to the closely watched summit was in stark contrast to the pomp and circumstance with which it began. When Putin arrived at an Air Force base in Alaska, a red carpet awaited him, where Trump greeted Putin warmly as US military aircraft flew overhead.

Putin is wanted by the International Criminal Court, accused of the war crime of deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine. Russia denies the allegations, and the Kremlin has dismissed the ICC warrant as null and void. Russia and the United States are not members of the court. The day before the summit, Putin held out the prospect of something Trump wants - a new nuclear arms control agreement to replace the last surviving one, which is due to expire in February. It was unclear if the issue was discussed on Friday.

Zelenskyy, who was not invited to Alaska, and his European allies had feared Trump might sell out Ukraine by essentially freezing the conflict and recognizing - if only informally - Russian control over one-fifth of Ukraine. Trump had sought to assuage such concerns on Friday ahead of the talks, saying he would let Ukraine decide on any possible territorial concessions. "I'm not here to negotiate for Ukraine, I'm here to get them at a table," he said.

Asked what would make the meeting a success, he told reporters: "I want to see a ceasefire rapidly ... I'm not going to be happy if it's not today ... I want the killing to stop." The meeting also included US Secretary of State Marco Rubio; Trump's special envoy to Russia, Steve Witkoff; Russian foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov; and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Trump, who said during his presidential campaign that he would end the Ukraine war within 24 hours, conceded on Thursday it had proven a tougher task than he had expected. He had said if Friday's talks went well, quickly arranging a second, three-way summit with Zelenskyy would be more important than his encounter with Putin.

Trump ended his remarks on Friday by telling Putin, "I'd like to thank you very much, and we'll speak to you very soon and probably see you again very soon." "Next time in Moscow," Putin responded. Trump said he might "get a little heat on that one" but that he could "possibly see it happening."

Zelenskyy said ahead of Friday's summit that the meeting should open the way for a "just peace" and three-way talks that included him, but added that Russia was continuing to wage war. "It's time to end the war, and the necessary steps must be taken by Russia. We are counting on America," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram.

Zelenskyy when speaking to reporters earlier. He said he expected Ukraine and its European allies to accept the results of the US-Russia negotiation constructively and not try to "disrupt the emerging progress." He also repeated Moscow's long-held position that what Russia claims to be the "root causes" of the conflict must be eliminated to reach a long-term peace, a sign he remains resistant to a ceasefire.

There was no immediate reaction from Kyiv to the summit, the first meeting between Putin and a US president since the war began. When asked by Hannity what he would advise Zelenskyy, Trump said, "Gotta make a deal." "Look, Russia is a very big power, and they're not," Trump added. The war has killed or injured well over a million people from both sides, including thousands of mostly Ukrainian civilians, according to analysts.

Zelenskyy has ruled out formally handing Moscow any territory and is also seeking a security guarantee backed by the United States. Trump said he would call Zelenskyy and NATO leaders to update them on the Alaska talks. As the two leaders were talking, the war raged on, with most eastern Ukrainian regions under air raid alerts. Governors of Russia's Rostov and Bryansk regions reported that some of their territories were under Ukrainian drone attacks.

Ukraine's opposition lawmaker Oleksiy Honcharenko said on the Telegram messaging app, "It seems Putin has bought himself more time. No ceasefire or de-escalation has been agreed upon." The anticlimactic

Operations in Balochistan target only terrorists: DG ISPR

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Director General of Inter Services Public Relations Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said that ongoing counter-terrorism operations in Balochistan are not aimed at harming innocent citizens but are focused on eliminating terrorists and their facilitators.

He made these remarks during an interactive session with students from Balochistan as part of the ISPR internship program. The discussion covered various aspects of Pakistan's security and development, with special emphasis on Balochistan. Responding to questions, the DG ISPR highlighted that abandoning an area did not resolve problems, stressing that true success is only possible with active participation of local communities.

He appreciated the sacrifices and resilience of the people of Balochistan, noting that youth, women, and children are increasingly playing a central role in shaping their future. Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif underlined that Pakistan is founded on unity and shared faith, and despite linguistic diversity, the people of Balochistan remain dedicated to serving the country.

He added that the province's residents clearly understand the importance of their bond with Pakistan. The session also reflected on the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces, including the services of Major Muhammad Anwar Kakar, while discussing the ongoing struggle against terrorism. The DG ISPR emphasized that lasting peace in Balochistan can only be achieved through cooperation between the public, local leadership, and the administration.

NDMA urges tourism curbs in hilly areas

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Amid heightened risks of landslides and flash floods during the ongoing monsoon season, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a public advisory urging citizens to avoid travel to hilly and disaster-affected regions.

Following directives from the Prime Minister, NDMA has instructed relevant authorities to take immediate action to restrict tourism activities in vulnerable areas. Law enforcement agencies in tourist zones have been directed to ensure strict implementation of the new restrictions.

According to NDMA, public movement in high-risk areas must be curtailed during active monsoon spells to safeguard lives and support emergency response efforts. The advisory also notes that Section 144 may be enforced, if necessary, to impose tourism curbs and maintain public safety. Citizens have been urged to remain vigilant, avoid non-essential travel, and stay informed through verified official channels.

