

**JUI-F leader assassinated**  
**F.P. Report**

CHAGHI: A local leader of the JUI-F, Molvi Kaleemullah, was shot dead by unknown attackers in Balochistan's Chaghi district on Monday. The incident occurred in the Chaghi area, with the perpetrators fleeing the scene after the attack. The victim's remains were transported to a local medical facility for necessary procedures and subsequently released to his family.

**Rana to contest for Senate**  
**F.P. Report**

SIALKOT: PML-N senior leader and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Inter-Provincial Coordination, Rana Sanaullah, will contest the Senate by-election for the vacant general seat from Punjab. In a statement, Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said: "(PML-N Supremo) Nawaz Sharif has awarded the Senate general seat ticket from the Punjab Assembly to Sanaullah."



SHANGLA: Residents walking on a makeshift crossway made of wooden planks over rain water flowing from mountains crossing a damaged area, following a storm that caused heavy rains and flooding in Gambat Puran area. — F.P. photo

# PM pledges full support for KP flood victims

## — announces cabinet’s one-month salary

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday pledged the federal government's complete support for flood-hit communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, announcing the donation of one month's salary from the federal cabinet to aid relief efforts.

Chairing a meeting to review ongoing relief efforts by federal government in flood affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the prime minister directed the federal institutions to intensify efforts to assist rain and flood-affected people in various districts of KP.

"In this hour of calamity, there is no federal or provincial government; we must ensure the assistance and rehabilitation of affected people," the prime minister said adding that "Helping our distressed Pakistani brothers and sisters is our national responsibility". He said this was not a time for politics but for service and healing the wounds of the people.

The prime minister stressed that the federal government will also provide financial assistance to the families of the deceased and affected individuals under the Prime Minister's relief package. Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan will oversee relief and rehabilitation operations in affected areas while the relevant federal ministers will personally monitor the restoration of electricity, water, roads, and other facilities in affected areas, the prime minister added.

Furthermore, he also instructed all relevant federal ministers to visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan in person. The prime minister directed the National

Highway Authority (NHA) not to differentiate between provincial or national highways; and opening routes for relief must be the top priority.

He also ordered Ministry of Communications, NHA, and FWO to ensure repair of highways and bridges in affected areas. "Minister for Communications should personally oversee rehabilitation operations." The prime minister also directed Minister for Power to visit affected areas, inspect, and prioritize restoration of the electricity system, adding that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) should immediately submit a final assessment of damages.

"NDMA should present a comprehensive plan for the distribution of relief items to flood victims in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," the prime minister said stressing the Ministry of Finance to provide necessary resources to NDMA. The prime minister further directed all the relevant federal ministers to remain in affected areas until the last person received assistance and basic infrastructure was restored.

Ministry of Health should send medicines and medical teams to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and establish medical camps while Benazir Income Support Programme should be mobilized to assist the affected, the prime minister instructed. During the meeting, the prime minister and other participants prayed for the departed souls and speedy recovery of the injured.

The meeting was briefed on the ongoing relief activities by NDMA and federal ministers designated by the prime minister. It was informed that the federal government, provincial governments, Pakistan Army, and

other institutions had established 456 relief camps and conducted 400 rescue operations so far.

The meeting was told that relief trucks carrying essential items were being dispatched, while the prime minister directed that convoys be prioritized for the hardest-hit areas. According to the preliminary estimates, damages to public and private property exceeded around Rs 126 million.

NDMA presented a report on the provision of rations, tents, medicines, medical teams, and other essentials, with the prime minister directing an increase in the quantity of relief items. The meeting was informed that the monsoon season will continue until the second week of September, with six major spells already passed and two more expected, with effects lasting until the last week of September.

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam briefed on the situation in Swat, Minister for Power Sardar Awais Khan Leghari on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Special Assistant Mubarak Zeb on Bajaur, NHA Chairman on Malakand, and Secretary Communications on Gilgit. Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yusuf, Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Watto, Dr. Musadik Malik, and other officials updated the meeting on relief activities as per the prime minister's instructions.

The meeting was also attended by Federal Ministers Khawaja Asif, Ahsan Iqbal, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, NDMA Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, Prime Minister's Chief Coordinator Musharraf Zaidi, and other senior officials.

## Varsity lecturer swept away in Rawalakot flash floods

**F.P. Report**

RAWALAKOT: Dr Gul Lalah, a lecturer at Poonch University, was swept away along with her car near Tarar Campus, Rawalakot. According to officials, Dr Lalah's vehicle became stuck as the water level surged near Poonch University's Tarar Campus, and the powerful current dragged both the car and the driver downstream.

The lecturer, a resident of Khadak, a suburban area of Rawalakot, could not be traced immediately after the accident. Rescue teams, supported by local authorities, have launched an extensive search operation to recover the missing academic. However, officials noted that strong currents and rising water levels are making rescue efforts increasingly difficult.

Meanwhile, in Athmuqam (capital of Neelum Valley), another tragic accident occurred when a car plunged into the Neelum River, killing at least five people on board. Police confirmed that the accident was caused by slippery roads and low visibility during heavy rainfall.

Authorities in Bagh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, have ordered the temporary closure of all schools and other educational institutions following a high flood alert issued by the Meteorological Department.

According to an official notification, both public and private schools across the district will remain closed on August 18 and 19, 2025 as a precautionary measure to safeguard students and staff. The Met Office has forecast heavy rainfall and thunderstorms in several districts, including Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Bagh, Haveli, Kotli, Mirpur, and Bhimber, over the coming days. It cautioned that the weather conditions may trigger flash flooding and landslides, particularly in hilly areas. In addition, the department warned of heavy to very heavy rain, fall in Islamabad within the next 24 hours, with brief intervals in between. Officials said the closure of schools in Bagh was a necessary step to reduce risks as the region braces for the impact of the ongoing monsoon spell.

Temperature of major cities recorded this morning: Islamabad twenty-six degree centigrade, Lahore and Peshawar twenty-eight, Karachi twenty-nine, Quetta and Gilgit twenty-one, Murree seventeen and Muzaffarabad twenty-three degree centigrade.

According to the weather forecast for Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, cloudy weather with chances of rain and wind with thunder-shower is expected in Srinagar, Jammu, Leh, Pulwama, Anantnag, Shopian and Baramula.

# Fresh monsoon spell 15 dead as cloudburst devastates Swabi

## 380 people died in KP flooding as 354 cases of waterborne diseases reported

**F.P. Report**

SWABI: Another powerful spell of the monsoon season has gripped Pakistan, lashing several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with torrential rains. In Swabi, a devastating cloudburst killed at least 15 people and injured many others, with fears that the death toll may rise.

According to police, the cloudburst in Darwodi submerged dozens of houses, forcing residents to seek refuge on rooftops. Over 70 stranded people were rescued from floodwaters. In Swabi's Razaar, Lahore, and Topi tehsils, floodwater entered homes, trapping many families. Landslides were also reported in hilly areas, while a school wall collapsed in Tordher and an entire van was submerged.

Deputy Commissioner Swabi confirmed widespread damage, saying rescue teams from Haripur and Mardan had been deployed. In Nowshera, a house roof collapse killed a couple, while in Peshawar, heavy downpours caused drains to overflow and inundated major roads and markets. In Swat's upper regions, streams overflowed after continuous rains. Haripur's flash floods cut off the Karakoram Highway and swept away bridges and trees, leaving traffic suspended.

Meanwhile, flash floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has claimed the lives of 380 people, and dozens are still missing, said Provincial Disasters Management Authority here Monday.

In its report, the PDMA said the death toll from recent rains and floods has reached 380 in past two days, while 295 people injured. The highest number of missing persons of 150 were reported from

## Pakistan Army's flood relief operation continues

**F.P. Report**

BUNER: The flood relief operation by Pakistan Army in Buner, Swat, Shangla and Bajaur continues for the fourth consecutive day on Monday despite heavy rains. Ration and other relief goods are being distributed among flood victims through Pakistan Army's helicopters, while people are also being shifted to safer places. The contingents of Pakistan Army Engineers Corps are engaged in opening roads and removing the debris. The Urban Search and Rescue teams of the Corps of Engineers are also busy in retrieving the injured and bodies from the rubble.

The doctors of Pakistan Army are providing medical treatment to the patients free of cost in the medical camps that have been set up in the affected areas. Pakistan Army troops are also engaged in relief operations in flood and landslide affected districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. The Army Engineer's Corps and FWO are busy to open roads that were blocked due to land sliding. The Islamabad-Gilgit Highway via Babusar Top has been reopened, while Hunza Road, which heads towards Estiqwar and China, Deosai Road, and Jaglot-Skardu Road, except Estiq Bridge, have also been reopened for traffic.

Buner district. Among the deceased are 279 men, 15 women, and 13 children. Overall, 74 houses were damaged including 11 completely destroyed and 63 partially damaged.

In Pir Baba Buner, over 400 schoolchildren were safely rescued. In Mingora, Swat, multiple homes were flattened by flooding. There is debris several feet high, with large boulders scattered, and many residents have been left homeless. Meanwhile, relief operations continue in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Evacuations from flood-hit areas to safer locations are underway, while helicopters are delivering food and other relief supplies.

In addition to the large-scale loss of lives and property due to the recent devastating rains and floods, health services in the province have also been affected. So far, 289 medical camps have been set up in the affected areas, where 5,627 patients treated in the last 24 hours. Most of these patients are children, women, and the elderly. Health facilities were severely impacted by the floods. Twenty-one hospitals have been partially damaged, and one hospital has been completely destroyed, making it difficult to provide medical aid.

So far, 354 cases of infectious diseases have been reported in health facilities, with the highest number in Swat. These include 194 cases of respiratory illness, 140 cases of diarrhea, 8 cases of scabies, and 8 cases of bloody diarrhea or dysentery. However, no deaths have been reported due to infectious diseases yet.

According to the report, 26 patients were reported in Bajaur, most suffering from respiratory issues and diarrhea. Swat remains the most affected district, with 354 public health cases reported.

# KP CM reviews relief efforts in flood-hit areas

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur chaired a high-level meeting on Monday to review relief and rehabilitation efforts in flood-hit districts. The meeting was attended by the Finance Adviser, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), administrative secretaries, and PDMA officials.

Officials briefed the Chief Minister on the scale of damages, rescue operations, immediate relief measures, and medium-term response in the effected areas. It was reported that flood emergencies have been declared in nine districts, with the Chief Secretary personally overseeing relief and recovery efforts. District administrations, Rescue 1122, police, communication and works, local government, and other agencies are actively engaged on the ground.

The provincial government has released Rs. 1.5 billion for relief activities and another Rs. 1.5 billion for restoring damaged infrastructure. Additional staff and medical teams have been deployed in affected districts. It was informed that so far, 100 damaged roads have been cleared with heavy machinery, over 23,000 ready-to-eat food packs have been distributed, and essential items including 2,860 tents, 6,100 mattresses, 2,700 hygiene kits, 4,300 kitchen sets, 3,100 tarpaulins, 7,400 mosquito nets, 6,800 blankets, and 500 gas cylinders have been delivered. Mobile medical units are operational, with two mobile hospitals dispatched to Buner. Emergency control rooms have been set up,

## Gandapur donate one-month salary to flood victims

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has announced to donate his one-month salary to support victims of the recent floods across the province. He has further decided that members of the provincial cabinet will contribute 15 days' salary, while members of the provincial assembly will donate seven days' salary for the flood affectees. Similarly, government employees from Grade-17 and above will give two days' salary, and those from Grade-1 to 16 will contribute one day's salary toward relief efforts. To ensure transparency, the Chief Minister directed that a special account be established in the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), with a clear and accountable mechanism for disbursing the funds. He assured that every rupee would be properly accounted for and details would be shared with the public. "The flood-affected people deserve our utmost attention and support," Gandapur said. "In this difficult time, all of us must come forward generously to help them."

## Pakistan, UK to boost ties

LONDON: Pakistan and the United Kingdom have reaffirmed their dedication to strengthening their collaboration across various sectors, including politics, economics, climate change, and cultural exchanges. This commitment was made during a meeting between Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and the UK's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, Rt. Hon Hamish Falconer, at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in London on Monday.

The two officials conducted a comprehensive review of bilateral ties and discussed regional and international affairs. Dar emphasized Pakistan's dedication to economic reforms and shared the nation's viewpoint on regional developments, particularly peace and stability in South Asia. He also underscored the significance of a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in line with UN Security Council resolutions. — Agencies

# Hamas accepts new Gaza truce plan

GAZA (AFP): Hamas has accepted a new ceasefire proposal for Gaza without requesting amendments, a source from the group told AFP Monday, after a fresh diplomatic push to end more than 22 months of war. Mediators Egypt and Qatar, backed by the United States, have struggled to secure a lasting truce in the conflict, which has triggered a dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

But after receiving a new proposal from mediators, Hamas said it was ready for talks. "Hamas has delivered its response to the mediators, confirming that Hamas and the factions agreed to the new ceasefire proposal without requesting any amendments," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Israel has yet to respond.

A Palestinian source familiar with the talks said mediators were "expected to announce that an agreement has been reached and set a date for the resumption of talks", adding that guarantees were offered to ensure implementation and pursue a permanent solution. Another Palestinian official earlier said mediators had proposed an initial 60-day truce and

hostage release in two batches. The proposal comes more than a week after Israel's security cabinet approved plans to expand the war into Gaza City and nearby refugee camps, which has sparked international outcry as well as domestic opposition.

An Islamic Jihad source told AFP the plan envisaged a 60-day ceasefire "during which 10 Israeli hostages would be released alive, along with a number of bodies". Out of 251 hostages taken during Hamas's October 2023 attack, 49 are still held in Gaza, including 27 the Israeli military says are dead. The Islamic Jihad source said "the remaining captives would be released in a second phase", with negotiations for a broader settlement to follow. They added that "all factions are supportive" of the Egyptian and Qatari proposal.

US President Donald Trump wrote on Truth Social: "We will only see the return of the remaining hostages when Hamas is confronted and destroyed!!!" "The sooner this takes place, the better the chances of success will be." Last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel "will agree to an agreement in which all the hostages

are released at once and according to our conditions for ending the war".

Meanwhile, in a now familiar scene in Gaza, AFP footage from the southern city of Khan Yunis showed crowds of mourners kneeling over the shrouded bodies of their loved ones who were killed seeking aid the day before. Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, visiting the Rafah border crossing with Gaza on Monday, said Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani was visiting "to consolidate our existing common efforts in order to apply maximum pressure on the two sides to reach a deal as soon as possible".

Alluding to the dire humanitarian conditions for the more than two million people living in the Gaza Strip, where UN agencies and aid groups have warned of famine, Abdelatty stressed the urgency of reaching an agreement. "The current situation on the ground is beyond imagination," he said. Egypt said on Monday it was willing to join a potential international force deployed to Gaza, but only if backed by a UN Security Council resolution and accompanied by a "political horizon".

while dewatering pumps are being used to clear waterlogged areas. Rescue 1122 has successfully evacuated more than 5,000 people, and emergency relief camps have been established in severely affected districts.

The meeting was apprised that compensation for fatalities and injuries is being disbursed in the first phase, while surveys are underway to assess property, livestock, and business losses. The Chief Minister directed that all compensation payments be completed swiftly and that surveys be finalized with accurate data collection. He emphasized replacing food handouts with cash support so victims can meet their own urgent needs, stressing that payments will be made through a transparent, NADRA-verified mechanism.

Gandapur also ordered that district administrations face no shortage of funds and that resources be made available

immediately when required. Praising officials for their efforts, he urged them to further accelerate relief work. "Timely relief and early rehabilitation of affected people are our top priorities, and the provincial government will mobilize all available resources for this purpose," he said.

**KP govt launches digital payment system for flood affectees:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government launched a special mobile app based digital payment system to ensure transparent and timely compensation payments to flood victims.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally launched the digital payment system on Monday. The new app, called Digital Disaster Compensation Management, was rapidly developed by the KP Information Technology Board and has been integrated with the government's central service delivery platform "Dastak."





KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a rain emergency preparedness meeting at CM House.

## Pak-Afghan journalists attend training on constructive journalism

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A three-day workshop for Pak-Afghan journalists on Constructive Journalism and usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in professional work to uplift their capabilities and improve digital skills, on Monday.

A comprehensive training session on Constructive Journalism was conducted for a group of Pakistani and Afghan journalists, focusing on the principles and practices of this emerging approach to storytelling. The training aimed to equip journalists with the skills and knowledge necessary to shift their focus from merely reporting problems to exploring solutions and promoting positive change.

The participants gained a deep understanding of the core principles of Constructive Journalism, including its focus on solutions, impact, and engagement. The journalists learned effective storytelling techniques to present complex issues in a clear and engaging manner, highlighting solutions and positive developments.

The trainer Nighat Aman emphasized the importance of impact-driven reporting, where journalists consider the potential impact of their stories on audiences and society. The participants discussed the value of collaboration and engagement with stakeholders, including sources, audiences, and other journalists, to create more comprehensive and

impactful stories.

The training featured interactive sessions, including group discussions, case studies, and hands-on exercises, to engage participants and promote learning. The journalists shared their experiences and insights on Constructive Journalism.

The participants reported feeling more confident in their ability to apply Constructive Journalism principles in their reporting. They expressed a renewed commitment to focusing on solutions and positive developments in their stories.

The training emphasized the importance of ongoing support and collaboration among journalists to sustain the momentum and continue improving their

reporting practices. To encourage collaboration and networking among journalists to share best practices and support each other in applying Constructive Journalism principles.

By investing in Constructive Journalism training, journalists can develop the skills and knowledge necessary to create more impactful and engaging stories that promote positive change and solutions-oriented reporting.

Meanwhile, certificate of participations were distributed among the media professionals after conclusion of the training and several teams were formed for a task respectively in Constructive Journalism domain.

## PPP mobilizes relief efforts in flood-hit areas

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon, while expressing regret and deep concern over the rains, flooding, and loss of lives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir, said that the entire party is mobilized on the special instructions of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari.

On the directives of the

party leadership, workers and leaders are actively engaged in relief activities in the affected areas to ensure immediate support for the victims. He added that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and President Asif Ali Zardari have issued clear instructions that no family should be left without assistance.

He said that the PPP leadership and workers stand with the victims in this difficult time, and that during natural disasters, all provinces and regions should rise above politics and support one another.

In a statement, Senior

Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that thousands of families have been severely affected in the flood-hit areas, where houses and roads have been damaged and victims are in urgent need of assistance. He said that the federal and provincial governments, along with welfare organizations, should step forward to help the people and ensure the timely provision of food, medicine, clean water, and shelter.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government stands with its brothers and sisters in this difficult time and will extend

all possible support. He added that due to climate change, Pakistan is experiencing repeated natural disasters, and therefore all units must come together to formulate a common strategy to protect the lives and property of the people in the future.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the sympathies and good wishes of the Sindh government are with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir, and that everyone must demonstrate solidarity in this difficult time.

## HED mobilizes Staff for flood relief

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In view of the devastation caused by cloudbursts and flooding in various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Higher Education, Captain (R) Kamran Ahmad Afridi, has mobilized the HED staff to actively participate in relief operations in the affected areas.

On the directives of the provincial government, teachers, administrative and ministerial staff from higher education institutions Colleges and Universities across the province are voluntarily rendering their services to assist their distressed brothers and sisters in these flood-hit areas. These activities are being directly supervised by Secretary Higher Education, Captain (R) Kamran Ahmad Afridi.

Addressing the department's staff on Monday, he stated that the widespread loss of lives and property caused by cloudbursts, floods, and heavy rains is a national tragedy. In line with its long-standing tradition of public service and welfare during natural disasters and emergencies, the Higher Education Department is once again at the forefront of relief efforts for the affected people in this difficult time.

The Secretary further said that as a result of these natural calamities, many people have been forced to leave their homes in a state of helplessness. Therefore, wherever needed, the buildings of the Higher Education Department have been opened to provide shelter and assistance to the affected families. Moreover, the department is closely coordinating with the District Administration, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Rescue services, and other government agencies to play its role in ensuring the timely delivery of relief.

## Polio case reported in Badin, Sindh officials demand urgent action

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, and Chief Secretary Sindh, Asif Hyder Shah, have expressed deep concern over the reporting of a polio case in Union Council No. 2 of Matli, District Badin. The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) has officially confirmed the case. Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah contacted the Commissioner Hyderabad and directed him to submit a detailed report within 24 hours.

He stated that polio is an incurable disease, and the only effective protection against it is timely vaccination. He urged parents to ensure that their children receive polio drops without fail to safeguard them from lifelong disability. He further stated that the nationwide anti-polio campaign will commence on September 1\*, and parents must fulfill their national responsibility by actively participating.

The Chief Secretary emphasized that the success of the polio eradication campaign depends on the active role of parents, communities, and local leadership. He also highlighted that along with polio vaccination, completing the full schedule of other routine immunizations is equally essential for ensuring a healthy and safe future for children.

## DC monitors anti-dengue measures

LAHORE (APP): The district administration, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza, has intensified dengue prevention measures with comprehensive field surveillance operations to safeguard citizens.

During his visit to Tehsil Wahga, the Deputy Commissioner inspected dengue surveillance activities along Jallo Road and adjoining localities. He was accompanied by the Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Lahore, Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Assistant Commissioner Wahga, and CEO Health. The DC was briefed that standard operating procedures were being fully implemented in all operational areas.

On the spot, Syed Musa Raza directed immediate spraying in 10 surrounding houses wherever larvae were detected, ensuring robust containment. He stressed that the next four weeks are critical for dengue prevention and instructed surveillance teams to maintain maximum activity levels. The DC reiterated that protection of citizens' health is the foremost priority of the administration, but added that effective public cooperation is vital to completely eliminate dengue. He directed strict monitoring of all operations to ensure continuous vigilance and coordinated efforts across Lahore.

Meanwhile, the district administration has intensified monitoring of essential items to ensure price stability and availability. Prices of several vegetables including arvi, spinach and bottle gourd have declined, while rates of potatoes, onions, tomatoes, apples, bananas, apricots and grapes remain stable. DC Lahore warned profiteers and hoarders of strict action and directed registration of FIRs against repeated violators. Citizens have been urged to report complaints to the DC Control Room (0307-0002345) or through official social media platforms.

## PHCBA establishes relief camp for flood victims

### Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) has set up a relief camp at the Peshawar High Court to collect aid for flood victims in affected areas. The camp was established in accordance with a decision made by the Executive Council of the PHCBA, on Monday.

PHCBA president Amin ur Rehman Yousafzai, Secretary General Ashfaq Dawoodzai, and Vice President Arshad Ali Nowsherawi along with other cabinet members attended the camp. The lawyers actively participated in the camp, contributing donations to support the flood victims.

The primary objective of the relief camp is to collect aid for flood victims and alleviate their suffering. President Amin ur Rehman expressed deep sorrow over the devastation caused by floods and natural disasters, emphasizing that the Bar Association stands in solidarity with the affected communities. He assured that the legal fraternity would extend all possible support to the victims during this critical time.

The Bar Association has designated its office as a collection point for donations. Lawyers and members can contribute to the relief efforts by donating to the specified office or through a designated number.

President Amin ur Rehman urged all lawyers and Bar members to contribute to the relief efforts according to their capacity. He emphasized the importance of collective support in helping the flood victims and highlighted the Bar Association's commitment to standing with the affected communities.

## Sindh donates relief supplies for flood victims in KP

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sindh government delivered relief supplies to flood-affected families in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the Governor House, Peshawar, on Monday.

The delegation from Sindh included Provincial Minister for Rehabilitation Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman, Secretary Rehabilitation Sindh Akhtar Hussain Bugti, Director General Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh Salman Shah, and other officials.

The Sindh delegation was received by Pakistan Peoples Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial President Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, Vice Chairman of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Red Crescent Society Farzand Wazir, and Principal Secretary to the Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi.

A ceremony was held at the Governor House, Peshawar, to formally hand over the relief supplies. At the event, Sindh's Minister for



Rehabilitation, Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman, handed the supplies to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Red Crescent Society.

On the occasion, Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman said that, on the instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, relief goods had been sent to the flood-affected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He added that further assistance would also be provided.

He said that Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah is in constant contact with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi.

The provincial minister assured that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would not be left alone in this difficult time and would be provided with every possible support.

PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial President Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha thanked the Sindh government, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, President Asif Ali Zardari, and the people of Sindh for their immediate assistance.

A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed between the Sindh Rehabilitation Department and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Red Crescent Society. The relief supplies, which include 100 water filtration plant units and 4,000 ration bags, will be distributed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Red Crescent Society to flood-affected families in Buner and other parts of the province.

## Murad Shah reviews law & order in kutcha area, orders ruthless operation against dacoits

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, presiding over a high-level meeting, said that the government's objective is to make the security situation in the katcha belt 'ideal' and directed police to stay vigilant.

"Kidnapping for ransom will not be tolerated under any circumstances," he said, adding that strict action must be taken to curb 'honey trap' crimes.

The meeting was held at the CM House and was attended by Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar, Chief Secretary Asif Haider Shah, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Principal Secretary Agha Wasif, and DIG Larkano.

The chief minister said that he wants the law & order situation in the katcha area of Sukkur and Larkana division to be perfect and directed police to stay vigilant, and he won't tolerate any kidnapping for ransom. "I want you to be ruthless against the dacoits and their facilitators so that no kidnapping for ransom case could take place.

Briefing the CM, the Home Minister Zai Lanjar and IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon informed that large-scale operations had been carried out in Ghotki and Shikarpur. They revealed that around 500 hide-outs of dacoits and their facilitators were destroyed. Between January 2024 and 2025, a total of 115 dacoits were killed, 208 were injured, and 582 were

arrested. The eight most-wanted outlaws were also eliminated.

The CM was told that 91 kidnapping cases were reported in 2025, out of which 88 abductees were safely recovered. Similarly, 287 victims of honey-trap abductions were rescued.

The Home Minister further informed that while highways were previously plagued by rampant robberies, the menace has now been eliminated. The CM said that all highways in the province must be made safe and secure. Murad Shah directed the Home Minister to ensure cutting of the weapons supply line to dacoits is disconnected. "How the sensitive weapons reach the dacoits in the kutch area is a question yet to be inquired.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah instructed the IG Police to ensure that criminal gangs are rooted out completely. "We have already prevented forced abductions and secured many hideouts. Now, we must finish the dacoits once and for all," he asserted.

**Murad Shah reviews Rs 78 bn Karachi, & Hyderabad's Major Development Projects:** Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over a meeting to review the Development Portfolio of the Local Government Department for the financial year 2025-26, which stands at Rs. 78.087 billion.

The CM said that Rs 78.087 billion is allocated for 765 development schemes - 696 ongoing schemes and 60 new schemes, including 16 carry-forward

schemes and 44 new schemes in the portfolio.

Additionally, Rs. 8288.680 million has been allocated for nine schemes included in the Mega Projects Karachi. He also reviewed mega development schemes of Karachi and Hyderabad, being undertaken by the Local Government Department.

The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Haider Shah, Principal Secretary Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Finance Secretary Fayaz Jatui, Local Government Secretary Waseem Shamsad and other senior officers.

The CM was told that this year's allocation is Rs 86,375.6 million, against which Rs 23,390.821 million have been released, while the utilisation is recorded at Rs1412.293 million. The overall progress on the ongoing schemes was reported at 7 per cent while the news schemes have been approved by the P&D recently.

**Development Schemes:** The CM was briefed that Karachi has six major development schemes worth Rs. 8.2 billion. These include the establishment of Allama Iqbal Park in the FB Area, the rehabilitation of Nehr-e-Khayam in District South, the construction of a sports complex in District Central, the reconstruction of

the Korangi Causeway, and road construction in Sachal Goth. Additionally, there are efforts to rehabilitate the drainage system in Manzoor Colony, stormwater drain projects including works on Thado Nallah, Mehran Drain, Malir River at N-5 Mughli Khana, and junction works on the Korangi Causeway at Shahrah-e-Bhutto.

The Chief Minister directed the Local Government Department to accelerate progress on these mega schemes, announcing that he would personally visit project sites soon. "We must speed up the implementation of Karachi's development projects," he said.

Karachi also has 13 new schemes planned for FY 2025-26, including development of old city areas and major business districts, rehabilitation of old KMC markets, road restoration from Check Post-4 (Malir Cantt) to M-9 Motorway, road construction from Check Post-3 to Shahrah-e-Bhutto, development of IB Soomro Avenue and Memon Mamar roads, construction of roads in Shah Faisal Colony, storm-water drain rehabilitation, link roads to Shahrah-e-Bhutto, new roads from Gulshan-e-Hadeed Mor to Allah Wali Chowrangi, from Hub River Road (Turi Bangash) to Ittehad Town, the Karachi Traffic Corridor Project, a fly-over crossing at Gujjar Nallah, construction on Sir Shah Suleman Road, Kidney Hill Park at the Bird Aviary site, develop-

ment of Gutter Baghicha as a public park, upgrades at various graveyards, construction of a hockey ground near Ziauddin Hospital in Nazimabad.

**Hyderabad Development Schemes:** The CM was also briefed on three new schemes for Hyderabad under the 2025-26 worth Rs4.4 billion, including a 23-inch diameter water supply scheme connecting the Combined Channel to a 6 MGD filtration plant at LTFBabad Unit-4, costing Rs. 1.2 billion, Construction of a 6 MGD Rapid Gravity Water Treatment Plant at Masri Goth, Qasimabad, with a cost of Rs. 2 billion and Establishment of a six-MGD Water Filtration Plant at Khanpota.