Severe weather across Gilgit-Baltistan and adjoining northern regions has caused extensive disruption to transport infrastructure, prompting urgent travel advisories. The National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has advised the public to avoid travel to northern areas, citing widespread road closures, landslides, and flood damage.

Several key routes have been rendered impassable. The Somro Bridge in Ghanche, the Saltoro Bridge and the Baghicha Bridge in Skardu have sustained significant damage and are currently unusable. The Jaglot-Skardu Road remains completely suspended, while roads at Dayan, Thali Baroq, and Kalti in Ghizer are fully blocked. Access to Gilgit, Jaglot, Guru, and Naltar has also been cut off. In addition, the Gilgit-Hunza corridor, including Gulmit and Gojal, and the Babusar Top route are entirely shut down. The NDMA has warned of the continued risk of flooding and landslides in Torgarh, Battagram, Shangla, Lower Kohistan, Tata Pani, Gilgit, Hunza, and Swat.

Pakistan's new remote sensing satellite reaches orbit

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SPARCO) expert sources here on Saturday confirmed that Pakistan's new remote sensing satellite has successfully reached orbit and is operational with excellent performance.

SPARCO has confirmed the successful deployment and operational readiness of the country's advanced remote sensing satellite. The satellite was launched from Xichang Satellite Launch Center (XSLC) in China on July 31, 2025.

After the successful launch, the satellite has established stable communication with ground stations and has started acquiring high-resolution images and sending them to the ground. This will enable the availability of data for various national sectors. It is worth mentioning here that this satellite has high-quality imaging capabilities that will revolutionize urban planning, infrastructure development and regional planning, while also helping to monitor urban sprawl and development trends.

It will strengthen the natural disaster prevention



system and enable rapid response by providing timely data for floods, landslides, earthquakes and other hazards. The satellite will also play a role in environmental protection, such as monitoring glacier melting, deforestation and climate change indicators. The satellite will also help improve agricultural production, the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission expert sources further said.

Meanwhile, it will also play a key role in national development projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), mapping transport networks, identifying geo-

hazards and enabling effective use of resources. They said that these capabilities will not only improve decision-making in various sectors but also strengthen sustainable socio-economic development and technological autonomy of Pakistan. This remarkable achievement highlights Pakistan's progress in space-based technologies and Suparco's commitment to strengthening national infrastructure. Moreover, it will not only help achieve self-reliance in space science but also provide new opportunities for development, sustainability and informed decision-making in key sectors, sources added.

Pakistan committed to boost ties with BD: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that Pakistan was committed to further strengthening cooperation with Bangladesh in political, economic and cultural fields.

During a meeting with Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohammad Iqbal Hussain Khan, the two sides discussed bilateral relations, regional situation, promotion of media cooperation. Expressing satisfaction over the growing relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, he said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with Bangladesh. Pakistan has given a new dimension to relations with Bangladesh through high-level visits and cultural

cooperation, he maintained. "Cooperation in the media sector is very important to bring the people of Pakistan and Bangladesh closer to each other," Attaullah Tarar said. The minister said that collaboration in film, drama and digital media would not only bring the people of both countries closer but also promote a positive narrative in the region.

Bangladesh High Commissioner Mohammad Iqbal Yunus reiterated his desire to strengthen bilateral relations and said that Pakistan and Bangladesh's historical bonds of friendship would always maintain. In the meeting, both sides agreed to continue positive progress in Pakistan-Bangladesh relations.

Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen

Jan and Principal Information Officer Mubashir Hassan were also present during the meeting. Meanwhile, Federal

Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar on Saturday appreciated the services of his media coordinator Tasawar Arafat Chaudhry during stand off with India.

"Behind every successful strategy is the hand of the entire team", he said in a post on his X account. The minister said that the way the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting fought the narrative war during the Marka-e-Haq, there was the effort of several persons behind the achievement. He said that Tasawar Arafat was one of those who worked hard and played a significant role in making the strategy successful. He appreciated his services.

KP govt releases Rs3b for flood-affected areas

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan made a telephonic contact with the Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Finance Muzammil Aslam and expressed sorrow over the loss of lives and properties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to the recent flood situation.

In a statement issued by the office of the Advisor to the KP Chief Minister on finance and interprovincial coordination Muzammil Aslam, it was said that the Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan assured his support during this difficult time and stated that the federal government stands shoul-

der to shoulder with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in this moment of grief and hardship.

Muzammil Aslam stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government will leave no stone unturned in the rehabilitation of its people. On the other hand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Advisor Muzammil Aslam said that, on the directions of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provincial Finance department has released approximately 3 billion rupees in funds for relief and rehabilitation.

Muzammil Aslam said that 1.56 billion rupees have been released to the Communication and Works

department for the repair of roads, bridges, and highways affected by the floods. He further said that 1 billion rupees had already been released to the Relief and PDMA (Provincial Disaster Management Authority), and an additional 500 million rupees were issued to Relief and PDMA on August 13 for the flood-affected areas.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Advisor stated that provincial authorities are also assessing the damage to infrastructure and the financial impact on the economy. Muzammil Aslam said that the provincial government is actively taking steps to provide further relief and carry out rehabilitation efforts.