The Chief Minister instructed officials to start work immediately on these projects, emphasising that Hyderabad's road infrastructure had already been improved, and the completion of water and filtration schemes would resolve long-standing issues of the city.

**Murad puts local bodies, administration for expected monsoon onslaught in the city, other parts of the province:** Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, following the Pakistan Meteorological Department's forecast of imminent rainfall, chaired an emergency meeting to oversee preparations for the monsoon rains expected to impact Karachi and other parts of the province.

Mr Shah put all the local bod-

ies, administration and traffic police on high alert, and directed them to strengthen coordination between the relevant departments and organisations.

The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatui, Secretary Local Govt Waseem Shamsad, MC KMC Afzal Zaidi and others.

The CM focused on ensuring the city's infrastructure is ready to handle the anticipated downpour. Mayor Wahab briefed the Chief Minister on ongoing efforts to improve drainage systems at 44 Nullah's critical choking points across Karachi, with approximately 150 drains under the control of Towns undergoing cleaning to facilitate the smooth flow of rainwater.

The CM directed the Local Government Minister and the Mayor Karachi to take all necessary steps to minimise disruption and ensure the safety of our citizens. Mayor Murtaza Wahab told the CM that in addition to drainage improvements, 120 suction vehicles from the water board are strategically positioned in low-lying areas to clear any accumulated water quickly.

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) is also working closely with the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to secure additional machinery if needed, demonstrat-

ing a coordinated approach to disaster management.

Directing all relevant agencies to remain vigilant, the chief minister instructed local government bodies to maintain a fully mobilised presence during the rain spell. He emphasised the importance of proactive measures by the city administration and urged the traffic police to ensure smooth traffic flow, even in the event of heavy downpours.

"The provincial government is fully prepared to manage the rains, but constant vigilance and rapid response from all departments are crucial," Chief Minister Shah asserted. "Our priority is to protect our citizens and minimise any potential damage caused by the monsoon."

Residents are advised to stay informed about weather updates and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety during the anticipated rainfall. The Sindh government has established emergency contact points and is urging citizens to report any issues or concerns promptly.

Rain in Thar: While Karachi braces for potential challenges, Chief Minister Murad Shah highlighted the positive impact of recent rainfall in the Tharparkar region. "The heavy rainfall has replenished all local dams in Tharparkar, providing a vital source of water for the people," he noted. "This will significantly benefit local communities, particularly in agriculture and daily life," the CM concluded.





PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi talking to people during his visit to city area after heavy rain lashed provincial capital.

## Shakoor expresses sorrow over the loss of precious lives

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Expressing deep sorrow and concern over the loss of precious lives caused by the recent floods in the province, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour, Fazal Shakoor Khan, has said that the heavy rains and flash floods have wreaked havoc, leaving thousands of people displaced and causing severe damage to

roads and essential infrastructure. In a statement issued from his office, the provincial minister said that during this difficult time, the KP government and the labour department stand in full solidarity with the affected families. Fazal Shakoor Khan directed the concerned officials of the labour department to immediately coordinate with the dis-

trict administration and actively take part in relief and rehabilitation efforts for the flood-affected people. He stressed that officers and staff of the department will remain in the field and will utilize all available resources to fulfill their national and humanitarian duty in the rehabilitation process. He assured that the labour department will

work closely with district administrations, rescue agencies, and other relevant departments to take all possible measures in dealing with this natural disaster. "Work with the true spirit of public service, and play your role in bringing back hope and support to the faces of the affected people", the provincial minister urged all officials and staff.

## Regional Flood Control Rooms are monitoring flood situations

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Communications and Works, Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi, has said that on the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur, the Central Flood Control Room was established in May 2025 to compile data regarding losses caused by floods and natural disasters. For this purpose, a modern Damage Management Information System (DMIS) has been introduced, which provides real-

time data to ensure immediate measures can be taken. This system is being provided to all relevant institutions across Pakistan. He expressed these views while addressing a press conference in Peshawar on Monday along with Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi. On this occasion, Member Provincial Assembly Laiq Muhammad Khan, Secretary Communications & Works Muhammad Israr, and Managing Director KPWA Sohail Idrees were also present. Muhammad Sohail Afridi further said that

Regional Flood Control Rooms have also been established for monitoring flood situations, from where reports regarding damages in Upper Dir, Buner, Bajaur, Swat, and Shangla are being prepared. To restore various roads and repair basic infrastructure in these areas, around 186 heavy machinery units including excavators, loaders, tractors, and dumpers have been provided. Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi said that after the floods, provincial ministers and senior officials immediately

reached the affected areas, and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur himself is personally monitoring the entire situation to ensure that no negligence occurs in relief, rescue, and rehabilitation efforts. Special Assistant Muhammad Sohail Afridi and Provincial Minister for Higher Education reaffirmed the government's resolve that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is utilizing all available resources to provide every possible assistance to the affected people and to ensure the immediate restoration of infrastructure.

## Annual 02 Exam: A shortcut that's damaging education

### Alamgir Khan

A few years ago, secondary education boards across the province introduced the second annual examination—commonly referred to as the "Annual 02 Exam"—with the intention of offering students an additional opportunity to improve their academic performance without waiting an entire year. While the initiative may have stemmed from good intentions, its practical impact has raised serious concerns among educators, parents, and the wider academic community. Instead of enhancing educational outcomes, the Annual 02 Exam has inadvertently contributed to a decline in academic standards, student discipline, and overall educational integrity. A Lucrative Venture for Board Authorities From a financial standpoint, the second annual exam has become a lucrative source of income for many education boards. Thousands of students register every year, generating significant revenue through examination fees, registration charges, and form processing costs. However, critics argue that the growing emphasis on revenue generation has shifted focus away from maintaining the quality and fairness of



the examination process. The monetization of this system, designed to support struggling students, now appears to prioritize quantity over quality. A Breeding Ground for Cheating Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the Annual 02 Exam is the widespread malpractice and cheating that has become a regular feature in many exam centers. Reports of students using unfair means—from open books to mobile devices—have become alarmingly common. In many cases, invigilation is either insufficient or altogether absent, and there are even instances where staff are complicit in enabling or ignoring cheating. This blatant disregard for exam integrity sends a damaging message; that success can be achieved without effort, study, or merit. It diminishes the value of honest academic achievement and undermines the efforts of hard-working students. Erosion of Morals

and Discipline Beyond academics, the second annual exam system is contributing to a decline in student morality and discipline. When cheating is normalized and dishonesty is tolerated, students begin to view unethical behavior as acceptable. This has long-term consequences—not only for their educational development but also for their personal and professional lives. Educators are increasingly disheartened, as the culture of shortcuts and manipulation makes it harder for them to instill values of hard work, perseverance, and honesty in the classroom. Falling Standards in Education The credibility of the entire educational system is at risk. The emphasis on simply passing exams, regardless of how, has shifted the focus away from learning and comprehension. The result is a generation of students who may hold certificates but lack real knowledge or critical thinking skills. This has serious implications for higher education and the job market, where such deficiencies quickly become apparent. Institutions of higher learning are also affected, as they admit students based on results that may not reflect actual academic potential. A Call for Reform The current state of the

Annual 02 Exam system demands urgent attention. If these exams are to continue, sweeping reforms must be introduced to protect the integrity of the educational process. Some key steps include: 1. Tightening invigilation and monitoring mechanisms to prevent malpractice. 2. Ensuring transparency and fairness in examination procedures. 3. Holding accountable those who facilitate or ignore cheating. 4. Educating students on the long-term importance of academic honesty and ethical conduct. 5. Reviewing fee structures to prevent the system from becoming a profit-driven enterprise. Education boards must remember their core responsibility: to uphold educational standards and prepare students to face the challenges of the future with competence and character. The introduction of the Annual 02 Exam was meant to be a safety net for students, not a shortcut to success. Unfortunately, it has evolved into a flawed system that promotes mediocrity, dishonesty, and a culture of shortcuts. Without immediate and meaningful reforms, this practice will continue to damage the very foundations of our education system. It's time to act before the situation becomes irreversible.

## KMU Senate okays Rs. 279.976 million surplus budget

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Senate of Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar unanimously approved a surplus budget of Rs. 279.976 million. The approval was granted during the 19th Senate meeting held at Alexander Fleming Hall, KMU, under the chairmanship of Pro-Chancellor and Advisor to the Chief Minister on Health, Mr. Ihtisham Ali. The meeting was attended by KMU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, former Supreme Court Judge Justice (R) Mian Muhammad Ajmal, former Additional IG Police Akhtar Ali Shah, and other members. Briefing the Senate, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that KMU was established 18 years ago with very limited resources, but today it has grown into a strong and flourishing institution with over 200 affiliated colleges in the fields of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Rehabilitation, Public Health, Basic Medical Sciences, Pharmacy, and Allied Health Sciences, and more than 75,000 students. He added that with sub-campuses in major districts of the province and the establishment of the Islamabad campus, KMU has already attained national recognition, while upcoming international campuses in Kabul and Saudi Arabia will elevate it to the global level.



He further informed that KMU's research grant has reached Rs. 2 billion, while in the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) ranking, KMU's Quality Enhancement Cell stood at the top with a 95% score. He said that the successful diagnostic services provided by the Public Health Reference Lab (PHRL) will soon be expanded commercially across the province. KMU is also the first medical university in the province to establish a 500-bed general hospital, which will soon be inaugurated by the Chief Minister. The Vice Chancellor added that due to strict implementation of the financial austerity policy and conversion of pension and GP Fund into the Contributory Provident Fund (CP Fund), the uni-

versity has once again been able to present a surplus budget. Speaking on the occasion, Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali praised KMU's performance and financial management, stating that at a time when most universities in the province are facing financial deficits, KMU's presentation of a surplus budget is a commendable and exemplary achievement. He said that the determination of vision and goals, and the struggle for their achievement, reflect KMU's commitment and hard work, which is indeed praiseworthy and a matter of pride. He assured the Senate that the provincial government and the Health Department will provide all necessary facilities to KMU

on a priority basis, enabling the only medical university of the province to achieve its mission and vision more effectively. Earlier, the Senate approved the budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 with an income of Rs. 5077.325 million and expenditures of Rs. 4797.349 million, reflecting a surplus of Rs. 279.976 million. The Senate also unanimously approved the revised budget of the fiscal year 2024-25, which showed an income of Rs. 4907.126 million and expenditures of Rs. 4186.748 million, with a surplus of Rs. 720.378 million. On this occasion, Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali also inaugurated the newly established Student Facilitation Center at KMU.

## Meeting reviews nature and legal standing of various writ petitions

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held today in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Advocate Aftab Alam. The meeting was

attended by the Minister for Agriculture, Major (R) Sajjad Barkwal, Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi, along with senior officials of the concerned departments. The meeting discussed in detail the nature and legal standing of various

writ petitions filed against the state. Participants were briefed on the current status of these cases and their legal aspects, while future strategy was also deliberated. On the occasion, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs,

Advocate Aftab Alam, directed all concerned departments to perform their roles in accordance with legal requirements and prescribed procedures, and to ensure timely progress so that matters could be advanced in a transparent and effective manner.

## Transgender leaders demand urgent action amid rising violence

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: TransAction Alliance President and prominent transgender rights activist Farzana Riaz has called on the Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court and the Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police to take immediate action against increasing violence, threats, and blackmail targeting the transgender community. Addressing a press conference at the Peshawar Press Club, Farzana Riaz expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation for transgender individuals, stating that due to institutional negligence, the community is living in a constant state of fear and insecurity. Despite ongoing court cases, transgender individuals continue to receive death and abduction threats. "Even though suspects have been arrested in some cases, criminal elements are still threatening the victims and their families to withdraw their cases," said Riaz. She highlighted the cases of two community members, Barfi and Zarka, who bravely filed FIRs against influential perpetrators but are now facing severe threats. Riaz stated, "Our homes are being attacked, and our families blackmailed, just to silence us. The police have failed to provide us with the protection that is our right under the law." She appealed to the judiciary to take suo motu notice



and ensure effective and sustainable security measures for the transgender community. She clarified that the aim of the press conference was not to pressure the courts, but to make their voices heard because the community itself is under extreme pressure. Speaking at the event, TransAction Alliance leader Mahi Gul said, "We have the right to live. We are part of this society, yet society refuses to acknowledge us and is pushing us to the wall." She added, "Neither we nor our families are safe anymore. We request the Peshawar High Court to take immediate notice." Highlighting the gravity of the situation, Mahi Gul stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded the highest number of transgender killings in 2025 across all of

Pakistan, with 14 murders documented. She further alleged that transgender persons are being extorted for sums of 2.5 to 3 million rupees, and when they file cases, the extortionists are released the very next day and return to threaten them again. "Laws are passed, but there is no implementation. The transgender community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues to live in fear, uncertainty, and without protection," she said. Both leaders stressed that if the judiciary and government fail to intervene, the violations will only increase, giving more power and impunity to criminals. They demanded equal protection, justice, and the fulfillment of constitutional guarantees of equality and security for transgender citizens.



PESHAWAR: Rescue workers pushing the rickshaws stuck in the inundated rainwater after heavy downpour in provincial capital.





## In brief

### Crackdown on tout mafia F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Action against tout mafia outside Passport Office Toba Tek Singh on the instructions of Director General Immigration and Passport Mustafa Jamal Qazi and Zonal Head Lahore Khalid Abbas. Assistant Director Regional Passport Office Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Idrees Shaikh said that we have started action against the tout mafia outside our passport office. He further said that we have applied to District Police Officer (DPO) Toba Tek Singh Ibadat Nisar for action against these tout mafia. The DPO forwarded our Application to DSP Syed Asif Shah for action. Muhammad Idrees Shaikh said that I meet DSP Syed Asif Shah in his office. The DSP assured me that we will take actions against the tout mafia. The DSP immediately deployed police personnel outside the passport office. The DSP said that if any tout mafia official is seen outside the passport office, police personnel will catch them and put them in custody and an FIR will also be registered against them. Muhammad Idrees Shaikh thanked DPO Toba Tek Singh Ibadat Nisar and DSP for taking actions on request.

### Two girls dies as roof collapses F.P. Report

HARNAI: Two young girls perished and another sustained injuries when the roof of a mud dwelling crumbled in Akhtarabad, Harnai district, Balochistan, early Monday morning. Rescue personnel reported that the incident occurred due to torrential downpours. Three young girls sleeping inside were trapped beneath the debris. Emergency responders extracted the victims and transported them to the District Headquarters Hospital Harnai. Two of the girls tragically succumbed to their wounds, while the third receives medical care. Authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the devastating event.

### Four dacoits killed in Lakki F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Four notorious dacoits were gunned down during a police encounter in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday. The police encounter took place in the mountainous region of Pezu in Lakki Marwat. Later police shifted the dead bodies of the dacoits to a local hospital for post-mortem. Earlier on August 11, 2025, three people, including one woman and a girl, were shot dead, and three women seriously injured in a firing incident inside a house in Lakki Marwat due to a domestic dispute.

### AAC visits Khushalgarh F.P. Report

KOHAT: On the special instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC) II Abrar Khattak visited the Khushalgarh Rasai area to review the arrangements for the expected heavy rains and the threat of cloud bursting. SHO Gumbat police station, Ayub Janan, accompanied the AAC during the visit. They strictly warned the workers engaged in informal gold mining on the banks of the Indus River that the risk of flooding in the river was increasing due to the rains in the coming days. The officers clarified that swimming or unnecessary movement in the river could prove fatal at any time; therefore, legal action would be taken against all such persons who violate safety instructions despite the warning.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti addressing during press conference.

## SSP: Multan to be made role model in traffic management

### F.P. Report

MULTAN: The newly appointed SSP Muhammad Kashif Aslam, City Traffic Police Officer Multan Division, has formally assumed charge of his post. Muhammad Kashif Aslam, who is considered an example of honesty, duty, and professionalism in the police department, has made it clear that solving traffic problems and improving public facilities will be given top priority.

Talking to the media after assuming charge, SSP Muhammad Kashif Aslam said that the rule of law, respect for citizens, and improvement of the traffic system are my mission. Our goal is to make Multan Division an exemplary city.

He further said that, along with the strict implementation of traffic laws, the scope of public awareness campaigns will also be expanded so that citizens themselves make law-abiding a habit.

Police sources say that the appointment of SSP



Muhammad Kashif Aslam will promote transparency, effective strategies, and people-friendly policies in the operational matters of the traffic police. The officers and personnel of the department are also hopeful that under his leadership, the traffic system will see significant improvement.

Traffic police chief has previously stood out in various districts as a District Police Officer due to his professional performance and integrity. The civil society and common citizens of Multan say that he always prefers to be in the field and find solutions to

problems, and this approach will guarantee success in Multan as well.

Multan High Court Bar Association member Dr. Aamir Mushtaq Advocate said that Muhammad Kashif Aslam, who is famous for his professional experience, honesty, and hard work, should give top priority to improving the traffic system and facilitating the citizens.

SSP also expressed his determination that traffic rules will be strictly enforced, but along with this, citizens will also be encouraged to abide by the rules through public awareness campaigns.

### KP Minister performs groundbreaking of bridge F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Aftab Alam has visited Sheikhhan in Kohat where he laid the foundation stone of the long-awaited Sheikhhan Bridge. The ceremony was attended by the officials of the C&W Department, local elders, party workers and a large number of people who warmly welcomed this important initiative.

It may be recalled that construction of the said bridge was the longstanding demand of the people of Sheikhhan as seasonal rains and flood streams caused serious difficulties in transportation. The absence of a bridge not only created travel hardships but also affected the routine activities in the area.

The Minister while addressing the gathering, said that the present government is taking practical steps to resolve the public issues. Construction of Sheikhhan Bridge will not only ease mobility for the local population but also promote healthy activities, he added.

Aftab Alam maintained that the government is committed to ensuring transparency, quality and timely completion of the project. He furthered, the incumbent government is prioritizing public welfare and development projects, and the Sheikhhan Bridge is a significant step in that direction. Local elders and residents expressed their gratitude to the Minister for fulfilling the long awaited demand of the area.

### Survey launched F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Major Muhammad Sajid Barakwal has said that the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan, following the vision of the national leader Imran Khan, has issued special directives for the provision of clean drinking water to the people of his constituency PK-98 Karak. In light of these directives, relevant departments under the Provincial Development Program have formally initiated the survey for the Gravity Water Supply Scheme. Under this project, Bogara, Zarki, Nusraty, Wanki, Sarki, Lakarki, Topi Kalay, Dagar Kalay, Takht e Nasrati, Pala, Baya and all adjacent localities will be provided with clean and safe drinking water, he remarked.

Barakwal while wholeheartedly thanking the Chief Minister, stated: "Alhamdulillah! this project is a revolutionary step towards resolving public issues. InshaAllah, under the Provincial Development Program, providing safe drinking water to every household across constituency PK-98 is our top priority. The promises made to the people will be fulfilled and clean drinking water will reach every home."

### Two killed F.P. Report

HUB: A dumper crashed into a motorcycle on Sakran Road in Hub, Balochistan, early Monday morning, leaving two motorcyclists dead. The accident occurred when the dumper, reportedly moving at high speed, failed to apply brakes before crashing into the motorcycle and claimed two lives, the local news channel reported.

## Embezzlement in CSR fund revealed

### F.P. Report

KARAK: Irregularities worth crores of rupees revealed in CSR fund PTI members distributed solar systems approved for existing water supply projects and pressure pumps among party workers Local government representatives made a fuss when records were sought, the administration started using delaying tactics Local local government representatives decided to approach the court and apply to NAB for investigation.

According to the details, the CSR fund for development and social work in oil and gas producing areas, which was Rs 29 crore and was distributed among the elected representatives,

according to information in this regard, Rs 54 million was kept for solar plants, while according to the advertisement and administrative approval, this solar system was to be installed on the existing and active water supply schemes in which pressure pumps are noteworthy.

However, the elected representatives, flouting the law, not only distributed the monkeys to please their party workers, but instead of installing the majority of solar on any pressure pumps, they installed them on their homes. Local local government representatives sought records of solar plants by submitting Right to Information and written applications, however, the

records were not provided under various pretexts.

It was further learned that since the CSR fund is required to be spent only in the lease area where oil and gas are produced, these rules were also trampled underfoot and more than 5 million rupees were spent outside the lease area to reward people of their choice, which is not only a clear violation of the rules of business but is tantamount to abuse of the people of the lease area. In this regard, local government representatives belonging to the lease area have demanded that the FIA and NAB take notice and have also decided to approach the court for legal action.

## Secretary E&SED visits The Fazle Haq College

### Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa paid an official visit to The Fazle Haq College Mardan on Monday. The visit was also attended by Zuhra Nigar, Additional Secretary E&SE Department, and Tahira Muzammil, Principal Girls Cadet College, Mardan.

Prof. Jehan Zeb, Principal, The Fazlehaq College, gave a detailed briefing on the college's ongoing initiatives, achievements, and future plans. The delegation visited various facilities of the institution and highly appreciated the developments carried out under the leadership of Prof. Jehan Zeb.

The Secretary E&SE expressed his commitment

to extend its full support to further strengthen academic excellence and provide maximum facilitation for both students and staff of the college.

**WSSCM at forefront in flood related rehab:** Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) is at the forefront in assisting and rehabilitating flood affected communities. In Swat, water tankers, jetting machine, excavator, and de-watering pumps have been deployed, while in Buner, water tankers, blade tractors, and a team of 26 staff members are actively participating in relief operations.

For the flood effectives in Buner, 160 packs of mineral water, 10 cartons of biscuits, first aid kits, and medicines for 100 people

were delivered. Additionally, 300 pairs of clothes and 30 pairs of shoes were distributed among the effectives.

On the special direction of Minister and Secretary Local Government, WSSCM Chief Executive Officer Shahid Khan is personally supervising the relief activities in Swat and Buner. He stated that in various parts of Swat, one kilometer of road, six markets, and 40 streets and neighborhoods have been cleared, while the relief operation is still continue. In China Market, Mulla Baba, and Mingora, heavy machinery is being used to remove debris, clean markets, and clear mud from shops. In Kokarai, Swat, water tankers are ensuring the supply of clean drinking water.

## KP Minister visits flood-affected Buner

### F.P. Report

BUNER: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jehan, along with PTI Chairman and Member National Assembly Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, visited the flood-hit areas of Tehsil Chagharzai in District Buner, including Village Councils Gumbad, Batara, Ganshal area and other severely affected localities, to assess the damages caused by the recent devastating floods.

During the visit, the Minister met with local elders, affected families and community members, listened to their issues and expressed heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the disaster.

He also prayed for the eternal peace of the depart-

ed souls. Syed Fakhar Jehan reiterated that the provincial government stands firmly with the victims in this difficult time and assured that they would not be left alone until their complete rehabilitation.

The Minister directed the district administration and relief agencies to ensure immediate assistance to the affected families, maintain uninterrupted supply of essential commodities and carry out urgent repair and restoration of roads and basic infrastructure.

He said that the government has introduced a comprehensive compensation package which includes PKR 2 million for the families of martyr, PKR 500,000 for the injured and the reconstruction of fully destroyed houses. The Minister further stated that

electricity restoration work in Chagharzai would be completed soon, while heavy machinery has been deployed for road clearance and debris removal.

He highlighted that the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had also paid a special visit to Buner to personally review the scale of damages. He added that the Chief Minister has issued clear instructions to leave no stone unturned in the relief and rehabilitation process and to utilize all available resources to ease the suffering of the people. Syed Fakhar Jehan reassured the victims that the government is fully committed to compensating their losses and emphasized that, as a public representative, he stands with them as their humble servant in every possible way.

## Police indicates 16 persons in triple murder case

### F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Vanike Tarar police have registered a case against 16 people for the brutal killing of three men near Asadullah Pur, Hafizabad. The attackers shot the victims dead and later set their bodies on fire inside a car. The incident has created fear across the district, while police are being criticized for not arresting the culprits despite orders from the Inspector General of Police.

According to the FIR, those nominated include Dawood Ahmad Tarar, Ashiq Hussain son of Muhammad Nawaz, Hashim Riaz, Ashiq Hussain son of Ghulam Rasool, Ehtesham-ul-Haq, Adnan Arshad, Sagheer, Almas Bibi and others. Police believe the motive was an old enmity, but no arrests have been made so far.

On the evening of the incident, Spain-returned expatriate Bawa Muhammad Hussain was traveling with his nephew Usman Haider and police constable Rai Shahzad when they were ambushed by armed men. The attackers opened fire, killing all three instantly. Afterwards, they set the victims' car on

fire and escaped.

The dead bodies were later shifted to a hospital for postmortem and then handed over to the families. The victims were buried in their native villages amid emotional scenes of grief and mourning. The tragic killing has raised serious concerns about law and order in Hafizabad. Locals have expressed anger over police inaction, saying that authorities have failed to provide security despite repeated claims. Police officials, however, insist that the suspects will be arrested soon and brought to justice.

**Secretary Transport launched actions to reduce fares:** Secretary District Transport Authority has launched action to ensure a reduction in public transport fares following the decrease in petroleum prices. Strict measures are being taken against transport owners and drivers who fail to comply with the revised fare schedule, aimed at providing relief to the public.

During checking in Pindi Bhattian, Adil Sohail, accompanied by Muhammad Umair and his team, imposed heavy fines on several transporters found violating the official fare list. Speaking on the

occasion, he said that implementation of the new fare schedule would be strictly ensured. He warned that stern legal action would be taken against those transporters and drivers who do not comply, so that citizens may receive the real benefit of the recent reduction in fuel prices.

### QMC workers hold protest F.P. Report

QUETTA: Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) workers held a protest at the QMC office on Monday, demanding immediate payment of overdue salaries and pensions.

Speakers at the demonstration highlighted the financial hardship faced by employees and pensioners, noting that it was already the 18th of the month and payments were still outstanding. They attributed the delay to negligence by the Secretary of the Finance Department, the Secretary of the Local Government Department, and the Chief Officer of QMC.





# Spain and Portugal battle wildfires as death toll mounts



MADRID (AFP): Thousands of firefighters backed by the military and water-bombing aircraft on Monday battled dozens of wildfires across Spain and Portugal, as the death toll increased to six since the outbreaks began. The Iberian peninsula has been particularly affected by forest fires fuelled by heatwaves and drought blamed on climate change that have hit southern Europe.

More than 343,000 hectares (848,000 acres) of land -- the equivalent of nearly half a million football pitches -- have been destroyed this year in Spain, setting a new national record, according to the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS). The previous record of 306,000 hectares was set in the same period three years ago.

Two firefighters were killed -- one in each country, both in road accidents -- taking the death toll to two in Portugal and four in Spain. The head of Spain's Civil Protection and Emergencies, Virginia Barcones, told broadcaster TVE there were currently 23 "active fires" that pose a serious and direct threat to the population. The fires, now in their second week, were concentrated in the northwest regions of Galicia, Castile and Leon, and Extremadura.

In Ourense province of Galicia, signs of the fires were everywhere, from ashen forests and blackened soil to destroyed homes, with thick smoke forcing people to wear facemasks. Firefighters battled to put out fires, as locals in just shorts and T-shirts used water from hoses and buckets to try to stop the spread. One resident in O Barco de Valdeorras, dousing his home with water from a hosepipe, described the wildfire that ripped through his area as "like a bomb". "It came from below and it was like a hurricane," he said. "The good thing was that in two minutes it headed up

and it didn't stay here long. "If not, our house would have been burnt, it would not have survived." Barcones said she hoped weather conditions would turn to help tackle the fires. Spain's meteorological agency said the heatwave, which has seen temperatures hit 45C in parts of the country, was coming to an end. Elsewhere, authorities in Turkey said two major fires had been brought under control, while rain and falling temperatures have helped firefighters extinguish dozens of blazes in the Balkans.

Spain is being helped with firefighting aircraft from France, Italy, Slovakia and the Netherlands, while Portugal is receiving air support from Sweden and Morocco. "It's a very difficult, very complicated situation," Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles told TVE. The size and severity of the fires and the intensity of the smoke -- visible from space -- were making "airborne action" difficult," she added.

Officials in Castile and Leon said a firefighter died when the water truck he was driving flipped over on a steep forest road and down a slope. Two other volunteer firefighters have died in Castile and Leon, while a Romanian employee of a riding school north of Madrid lost his life trying to protect horses from the fire. In Portugal, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa said a firefighter died in a traffic accident that left two colleagues seriously injured.

A former mayor in the eastern town of Guarda died on Friday while trying to tackle a fire. Some 2,000 firefighters were deployed across northern and central Portugal on Monday, with about half of them concentrated in the town of Arbanil. Some 216,000 hectares of land have been destroyed across Portugal since the start of the year.

# A timeline of territorial shifts in Russia’s war on Ukraine

WASHINGTON (AP): Russia's troops are continuing their slow war of attrition in eastern and northern Ukraine, even as the conflict enters a pivotal phase with a series of high-level meetings that are part of US President Donald Trump's push for peace.

In the three-and-a-half years since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the front line has continued to move slowly with some unexpected strikes also redrawing the map. Here is a look at some of the main events in the conflict.

Feb. 24, 2022 — Russian President Vladimir Putin launches an invasion of Ukraine from the north, east and south. Russian troops quickly reach Kyiv's outskirts, but their attempts to capture the capital and other cities in the northeast meet stiff resistance.