US suspends visas for Gaza residents

WASHINGTON: The United States has announced that it is halting all visitor visas for people from Gaza pending a "full and thorough" review, a day after social media posts about Palestinian refugees sparked furious reactions from right-wingers.

The Department of State's move on Saturday came a day after far-right activist and Trump ally Laura Loomer posted on X that Palestinians "who claim to be refugees from Gaza" entered the US via San Francisco and Houston this month. "How is allowing for Islamic immigrants to come into the US America First policy?" she said on X in a later post, going on to report further Palestinian arrivals in Missouri and claiming that "several US Senators and members of Congress" had texted her to express their fury.

Republican lawmakers speaking publicly about the matter included Chip Roy of Texas, who said he would inquire about the matter, and Randy Fine of Florida, who described the alleged arrivals as a "national security risk". By Saturday, the State Department announced it was stopping visas for "individuals from Gaza" while it conducted "a full and thorough review of the process and procedures used to issue a small number of temporary medical-humanitarian visas in recent days".

The US issued 640 visas to holders of the Palestinian Authority travel document in May, according to the Reuters news agency. B1/B2 visitor visas permit Palestinians to seek medical treatment in the US. Loomer greeted Saturday's State

Department announcement with glee.

"It's amazing how fast we can get results from the Trump administration," she said on Saturday, though she later posted that more needed to be done to "highlight the crisis of the invasion happening in our country".

The decision to cut visas comes as Israel intensifies its attacks on Gaza, where at least 61,827 people have been killed in the past 22 months, with the United Nations warning that "widespread starvation, malnutrition and disease" are driving a rise in famine-related deaths. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been pushing to seize Gaza City as part of a takeover of the Strip, forcibly displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to concentration zones. — Aljazeera

China's top diplomat to visit India

BEIJING (AFP): China's top diplomat will visit India next week for talks about their shared boundary, Beijing's foreign ministry said on Saturday, as the two countries eye resuming border trade five years after halting it.

"From August 18 to 20 ... (Chinese foreign minister) Wang Yi will upon invitation visit India and hold the 24th special representatives meeting on the China-India border issue," a spokesperson said in a statement. Past trade between the neighbours across icy and high-altitude Himalayan border passes was usually small in volume, but any resumption is significant for its symbolism. It stopped following a deadly 2020 clash between border troops. Indian media had reported earlier in the week that China's Wang was expected for talks in New Delhi on Monday. His Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, visited Beijing in July. The two major economic powers have long competed for strategic influence across South Asia.

However, caught in global trade and geopolitical turbulence triggered by US President Donald Trump's tariff regime, they have moved to mend ties. In recent weeks, Chinese and Indian officials have said the two countries were discussing resuming border trade.

UK to prosecute more people for backing Palestinians

LONDON: London's Metropolitan Police say at least 60 people will face prosecution for "showing support" for Palestine Action, the activist group outlawed as a "terrorist organisation" last month for protesting Israel's genocide in Gaza. Three others have already been charged.

"We have put arrangements in place that will enable us to investigate and prosecute significant numbers each week if necessary," the force said in a statement. Since the controversial ban on July 7, more than 700 people have been detained at peaceful protests, including 522 arrested at a protest last weekend for holding signs backing the group, believed to be the largest number of arrests at a single protest in the capital's history.

Critics, including the United Nations, Amnesty International and Greenpeace, have called the ban an overreach that risks stifling free speech.

Director of Public Prosecutions Stephen Parkinson said the latest decisions were the "first significant numbers" from recent demonstrations, adding: "Many more can be expected in the next few weeks. People should be clear about the real-life consequences for anyone choosing to support Palestine Action."

The UK's Equality and

Arab, Islamic FMs flays 'Greater Israel' remark

RIYADH: The foreign ministers of Arab and Muslim nations on Saturday denounced statements about a "Greater Israel" that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was reported to have made in the wake of pronouncements by his far-right allies to annex Palestinian territories.

In a joint statement the ministers said the pronouncements by Netanyahu and his ministers were "a blatant and dangerous violation" of international law. "They also constitute a direct threat to Arab national security, to the sovereignty of states, and to regional and international peace and security," said the statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency. Signatories of the document included the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkiye, the UAE, and Yemen. Also included were the secretaries-general of the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. — Arab News

Human Rights Commission has also warned against a "heavy-handed" approach, urging the government and police to ensure protest policing is proportionate and guided by clear legal tests. The initial three prosecutions earlier this month stemmed from arrests during a July demonstration, with defendants charged under the Terrorism Act. Police said convictions for such offences could carry sentences of up to six months in prison, along with other penalties.

Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mark

Rowley praised the rapid coordination between officers and prosecutors, saying he was "proud of how our police and CPS teams have worked so speedily together to overcome misguided attempts to overwhelm the justice system". Yvette Cooper defended the Labour government's decision to proscribe Palestine Action, stating: "UK national security and public safety must always be our top priority. The assessments are very clear, this is not a non-violent organisation." — Aljazeera