March 5, 2022 — Russian advances toward Kyiv and Kherson toward their height. The port city of Mariupol is surrounded.

April 2, 2022 — Ukraine defeats Russian forces in Kyiv after throwing them back in Chernihiv.

Aug. 29, 2022 — Ukraine's first counteroffensive starts in the east and south.

Sept. 30, 2022 — Russia illegally annexes Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine, even though it doesn't fully control either of the four.

September to November 2022 — Ukrainian forces reclaim vast parts of the

Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions in the first counteroffensive, including the city of Kherson itself.

May 22, 2023 — Russia claims control of Bakhmut after months of fighting.

June 6, 2023 — As Ukraine's long-anticipated second counteroffensive starts, the Russian-controlled Kakhovka Dam explodes, sending a wall of water into southern Ukraine and upending Ukrainian battle plans.

Fall 2023 — The second Ukrainian counteroffensive ends, with little change to the front line.

Feb. 18, 2024 — Russian forces take complete control of the eastern city of Avdiivka after months of combat.

April 19, 2024 — The US House of Representatives approves \$61 billion package for Ukraine after months of delay.

May 10, 2024 — Russia launches a new offensive in the northeastern region of Kharkiv, capturing a string of villages and opening a new front in the war.

Aug. 6, 2024 — Ukraine launches a lightning incursion into Russia's Kursk region, holding territory along the border in an unexpected and embarrassing episode for the Kremlin.

Jan. 20, 2025 — Donald Trump is inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States. His election raises uncertainty as to whether Washington will continue to support Ukraine.

April 26, 2025 — Moscow says all Ukrainian

troops have been forced out from Russia's Kursk region. Several weeks later, Putin visits the area in a show of strength and is filmed speaking with local volunteers.

June 1, 2025 — Ukraine strikes airfields deep inside Russia by launching drones that have been secretly stored and transported across the country on the back of trucks. The attack is codenamed Operation Spider Web.

Summer 2025 — Russia and Ukraine both step up drone strikes with the ability to strike deep into each other's territory.

June 30, 2025 — Russia says it has taken full control of Ukraine's Luhansk, one of four regions that Moscow illegally annexed in September 2022. July 31, 2025 — Russia says it has taken full control of the strategically important Ukrainian city of Chasiv Yar after a grinding, months-long assault.

August 2025 — Russian forces continue their push in the Donetsk region, where the Kremlin has focused the bulk of military efforts, capturing small villages and closing in on Pokrovsk, a strategically important city.

Aug. 15, 2025 — Putin meets Trump in Alaska for the first Russia-US summit in four years to discuss ending the war in Ukraine. Zelenskyy and European officials say Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw from the remaining 30% of the Donetsk region that it controls as part of a deal.

## Myanmar junta sets December 28 poll date

YANGON (AFP): Myanmar's junta said Monday that long-promised elections will start on December 28, despite a raging civil war that has put much of the country out of its control, and international monitors slating the poll as a charade.

Myanmar has been consumed by conflict since the military deposed the government of democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021, making unsubstantiated allegations of electoral fraud. Swathes of the country are beyond military control -- administered by a myriad of pro-democracy guerrillas and powerful ethnic armed organisations which have pledged to block polls in their enclaves. Analysts say the election will likely see junta chief Min Aung Hlaing maintain his power over any new government -- either as president, military leader or some new office where he will consolidate control. "I think this election is only being held to give power to military dictators until the world ends," said one Myanmar citizen in the western state of Rakhine.

"I don't think the election will hold any significance for the people," added the 63-year-old, declining to be named for security reasons. Myanmar's civil war has killed thousands, left more than half the nation in poverty, and more than 3.5 million people living displaced. The junta has touted elections as a way to end the conflict and offered cash rewards to opposition fighters willing to lay down their arms ahead of the vote. "We want stability back in the country," said one displaced woman in the central city of Mandalay. "If the country will be made more stable and peaceful because of the election, we want to participate." Suu Kyi remains jailed and many opposition lawmakers ousted by the coup are boycotting the polls, which a UN expert has branded a "fraud" designed to rebrand continuing military rule.

"These elections are not a process of ending the political crisis in Myanmar, but placing a fake democratic veneer over continued repressive rule," said independent analyst David Scott Mathieson. "All the supposedly credible moving parts" including party registrations, updated election laws and constituency announcements "are all simply special effects in an elaborate but squalid sham", he added. Myanmar's Union Election Commission said in a statement that the first votes will be cast on December 28 and "dates for the subsequent phases will be announced later".

Conflict monitors predict the period will see an uptick in violence and unrest as the military seeks to expand the scope of the vote and opposition groups lash back. Last month, the junta introduced new laws dictating prison sentences of up to 10 years for critics or protesters of the election. The legislation also outlawed damaging ballot papers and polling stations, as well as the intimidation or harm of voters, candidates and election workers -- with a maximum punishment of 20 years in prison.

Min Aung Hlaing is currently ruling Myanmar as acting president, also serving as the chief of the armed forces which has ruled the country for most of its post-independence history. Analysts predict the vote may split the factions opposing him, as they weigh whether to participate. Myanmar's disparate opposition fighters initially struggled to make headway against the junta, before a combined offensive starting in late 2023 won a series of nationwide territorial victories. In response the junta has waged a withering campaign of air strikes and enacted conscription, swelling its ranks with thousands of new troops and clawing back some key settlements in recent weeks.

# Some Palestinians already leaving Gaza City ahead of Israeli offensive

CAIRO (Reuters): Fearing an Israeli onslaught could come soon, some Palestinian families began leaving eastern areas of Gaza City, now under constant Israeli bombardment, for points to the west and some explored evacuating further south.

Israel's plan to seize control of Gaza City has stirred alarm abroad and at home where tens of thousands of Israelis held some of the largest protests seen since the war began, urging a deal to end the fighting and free the remaining 50 hostages held by Palestinian militants in Gaza. The planned offensive has spurred Egyptian and Qatari ceasefire mediators to step up efforts in what a source familiar with the talks with Hamas militants in Cairo said could be "the last-ditch attempt."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has described Gaza City as Hamas' last bastion. But, with Israel already holding 75% of Gaza, the military has warned that expanding the offensive could endanger hostages still alive and draw troops into protracted and deadly guerrilla warfare. In Gaza City, many Palestinians have also been calling for protests soon to demand an end to a war that has demolished much of the territory and wrought a humanitarian disaster, and for Hamas to intensify talks to avert the Israeli ground offensive.

An Israeli armoured incursion into Gaza City could see the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom have been uprooted multiple times earlier in the war. "The people of Gaza City are like someone who received a death sentence and is awaiting execution," said Tamer Burai, a Gaza City businessman.

"I am moving my parents and my family to the south today or tomorrow. I can't risk losing any of them should there be a surprising invasion," he told Reuters via a chat app. A protest is scheduled for Thursday in Gaza City by different unions, and people took to social media platforms vowing to participate, which will raise pressure on Hamas.

The last round of indirect ceasefire talks ended in late July in deadlock with the sides trading blame for its collapse. Sources close to the Cairo talks said Egyptian and Qatari mediators had met with leaders of Hamas, allied militant group Islamic Jihad and other factions with little progress reported. Talks will continue on Monday, the sources added. Hamas told mediators it was ready to resume talks about a US-proposed 60-day truce and release of half the hostages, one official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters, but also for a wider deal that would end the war.

Israel says it will agree to cease hostilities if all the hostages are released and Hamas lays down its arms - the latter demand publicly rejected by the Islamist group until a Palestinian state is established. Gaps also appear to linger regarding the extent of an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and how humanitarian aid will be delivered around the enclave, where malnutrition is rife and aid groups warn of unfolding famine.

The Israeli military said it was preparing to help equip Gazans with tents and other shelter equipment ahead of relocating them from combat zones to the south of the enclave. It did not provide further details on quantities or how long it would take to get the equipment into the enclave.

Palestinian economist Mohammad Abu Jayyab said at least 100,000 new tents would be needed to house those heading to central and southern areas of the coastal strip should Israel begin its offensive or the army orders Gaza City's entire population to evacuate. "The existing tents where people are living have worn out, and they wouldn't protect people against rainwater. There are no new tents in Gaza because of the (Israeli) restrictions on aid at the (border) crossings," Abu Jayyab told Reuters.

He said some families from Gaza City had begun renting property and shelters in the south and moved in their belongings. "Some people learned from previous experience, and they don't want to be taken by surprise. Also, some think it is better to move earlier to find a space," Abu Jayyab added. The UN humanitarian office said last week 1.35 million people were already in need of emergency shelter items in Gaza.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed across the border into southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages back to Gaza, according to Israeli tallies. More than 61,000 Palestinians have since been killed in Israel's ensuing air and ground war in Gaza, according to local health officials, with most of the 2.2 million population internally displaced. Five more Palestinians have died of malnutrition and starvation in the past 24 hours, the Gaza health ministry said on Monday, raising the number of people who died of those causes to 263, including 112 children, since the war started. Israel disputed the figures provided by the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

# Israel slammed for ‘deliberately starving’ Palestinians in Gaza

GENEVA: The human rights group Amnesty International has accused Israel of enacting a "deliberate policy" of starvation in Gaza as the United Nations and aid groups warn of famine in the Palestinian enclave.

In a report quoting displaced Palestinians and medical staff who have treated malnourished children, Amnesty said: "Israel is carrying out a deliberate campaign of starvation in the occupied Gaza Strip." The group accused Israel of "systematically destroying the health, wellbeing and social fabric of Palestinian life".

"It is the intended outcome of plans and policies that Israel has designed and implemented, over the past 22 months, to deliberately inflict on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction -- which is part and parcel of Israel's ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza," Amnesty said. Israel has killed nearly 62,000 Palestinians and turned Gaza into rubble since it launched its military offensive on October 7, 2023. Campaigners and rights organisations have called it a war of vengeance and identified Israeli actions as a genocide.

The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes. The report is based on interviews conducted in recent weeks with 19 displaced Palestinians in Gaza sheltering in three makeshift camps as well as two medical staff members in two hospitals in Gaza City.

"I fear miscarriage, but I also think about my baby. I panic just thinking about the potential impact of my own hunger on the baby's health, its

weight, whether it will have [birth defects] and, even if the baby is born healthy, what life awaits it, amid displacement, bombs, tents," Hadeel, 28, a mother of two who is four months pregnant, was quoted as saying in the report. A 75-year-old woman told Amnesty International that she wishes to die. "I feel like I have become a burden on my family. ... I always feel like these young children, they are the ones who deserve to live, my grandchildren. I feel like I'm a burden on them, on my son," Aziza said.

Erika Guevara Rosas, senior director for research, advocacy, policy and campaigns at Amnesty International, said in a statement: "As Israeli authorities threaten to launch a full-scale ground invasion of Gaza City, the testimonies we have collected are far more than accounts of suffering, they are a searing indictment of an international system that has granted Israel a license to torment Palestinians with near-total impunity for decades." Nearly one million Palestinians in Gaza City, many of whom have been displaced multiple times in the past two years, face forced displacement as Israel has intensified its attacks on the enclave's main urban centre.

Rosas called for "an immediate, unconditional lifting of the blockade and a sustained ceasefire" for reversing "the devastating consequences of Israel's inhumane policies and actions" in Gaza. Rosas concluded: "The impact of Israel's blockade and its ongoing genocide on civilians, particularly on children, people with disabilities, those with chronic illnesses, older people and pregnant and breastfeeding women is catastrophic and cannot be undone by simply increasing the number of aid trucks or

restoring performative, ineffective and dangerous airdrops of aid."

The Israeli military and Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not make statements about Amnesty's findings at the time of publication. Israel, while heavily restricting aid allowed into the Gaza Strip, has repeatedly rejected claims of deliberate starvation.

More than 250 Palestinians, including 110 children, have died of malnutrition during the war due to the Israeli blockade. The enclave -- home to 2.1 million people -- had already been under an Israeli land, air and sea blockade since 2007, but since the war began, Israel has tightened it, at times stopping all aid from entering and now allows only a trickle of supplies into the Strip. In a report issued last week, the Israeli military body overseeing civil affairs in Palestinian territory rejected claims of widespread malnutrition in Gaza despite widespread condemnation from the UN and the international community in general.

Britain, Canada, Australia, Japan and several of their European allies have called on Israel to allow unrestricted aid into Gaza, stressing that the humanitarian crisis has reached "unimaginable levels". "Famine is unfolding before our eyes. Urgent action is needed now to halt and reverse starvation," the foreign ministers of about two dozen countries and the European Union's top diplomat said in a joint statement last week.

In April, Amnesty accused Israel of committing a "livestreamed genocide" against Palestinians by forcibly displacing Palestinians in Gaza and creating a humanitarian catastrophe in the besieged territory, claims that Israel dismissed at the time as "blatant lies". — Al Jazeera

# Bolivia to hold presidential run-off between centrist and right-winger

SUCRE: Bolivia is heading to a presidential run-off between a centrist and right-wing candidate, confirming the end of two decades of government by the Movement for Socialism (MAS), according to the South American country's electoral council.

With more than 91 percent of the ballots counted, preliminary results showed centrist Rodrigo Paz of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) in the lead, with 32.8 percent of the vote. Conservative former interim President Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga, of the Alianza Libre coalition, was in second place, with 26.4 percent of the vote, meaning he will face Paz, the son of former left-leaning President Jaime Paz, in a run-off election on October 19. Candidates needed to surpass 50 percent, or 40 percent with a 10-point margin of victory, to avoid a run-off. Al Jazeera's Latin America editor Lucia Newman, reporting from Bolivia's Santa Cruz de la Sierra, said the early results confirmed that MAS, which has

governed the country since 2005, is "out of the picture".

But the "biggest surprise", Newman said, is "that the frontrunner is none other than somebody who was polling between fourth and fifth place up until now". Paz is "more to the centre" than his father, Newman added. Eight presidential candidates were in the running in presidential election -- from the far-right to the political left. Pre-election polls had shown Samuel Doria Medina, a wealthy businessman and former planning minister, as one of two frontrunners alongside Quiroga, who served as interim president and vice president under former military leader President Hugo Banzer. Former leftist President Evo Morales was barred from running, and the outgoing socialist President Luis Arce, who had fallen out with Morales, opted out of the race.

The division within their leftist coalition, along with the country's deep economic crisis, meant few expected MAS

to return to power. Official results are due within seven days. Voters will also elect all 26 senators and 130 deputies, and officials assume office on November 8. The Andean country has been struggling through its worst economic crisis in a generation, marked by annual inflation of almost 25 percent and critical shortages of US dollars and fuel.

Bolivians repeatedly took to the streets to protest rocketing prices and hours-long waits for fuel, bread and other basics in the lead-up to election. Bolivia enjoyed more than a decade of strong growth and Indigenous upliftment under Morales, who nationalised the gas sector and ploughed the proceeds into social programmes that halved extreme poverty during his stint in power between 2006 and 2019. But a lack of new gas projects under Morales, who was outspoken on environmental issues and climate change, has seen gas revenues plummet from a peak of \$6.1bn in 2013 to \$1.6bn last year.

east coast in the coming days, creating "life-threatening surf" and rip currents," the NHC said.

While meteorologists have expressed confidence that Erin will remain well off the United States coast, they said the storm could still cause dangerous waves and erosion in places such as North Carolina. The Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June until late November, is expected to be more intense than normal, US meteorologists predict.

# Hurricane Erin restrengthens as it lashes Caribbean with rain

PUERTO RICO (AFP): Hurricane Erin restrengthened into a Category 4 storm, with forecasters warning it is expected to intensify and grow in size in the coming days as it lashes Caribbean islands with heavy rains that could cause flash floods and landslides.

The first hurricane of what is expected to be a particularly intense Atlantic season, Erin briefly strengthened into a "catastrophic" Category 5 storm before its wind speeds weakened. Forecasters do

not currently expect it to make land-fall along its expected course, but tropical storm warnings are in effect for the southeast Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Hurricane Erin was located about 130 miles (205 kilometers) east of Grand Turk Island at 11:00 pm Atlantic Standard Time (Monday 0300 GMT), with maximum sustained winds of 130 miles (215 kilometers) per hour, according to the Miami-based National Hurricane Center (NHC). "The core of Erin is

expected to pass to the east and northeast of the Turks and Caicos Islands and the southeastern Bahamas overnight into Monday," the NHC said in its latest report.

The North Carolina Outer Banks, Bermuda and the central Bahamas were advised to monitor Erin's progress. Hurricane Erin had reached the highest level on the Saffir-Simpson scale just over 24 hours after becoming a Category 1 storm, a rapid intensification that scientists say has become more

common due to global warming.

It could dredge isolated areas with as much as six inches (15 centimeters) of rain, the NHC said. "Some additional strengthening is expected over the next 12 hours followed by gradual weakening," the agency said. "However, Erin is forecast to continue increasing in size and will remain a large and dangerous major hurricane through the middle of this week," it added.

The NHC also warned of "locally considerable flash and urban flood-

ing, along with landslides or mudslides." In San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico, fishermen cast their rods into the storm-swollen waters of a local river, AFP images showed. Earlier last weekend, surfers rode the swells along the island's coast before the storm approached.

Areas of Puerto Rico -- a US territory home to more than three million people -- saw flooded roads and homes. Swells generated by Erin will spread to the Bahamas, Bermuda and the US and Canadian



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

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## Australians use illicit drugs worth \$5.8bn in 2023-24

**THE Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) report released on Friday showed that the use of drugs by Australians has increased by 34 per cent between August 2023 and August 2024 over the previous year. Australians have consumed 22.2 tonnes of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and MDMA, known commonly known as “Ecstasy”.**

The commission found that the consumption of cocaine increased by 69 per cent over the previous year, MMA by 449 per cent, methamphetamine by 21 per cent, and heroin by 14 per cent. The “estimated street value” of the drugs consumed amounted to 11.5 Australian dollars or 5.8 billion US dollars.

The figures for the consumption of drugs was inferred through the analysis of wastewater, which is said to be the regular way of detecting the amounts of drugs. There has been increase in the use of drugs after the slump during COVID-19. The commission said there is a “recovery of these illicit drug markets following the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.”

According to the commission, “transnational and domestic serious and organized crime groups have rapidly re-established and expanded their operations” after the pandemic. The commission maintains an objective tone and does not raise an alarm over the extensive use of drugs across Australia.

Its wastewater analysis was carried out in major Australian capital cities and regional sites, and covered 57 per cent of the country. The commission head Heather Cook said crime groups are exploiting the demand for illicit drugs, and the groups are “maximizing profit at the expense of community’s security and well-being.”

It is perhaps more useful not to press the panic button over the increase in the use of drugs. The figures that could be estimated from the wastewater analysis can only give a hint of how much of the drugs are being consumed. The demographics remain elusive unless the location of the wastewater analysis should point to the people who are likely consuming the drugs.

It would of course be difficult to track the drug users. The more effective way of curbing drugs is by busting the criminal groups who indulge in the drug trade. The commission is keeping under wraps as it were how it wants to tackle the problem. But the commission is right in emphasizing that it is a matter of community concern.

Again, it is a much better approach than chasing the individual drug users and planning for their de-addiction and rehabilitation. These remedial measures will have to be done at the community medical levels. More importantly, it becomes necessary to protect the communities because the criminal groups trading in illicit drugs could unleash street violence. Establishing the hard facts about the drug use is an important first step.

The consumption of illicit drug use is a global phenomenon, spanning from the Latin American countries like Colombia, Mexico and spreading through the United States. There is another trail across south-east Asia, and a third emanating from Afghanistan. While the police forces in all these countries are fighting the illegal drug syndicates, they are outflanked because of the political and business linkages.

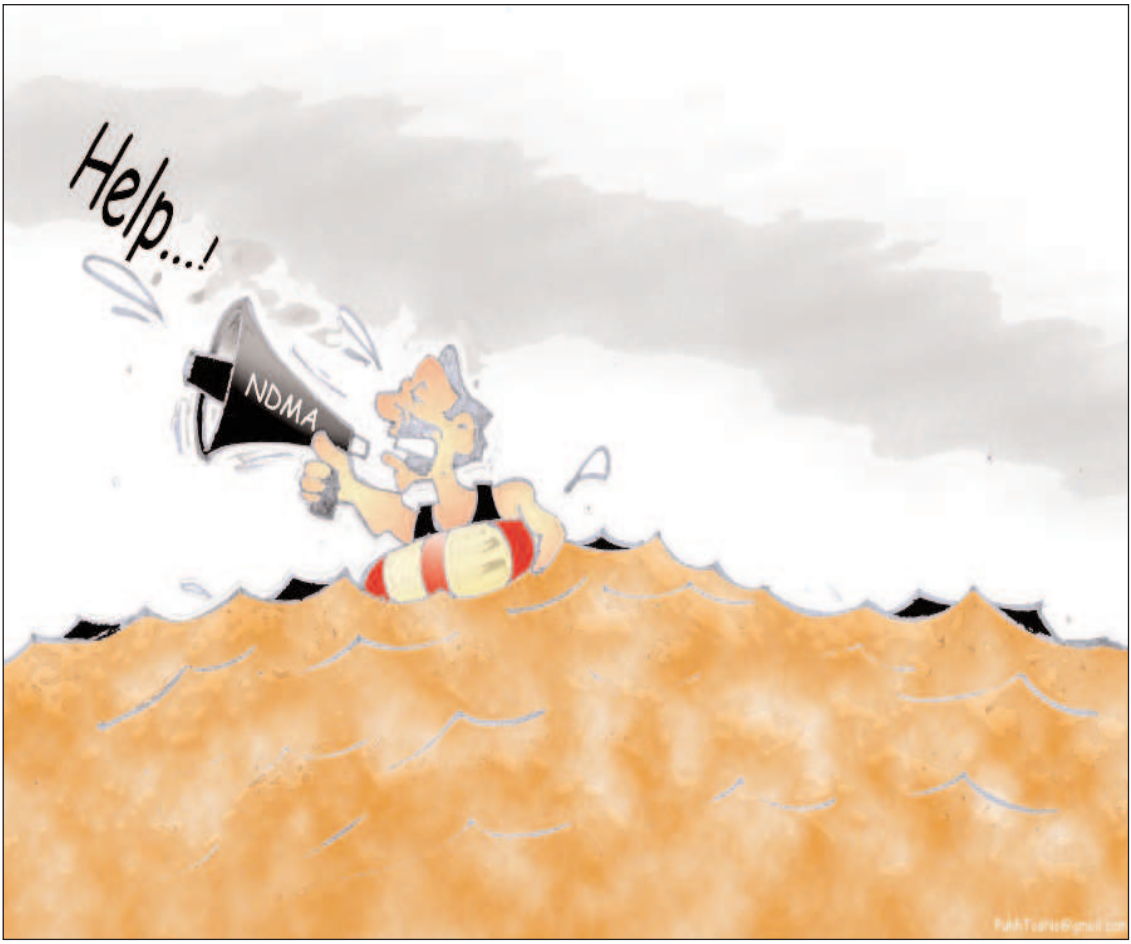
It would be necessary for the Australian commission to track the criminal groups and the routes they follow to smuggle drugs into Australia.

The question that arises is whether Australia is facing an epidemic of drug addiction, and whether it calls for an emergency response at the national level.

The commission does not point to any of the sensational conclusions. It states the figures which is an important thing in itself. The communities, the local and national authorities should be aware of the facts, and it is for them to think of a counter-plan to deal with the issue.

### Important Notice

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## Shoulder to shoulder in every calamity: The role of Pakistan Army in disasters

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

**THERE are many ups and downs in the lives of nations, and often, the harshest trials come from nature itself. In these moments, resilience, courage, and unity define the strength of a people. Pakistan, throughout its history, has faced numerous natural calamities that have tested its patience and perseverance. Each time, however, the people of this land, alongside their armed forces, have stood steadfast in the face of adversity. Whether in war or disaster, the Pakistan Army has never hesitated to sacrifice for the nation and has always remained on the front lines of relief and rescue.**

This time, the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been ravaged by devastating floods, leading to immense loss of life and property. Villages have been swept away, communication links destroyed, and countless families left stranded. Yet, as has always been the case, the Pakistan Army has rushed to the side of the distressed, standing shoulder to shoulder with the affected people. Following the traditions of service and sacrifice, the federal government, provincial governments, and Pakistanis abroad have also mobilized resources to support those suffering in this time of crisis.

Army Chief Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir has issued special instructions for the rehabilitation of flood victims in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He emphasized that the army deployed in the region will provide full support to those impacted, with additional troops sent to reinforce relief operations. In a gesture of solidarity, the entire Pakistan Army has donated one day’s salary towards rehabilitation efforts. Furthermore, the army has allocated over 600 tons of its own ration stock to provide immediate sustenance to the flood-hit population.

The Chief has also directed the Corps of Engineers to expedite the repair of damaged bridges and establish temporary structures where necessary to restore connectivity. Specialized rescue units, including the Army’s Sniffing Dog Unit and the Urban Search and Rescue Team, have been deployed to locate missing persons and assist in evacuation.

Helicopters from the Army Aviation Corps are actively engaged in transporting supplies and rescuing stranded families. In every sphere, the Pakistan Army has once again shown that it remains a guardian not only of the country’s borders but also of its people in their darkest hours.

Natural disasters, though painful, remind us of the fragility of life and the importance of solidarity. The Holy Qur’an says: “And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient—those who, when disaster

strikes them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.’” (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:155–156). These verses offer solace, reminding believers that patience and steadfastness in trials bring divine reward.

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) also said: “The believers, in their mutual kindness, compassion, and sympathy, are just like one body. When one limb suffers, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever.” (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim). Pakistan’s collective response to such calamities is a testament to this very spirit of unity and compassion.

History bears witness that Pakistan has endured calamities of even greater scale. In 8 October 2005, the earthquake that struck Kashmir and northern Pakistan claimed over 80,000 lives and left millions homeless. The nation united in grief and resilience, with the armed forces and volunteers from every corner of Pakistan rushing to aid survivors.

Again, in the floods of 2010, described by the United Nations as one of the worst humanitarian crises of modern times, nearly one-fifth of the country was submerged. Around 20 million people were affected, homes were destroyed, and farmlands devastated, yet the resolve of Pakistan’s people and their armed forces turned despair into determination.

In 2014, the floods in Punjab and Kashmir once again tested the nation, sweeping away infrastructure and livelihoods. Each time, Pakistan endured, rebuilt, and moved forward.

The present calamity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is thus part of a long and painful history, but also of a legacy of resilience. Every disaster has shown that the strength of Pakistan lies not in the absence of trials but in the courage with which they are faced. The sacrifices of the armed forces, who risk their lives even in peacetime for the sake of their people, deserve eternal recognition. Likewise, the compassion of overseas Pakistanis and ordinary citizens who contribute whatever they can illustrates the indomitable spirit of this nation.

As the floodwaters recede, the challenge of rehabilitation and reconstruction will demand patience, resources, and sustained effort. But with faith in Allah Almighty, the unity of the people, and the tireless service of our defenders, Pakistan will once again rise from the ruins.

Just as the sun emerges after the darkest storms, so too will hope return to the valleys of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Pakistan Army, as declared by its Chief, will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the brave people of the province in every hour of difficulty. And as history has shown, no disaster, however grave, can break the will of a nation bound together by faith, sacrifice, and resilience.

## Israel’s moral compass cannot be abandoned to extremist rhetoric

**FINANCE Minister Bezael Smotrich’s recent call to “bury the idea of a Palestinian state” was not an isolated remark but part of a concerning pattern that undermines the very principles upon which Israel was founded. In 2023, he declared the Palestinian people to be “an invention” and called for the West Bank village of Huwara to be “wiped out” — statements that have generated distress both among Palestinians and within the international community, including Israel’s closest allies. Such rhetoric, especially from a senior government official, risks eroding Israel’s moral standing, weakening its diplomatic relationships and threatening the foundations of its security.**

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has similarly contributed to heightened tensions, asserting that his “rights in the Land of Israel are more important” than those of Palestinians and advocating for changes to the status quo on the Temple Mount. Such actions and words carry the risk of igniting further instability in the region. The cumulative effect of

these statements is to strain Israel’s relationships with its allies, threaten its long-term security and make the path to coexistence more difficult for future generations.

The consequences of such rhetoric are tangible and immediate. These statements provide adversaries with material to advance their own agendas, portraying Israel as resistant to peace and reinforcing cycles of radicalization.

When extremism takes hold on one side, it too often fuels extremism on the other. It is incumbent upon Israel’s leaders to break this cycle and to demonstrate a commitment to peace and justice.

The diplomatic repercussions are already apparent. The US State Department has expressed its disapproval, while leaders across Europe have voiced serious concerns and some lawmakers are considering targeted measures. Even partners in the Abraham Accords have warned that such rhetoric could jeopardize the progress achieved toward normalization and cooperation. Responsible leadership must carefully

Ronald S. Lauder safeguard these achievements, not place them at risk.

The vast majority of Jews, both in Israel and throughout the diaspora, reject this form of extremism. They understand that such positions distract from Israel’s legitimate security concerns and move the conversation away from pragmatic, peaceful solutions.

This is not the vision that Theodor Herzl or the founders of Israel had for the state — a vision rooted in safety, democracy and moral purpose for all its citizens.

Herzl’s vision for Israel was clear: a state grounded in justice, coexistence and the highest civic values.

In his writings, Herzl advocated for a nation that would uphold dignity and equality for all its inhabitants, regardless of religion or ethnicity.

Upholding these ideals is essential not only for earning international respect but for ensuring Israel’s own security and future. Departing from these principles risks isolating Israel and undermining its standing among nations.

The voices of extrem-

ism do not represent the broad, diverse and often moderate consensus of the Jewish people.

Such ideologies narrow Israel’s prospects, empower its critics and make the prospect of a lasting peace more remote.

True leadership seeks to expand the horizons of possibility, not limit them.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government bear the responsibility to speak clearly: these views do not reflect the values or official position of Israel. In such critical times, silence may be misconstrued as acceptance. As the Torah instructs: “Tzedek, tzedek tirdof” — justice, justice you shall pursue. Israel’s leaders must ensure their words and actions foster justice, peace and unity for all who call the nation home.

History will judge whether Israel’s leaders chose the path of vision, responsibility and unity or whether they allowed the nation’s moral compass to be surrendered to voices of division.

The choice before us is clear and the responsibility lies with those who lead.

## The upcoming elections will not help stabilise Syria

Jasim Al-Azzawi

**IN early August, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) exchanged fire with Syrian government forces near Manbij in Kurdish-majority northeastern Syria. The tensions in the north came just weeks after bloodshed in the south’s Suwayda governorate killed more than 1,400 people and displaced nearly 175,000. The violence between Druze and Sunni Bedouin groups continued for more than a week and has still not fully abated.**

In March, groups loyal to former President Bashar al-Assad clashed with government forces and allied armed factions in the coastal governorates of Latakia and Tartus, dominated by the Alawite community. From 1,400 to 1,700 people were killed in the bloodshed, most of them civilians; 128,500 people were displaced.

The recurring violence has exposed the raw sectarianism that al-Assad once manipulated to maintain power. Now, in his absence, those divisions are metastasising, fuelled by a decade of unresolved grievances, land disputes and the proliferation of armed groups.

President Ahmad al-Sharaa, who took power after al-Assad’s ouster, has so far failed to build trust across all factions, as his main focus has been international normalisation and economic development. His Islamist leanings are causing alarm among minorities, including the Druze, Alawites, Christians and Kurds, who fear that his inability to rein in the various armed factions may result in more violence.

September’s elections may offer procedural legitimacy to al-Sharaa’s government, but without genuine security and reconciliation, they risk deepening the existing divides and reinforcing a power structure that benefits a select few at the expense of a truly unified nation. Since coming to power, al-Sharaa has signalled that his national strategy is overwhelmingly focused on reconstruction and economic development. This is where his provisional government has concentrated its efforts.

In May, al-Sharaa spoke at an event in the country’s second biggest city, Aleppo, urging Syrians to join in the reconstruction effort. “Our war with the tyrants has ended, and our battle against poverty has begun,” he declared in his speech.

To unlock the economic potential of the country, al-Sharaa has sought to gain international recognition. With the help of Gulf states, the Syrian president has been able to achieve a major diplomatic victory: the lifting of sanctions and the removal of the armed group he headed, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, from the list of “foreign terrorist organisations” by the United States government. US President Donald Trump’s administration also backed the potential integration of the SDF into the new security apparatus. From Washington’s perspective, engaging with the new authorities in Damascus can help reduce Iranian influence and prevent Syria from becoming a corridor for Hezbollah and other proxies. From al-Sharaa’s perspective this is a chance to secure international recognition and legitimacy.

Syria’s neighbour Turkiye is also an important player in al-Sharaa’s national strategy. It is providing noncombat military support — training, advice and technical assistance — to help rebuild Syria’s security infrastructure. It also is looking at a major role in the reconstruction effort.

This month, Turkiye began supplying Syria with natural gas, helping to address the country’s energy crisis in the north.

Meanwhile, Gulf states have pledged to invest heavily in Syria to help stabilise its economy. In July, Saudi Arabia announced \$6.4bn in investments in real estate and infrastructure projects. Two weeks later, the Syrian government signed deals worth \$14bn with Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the fields of public transport and real estate. However, many critics would argue that while economic support is essential for rebuilding, it cannot alone guarantee stability. The danger is that money and development may paper over deep-seated resentments and divisions that could reignite into future conflicts. The real challenge for the new Syrian government is to find a way to balance the urgent need

for economic recovery with the equally crucial need to address people’s grievances.

One way to address tensions is to gain public trust through a democratic electoral process. Al-Sharaa has called for national elections in September, but ordinary Syrians will not be able to cast their votes. That is because 140 of the 210 seats will be chosen by local electoral committees while 70 will be appointed directly by the president. There will be no seats filled by popular vote.

This format is a straightforward political calculation. It provides the new leadership with the assurance of a controlled outcome and avoids the challenges of organising a nationwide vote at a time when Damascus does not have full control over all territories and security cannot be guaranteed.

But this electoral process is likely to be met with mistrust from some Syrians, especially from minority communities, as they will see it as favouring the Sunni majority. Some may choose to boycott the elections, declare them illegitimate or find alternative ways to express their profound displeasure with a system that denies them a meaningful voice. The US and the European Union will monitor the election carefully and will likely take a critical stance if it fails to establish a truly inclusive and representative parliament. This will likely complicate the new regime’s budding international relations and hinder its efforts to gain full diplomatic recognition and support.

The more pressing problem for Damascus will be that the elections will not help heal the country’s deep wounds at a time of continuing sectarian tensions. That is why Syria needs a nationwide reconciliation process.

Syria’s interim government has yet to articulate a compelling vision for justice and accountability. War crimes under al-Assad — which include mass detentions, torture and chemical attacks — remain unaddressed. There have been promises to hold people accountable for sectarian massacres, but no concrete steps have been taken.

The absence of accountability is not just a moral failure. It’s a strategic one. Without a legal framework to hold perpetrators accountable, Syria’s wounds will fester. Syria needs a new social contract, and the people will no longer tolerate the old foundations of impunity that defined the past regime.

The process of justice and accountability must be impartial and transparent. Given the deep-seated sectarian divisions and the decades of one-family rule by the al-Assad regime, which drew heavily on the Alawite minority, the new government cannot be the sole arbiter of justice. A national, state-led process could easily be accused of being a form of retribution against a particular sect or those associated with the old regime. To counter this perception and ensure fairness, Syria would greatly benefit from the assistance of the international community, particularly the United Nations.

An entity like the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) could be a powerful tool. Instead of focusing solely on punishment, a TRC would prioritise uncovering the truth about past crimes, including mass killings, torture and embezzlement.

This process could help Syria move away from a solely punitive justice system that purges rather than reconciles. It could help the new regime build public trust and establish a new social contract based on a shared vision rather than competing narratives. It could also help dampen demands for federalism, which risk weakening the country and undermining its security, stability and economic development.

Syria’s transition was never going to be easy. But the current trajectory — economic development undermined by potential sectarian fragmentation and militarised politics — risks turning post-Assad Syria into a failed state.

The international community can play a critical role, but its approach must evolve beyond merely applauding procedural milestones. It must support civil society and demand accountability for crimes past and present. Otherwise, Syria’s future will look hauntingly like its past with new leaders but the same old cycles of violence and instability.



# Trump cranks up pressure on Zelensky ahead of his high-stakes White House return

**P**RESIDENT Donald Trump is ratcheting up pressure on Ukraine to agree to terms to end the war with Russia, echoing some of Moscow's talking points two days after meeting President Vladimir Putin.

Trump will host a summit Monday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and a bodyguard of European leaders in the most important moment yet in a quickening push to end the brutal conflict that followed Russia's 2022 invasion. The White House meeting is also one of the most critical days for European security and the Western alliance since the end of the Cold War, and it will test Trump's sincerity and his capacity to lead Ukraine and Russia toward an exit ramp likely to satisfy neither side. It follows Trump's summit with Putin on Friday in Alaska, widely viewed outside the administration and MAGA world with dismay as the US president welcomed his guest, who is accused of war crimes, with applause. Trump offered several major symbolic and process concessions to Putin for few public undertakings in return.

But Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff insisted Sunday on CNN that Russia had softened its opposition to post-war Western security arrangements for Ukraine and was ready to make significant land swaps in any deal to end the fighting.

"We agreed to robust security guarantees that I would describe as game-changing," Witkoff told Jake Tapper on "State of the Union."

Differing perceptions of the Trump summit will influence Monday's White House talks.

European officials told CNN privately that Putin called for Ukraine to hand over swaths of the critical strategic and economic powerhouse region of Donbas, which his troops have failed to seize in three and a half years of fighting. This would be all but impossible for Zelensky to accept — politically, constitutionally, economically and strategically. His forces have suffered severe losses defending farmland and cities seen as a bulwark against future Russian aggression.

No one outside the US and Russian delegations knows for sure what happened in Alaska. And the president's invite to European leaders and his energetic push for peace should not be prejudged before vital meetings take place.

Trump insisted on social media Sunday that "great progress" was being made.

But hanging over Monday's White House meetings is his warning to Ukraine after the summit with Putin.

"Make a deal," Trump said on Fox News. "Russia is a very big power, and they're not."

The president exerted more pressure on the Ukrainian leader on Sunday night in a post on Truth Social that also echoed Russia's stance that Zelensky's country can never join NATO. "President Zelensky of Ukraine can end the war with Russia almost immediately, if he wants to, or he can continue to fight," Trump wrote.

This prompted concern in Kyiv and other European capitals that Trump will try to impose Putin's ideal vision of a settlement on Zelensky and that if the Ukrainian leader refuses this impossible choice, Trump will blame Kyiv and walk away from the conflict entirely.

This points to a vital dynamic in Monday's White House meeting, which could turn into an extraordinary, televised spectacle if the president opens large portions of it to the cameras — a possibility for which his visitors must prepare.

Is Trump prepared to act as a broker who will bring Ukraine and its European supporters and Russia to a point where they can accept painful concessions despite their bitter antipathy? Or does Trump's acceptance of Putin's opposition to an immediate ceasefire and postponement of tough new US sanctions on Moscow mean the US will now side with Russia against Ukraine and Europe?

"Trump has done something useful in his drive to end the war. Negotiations have shown the world that Putin — not the Ukrainians or Europeans — is the one who's unwilling to stop fighting without conditions like handing over more land than he has already illegally conquered," said Josh Rudolph, managing director and senior fellow of strategic democracy initiatives at the German Marshall Fund.

"The question is now which side America is on."

Despite criticism of the Alaska summit and Trump's empathy toward Putin, the US president remains the potential catalyst to any peace deal. While there's little sign the Russian leader wants peace, US pressure, properly applied, might be the one thing that could stop him fighting.

And while Europe will play a major role in Ukraine's security after any deal, it lacks influence with Putin and can't fulfill a

Stephen Collinson

promised peace enforcement mission without Trump's support.

In this context, speculation in the Washington bubble over whether Trump is trying to rush the Ukraine war to a conclusion to secure a Nobel Peace Prize is pointless. If he could somehow end the conflict fairly, who cares about his motives?

If Europe is secured, Trump might even fulfill his craving for the prize that his first presidential predecessor, Barack Obama, won. However, US support for Israel as it comes closer to fully occupying Gaza amid starvation conditions might still disqualify him from the Nobel Committee's consideration.

Zelensky's arrival will stir memories of his disastrous last Oval Office visit in February.

Shocking live footage of Trump and Vice President JD Vance berating the Ukrainian leader means his escort this time from the leaders of France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Finland, NATO and the European Commission is seen as a protection squad.

But Europe has far more at stake than Zelensky's reputation.

The possibility that Russia could triumph in Ukraine and win vindication for its illegal invasion is the biggest geopolitical threat to Europe since the fall of the Soviet Union.

"This is existential also for European security. So, minimizing the role of Europe here, be it the United Kingdom, be it Poland, be it Finland, be it France, be it Germany, is not the way to go," Fiona Hill, who served as a Russia expert in Trump's first term, said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"Europe has to have an equal say in all of this," Hill said. "This is about Europe's future and the future of European security, not just about Ukraine's."

But it will be hard to create momentum for genuine peacemaking even as the administration pushes for a three-way summit among Trump, Putin and Zelensky, possibly as soon as the end of this week.

"The challenge is to try to achieve alignment between what look like very disparate things — what Trump wants, what the Europeans want, what Putin wants," said Nicholas Dungan, a senior member of the European Leadership Network. "The Europeans want a sovereign Ukraine. Trump wants a peace deal. These are not the same thing," said Dungan, who is also CEO of CogitoPraxis, a strategic advisory firm.

What Putin wants may

be impossible for Ukraine and its European allies to accept.

The Russian leader dictated terms alongside Trump in Alaska, demanding attention to the "root causes" of the war. This is his shorthand for various factors including the ousting of Zelensky, huge cuts to Ukrainian armed forces that would compromise Kyiv's capacity to repel any future invasion, and a redeployment of NATO forces from Moscow's former Soviet-era orbit in Eastern Europe.

The disconnect helps explain why Marco Rubio, the secretary of state and Trump's national security adviser, is more downbeat than the US president or Witkoff.

"We made progress in the sense that we identified potential areas of agreement, but there remains some big areas of disagreement," Rubio said on ABC. "We're still a long ways off. I mean, we're not at the precipice of a peace agreement; we're not at the edge of one."

European leaders traveling to the White House include French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Finnish President Alexander Stubb, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and European Council President Ursula von der Leyen.

Trump has good personal relationships with several of them, especially Meloni; Stubb, a golf partner; and Starmer. Rutte is seen as something of a Trump whisperer.

But the president's mood will be crucial, especially after critical media coverage of his lavish welcome for Putin.

Europe's influence is also in question. Trump had adopted the European position that a ceasefire was a vital first step in peacemaking and said he'd be disappointed if he didn't secure one in Alaska. But after meeting with Putin, he backed Russia's stance that a push for a full peace deal is best. This was a win for Russia, since a full settlement could take months to negotiate and give more time for its forces to seize more land while continuing attacks against civilians.

Europe is far more skeptical than the White House about the sincerity of any undertakings Putin offered to Trump on Friday.

Macron wrote on X on Saturday that it will be "essential to draw all the lessons from the past 30 years, in particular from Russia's well-established tendency not to honor its

own commitments."

But Witkoff said Trump's acceptance of Putin's ceasefire sequencing was a good sign.

"We made so much progress at this meeting with regard to all the other ingredients necessary for a peace deal that we, that President Trump, pivoted to that place," Witkoff told CNN's Tapper.

The Russian president tried to split the allies while in Alaska. "We expect that Kyiv and European capitals will perceive (the talks) constructively and that they won't throw a wrench in the works; they will not make any attempts to use some backroom dealings to conduct provocations to torpedo the nascent progress," Putin said.

Witkoff pushed back at criticism of Trump by insisting that Putin had accepted a security guarantee among Ukraine, European powers and the US similar to NATO's Article 5 clause that an attack on one is an attack on all. This undertaking would not, however, be linked to NATO in any way.

He also told CNN that Putin had offered "concessions on several of the regions," but refused to say what they were. And there has been no confirmation from the Kremlin.

But in return for an Anchorage welcome that purged his international pariah status, Putin offered political gifts to Trump. These included an echo of the president's false claims that mail-in voting is undemocratic and backing for Trump's claim the Russians would not have invaded Ukraine had he been in office.

US bullishness about an Article 5-style guarantee is also a little strange, since Putin would demand extraordinary steps in return. And there are already concerns that Trump wouldn't honor NATO's mutual defense clause if Russia attacked one of the alliance members close to its borders, perhaps in the Baltic states. The idea he'd would risk war with Russia to save Ukraine seems absurd.

This might also put Trump at odds with his political base, which shares his doubts about America's protection of European allies and his desire to avoid more foreign wars.

Conservative media has been running interference for Trump all weekend, with several key MAGA-friendly sites already portraying Zelensky as an obstacle to peace and the impediment to yet another Trump "win."

But the imagery of Trump as a peacemaker is a powerful one among his most loyal supporters.

# Starvation in Gaza and our global shame

Binaifer Nowrojee

**S**TARVATION is the slow, silent unmaking of the body. Deprived of basic sustenance, the body first burns through sugar stores in the liver. Then it melts muscle and fat, breaking down tissue to keep the brain and other vital organs alive.

As these reserves are depleted, the heart loses its strength, the immune system surrenders and the mind begins to fade. The skin tightens over the bones and breathing grows faint. Organs begin to fail in succession, vision fails and the body, now empty, slips away. It is a prolonged, agonizing way to die.

We have all seen the images of emaciated Palestinian babies and children withering away from starvation in their mothers' arms. Yet now that Israel is intensifying its war — embarking on a new campaign to "conquer" Gaza City — thousands more Palestinian civilians may be killed, either by bombs or by starvation.

"This is no longer a looming hunger crisis," Ramesh Rajasingham, a senior UN humanitarian official, told the UN Security Council on Aug. 10. "This is starvation, pure and simple." Alex de Waal, an expert on famine, estimates that thousands of Gazan children are now too weak to eat, even if they had access to food. "They have got to that stage of severe acute malnutrition where their bodies just can't digest food."

There is a growing consensus that Israel is committing the most serious of crimes in Gaza, including the use of starvation as a method of warfare.

Palestinian and international human rights groups raised the alarm about this risk within months of the start of the war and it has since been echoed by states on every continent, as well as by many in Israel.

Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, for example, has decried what he describes as war crimes in Gaza and leading Israeli human rights groups say Israel's actions in the territory amount to genocide.

On Oct. 9, 2023, two days after Hamas killed more than 1,200 Israelis and took more than 200 hostages — itself a serious war crime — then-Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced: "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip.

There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we will act

accordingly." The population of Gaza was dehumanized and no distinction was made between civilians and combatants — a violation of a cardinal rule of international humanitarian law. The siege shut off all supplies into Gaza for 70 days, imposing collective punishment.

This first siege was eased only slightly when Israel allowed supplies to trickle into Gaza in early 2024. By that April, Samantha Power, then the head of the US Agency for International Development, was already warning of famine in parts of Gaza. The following month, Cindy McCain, the executive director of the World Food Programme, announced "a full-blown famine" in northern Gaza.

International law prohibits the use of starvation as a weapon of war. As the occupying power in Gaza, Israel must ensure that the civilian population receives adequate food, water, medical supplies and other essentials. If those supplies cannot be located within Gaza itself, they must be sourced externally — including from Israel.

Over the past 21 months, several governments and aid agencies have pleaded with Israel to let them deliver aid. Granting such permission is also a legal obligation: Israel has a duty to facilitate others' relief schemes "by all means at its disposal." But Israel has continuously thwarted these efforts.

At this very moment, it is blocking humanitarian organizations from delivering aid.

In January 2024, the International Court of Justice, through legally binding decisions, ordered Israel to take "immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance."

Two months later, it reaffirmed that order and required that the measures be taken "in full cooperation with the United Nations."

The UN-led humanitarian system was the only one capable of preventing widespread famine in Gaza.

During the ceasefire between January and March of this year, the UN and other humanitarian organizations were operating as many as 400 relief distribution sites. But after Israel broke the ceasefire in March, these were shut down and another siege was unlawfully imposed.

Israel justified the new siege by saying that it was cutting off aid to exert greater pressure on Hamas — thus acknowledging its use of starvation as a weapon. When aid resumed in May, the UN was replaced by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a private food distribution arrangement organized by Israel. But since then, nearly 1,400 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces while attempting to obtain food at the foundation's four distribution sites.

Worse, the scheme was never going to work. According to a report from the Famine Review Committee last month, "our analysis of the food packages supplied by the GHF shows that their distribution plan would lead to mass starvation, even if it was able to function without the appalling levels of violence."

Under international law, the war crime of starvation begins at the point of deprivation. When it becomes a more expansive policy undertaken with the intent "to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group," it becomes genocide. Multiple senior Israeli officials have openly expressed such intent — including Gallant in October 2023, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who in August 2024 remarked that "it might be justified and moral" to "cause 2 million civilians to die of hunger," and Itamar Ben-Gvir, the Minister for National Security, who posted on social media that "food and aid depots should be bombed."

Palestinians are being intentionally starved to death.

Although signs of the coming horrors were clear within months of the war's onset, many governments averted their eyes.

They rationalized the restrictions on aid by arguing that it was going to Hamas — a claim that Israel now says it has no evidence for — and transferred more tonnage in weapons to Israel than they delivered in aid to Gaza.

Now, they are failing in their duty to prevent and stop a genocide.

History will forever record this moment of global shame. It will archive the images of skeletal children alongside those from past episodes where the world did nothing.

One can only hope that the world will act now to salvage at least a measure of our humanity, before even more children die.

# Gulf investors turning to Asia's finance giants

Zaid M. Belbagi

**I**N recent years, there has been a noticeable shift in the investment strategies of Gulf nations, as they increasingly turn to Asia for funding. This trend marks a significant pivot in the region's economic diversification efforts, driven by both geopolitical considerations and the evolving global economic landscape. With traditional Western investment sources becoming more volatile, Asian powers — especially China, India and Japan — are fast becoming the region's go-to funding source, as the Gulf states seek financial capital and strategic partnerships to expand their global influence and secure long-term growth.

As of June, Saudi Arabia had already sought more than \$2 billion in syndicated loans toward Asia-Pacific bank liquidity. This includes \$1 billion for the Saudi Electricity Company, \$750 million for Banque Saudi Fransi and \$500 million for Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait — transactions that reflect a clear strategy to diversify funding sources beyond domestic markets.

Qatar Gas Transport Company last week secured a five-year, \$1 billion syndicated loan, with Mizuho Bank acting as the sole mandated lead arranger and bookrunner. The deal follows an earlier financing arrangement

with Korea Eximbank to build 25 conventional Korean-built liquefied natural gas carriers.

This wave of recent announcements, marked by a growing number of deals with Asian banks, signals a structural shift in the global geoconomy. For decades, the US and Europe served as the key destinations for Gulf banks seeking to raise capital.

These markets provided deep liquidity, investor familiarity and established frameworks for issuing debt. However, the geopolitical and financial dynamics that once characterized this east-to-west flow of capital are rapidly changing.

Today, Gulf banks are increasingly looking toward markets like Singapore, Hong Kong and Taipei as viable alternatives for capital raising. Instruments such as private placements, Formosa bonds and growing interest in Panda bonds are creating new pathways to Asia's capital markets.

Central to this shift is China's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to connect China to Asia, Africa and Europe through vast infrastructure investments. As key trade partners in oil and energy, Middle Eastern countries are increasingly engaging with China, seeking opportunities in infrastructure, finance and technology.

This pivot toward Asia

is also evident in the growing diplomatic and financial exchanges between the Gulf and the East. For instance, high-profile visits by Hong Kong officials to Saudi Arabia, including the launch of a \$1.2 billion Shariah-compliant exchange-traded fund tracking Hong Kong-listed

Central to this shift is China's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to connect China to Asia, Africa and

Europe through vast infrastructure investments. As key trade partners in oil and energy, Middle Eastern countries are increasingly engaging with China, seeking opportunities in infrastructure, finance and technology. This pivot toward Asia is also evident in the growing diplomatic and financial exchanges between the Gulf and the East. For instance, high-profile visits by Hong Kong officials to Saudi Arabia, including the launch of a \$1.2 billion Shariah-compliant exchange-traded fund tracking Hong Kong-listed companies, shows Asia's rising efforts to court Gulf wealth. Adding to this are the increasing investment flows between the Gulf and Asia, with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund alone allocating \$6.6 billion to the region between 2022 and 2024. Gulf funds, such as the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Mubadala Investment Company and the Qatar Investment Authority, are also significantly increasing their investments in Asia. These trends are unfolding against a backdrop of shifting global alliances. With the UAE now a member of the BRICS grouping and Saudi Arabia having been invited to join, Gulf states are clearly signaling their commitment to a more multipolar investment strategy.

Energy, more than any other sector, has become the most visible gateway for global investors into the Middle East. The high-voltage direct current "Project Lightning," a major initiative to power ADNOC's offshore oil operations in the UAE with electricity instead of gas, has secured \$1.2 billion in committed financing, led by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and co-financed by Korea Eximbank, the Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation and Mizuho Bank. This export credit agency-backed structure, contracted by Abu Dhabi, offers both risk visibility and replicability, setting a benchmark for large-scale oil and gas decarbonization projects across the region. In Saudi Arabia, NEOM Green Hydrogen Company closed an \$8.4 billion investment package, including \$6.1 billion in nonrecourse debt from 23 local and international lenders. Asian banks played a prominent role in the financing syndicate, helping secure competitive terms. The surge in credit contracted by Gulf operators from Asia-Pacific lenders over the past year reflects the attractive terms and diverse financing options that Asian banks can provide.

Central to this financing are institutions such as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance, which play a crucial role in both funding and risk mitigation. These institutions provide more than just capital; they assume much of the risk, particularly during the sensitive construction and early operation phases, by providing direct loans, insurance and guarantees. A notable example is the Warsan waste-to-energy project in Dubai, for which the Japan Bank for International Cooperation committed about \$452 million in direct financing, while Nippon Export and Investment Insurance offered loan insurance covering \$380 million of the commercial bank debt.

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A notable example is the Warsan waste-to-energy project in Dubai, for which the Japan Bank for International Cooperation committed about \$452 million in direct financing, while Nippon Export and Investment Insurance offered loan insurance covering \$380 million of the commercial bank debt. By shouldering a significant share of the risk, these institutions have made it possible to move forward with large infrastructure projects.

Asian banks also often provide a complete financing package that

includes, alongside capital, critical equipment and engineering, procurement and construction services from Asian companies. This package approach is common in sectors like energy and infrastructure, where specialized technologies are essential. However, this approach creates a strong dependency on the Asian suppliers throughout the project's life cycle.

For Asian investors, the Middle East has become an increasingly attractive destination for infrastructure and new energy projects. With fewer investment opportunities in Asia-Pacific, excluding Japan, and a 30 percent drop in syndicated loans in hard currencies, the region offers a much-needed avenue for growth and diversification.

In this context, the growing footprint of Asia-Pacific megabanks in the Middle East reflects a deliberate shift in both financial strategy and geopolitical alignment. Alongside financial engagements, there has been a rise in the deployment of Chinese private military companies to safeguard energy and trade routes, critical not only for China but also for Japan and Korea. The broader picture is clear: Gulf investors are increasingly turning to Asia as a key part of their diversification strategy, reducing their dependence on the West.





# Minister urges for realizing potential of capital market

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has stressed the need for realizing the potential of capital market for the macro-economic sustainable growth in the country.

While addressing a Consultative Workshop 'Unlocking Capital Market Potential for Banks' organized by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and Pakistan Banks Association (PBA) at a local hotel here on Monday, he suggested the participants of the workshop that a Capital Market Development Council be established to properly run the capital related affairs.

The Finance Minister speaking about the tax policy said that now it would be laid down by the Finance Ministry, for the next financial year 2026, instead of FBR. He said that the tariff policy had been announced by the government and tariff-related reforms were home-grown agenda of the government. He said it was important how we were moving from stability to sustainable growth.

He said that the country was moving in the right direction and making measures to achieve its

goals. Aurangzeb lauding the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reforms said that they were very important and the private sector had to lead this country.

Later, talking to media persons, he said that Pakistan came out of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list and she would stay out of it. Replying to a question on exchange rate, he said that the government did not have any strategy on it and that was the SBP, which formulate exchange policy.

Replying to another question, he said that they were in ongoing conversation with IMF.

Answering a question, he said that climate change, and population growth challenges to be addressed to reach where we want to be in 2047.

He further said that without dealing and negotiating with these two existential threats we would not be able to make our way into where we want to be in 2047.

To another question regarding floods in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the Minister said that he could not say about the estimate of losses at this stage because rescue and relief work was still underway.

The Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmad, earlier speaking to the participants of the Workshop, under-

scored the importance of well-developed, deep and diversified capital markets to complement the banking sector and support long-term, sustainable economic growth.

He noted that while macroeconomic conditions have improved with inflation falling and growth gradually recovering structural challenges such as low domestic savings persist.

With a savings rate of just 7.4 percent of GDP, compared to 27 percent in South Asia, country remains overly reliant on external financing, contributing to recurring external account pressures and boom-bust cycles, he said.

Ahmad emphasized the importance of robust capital markets in channeling domestic savings into productive sectors. He noted that well-developed, deep and diversified capital markets, complemented by a resilient banking system, are needed to support sustainable economic development of the economy.

The Governor outlined recent SBP reforms aimed at broadening participation in the country's bond market, including the inclusion of non-bank institutions as Special Purpose Primary Dealers and expansion of Investor Portfolio Securities (IPS) accounts to micro-finance banks, the

Central Depository Company (CDC) and, the National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL).

These reforms open new investment avenues to millions of digital banking users and lay the foundation for broader market development, he noted. Despite progress in the government bond market, Ahmad expressed concern over the limited development of corporate debt and equity markets.

Outstanding corporate bonds account for less than one percent of GDP, with limited secondary market activity and low participation from non-financial sectors. Similarly, equity market penetration remains modest, with investor accounts and market capitalization lagging behind peer economies.

The Governor concluded by calling for coordinated efforts among regulators, financial organizations, government institutions and investors to promote financial literacy, expand participation, and build a transparent, innovation-friendly market ecosystem.

Chairperson of PSX Dr Shamsah Akhtar, Chairperson SECP Akif Saeed, Farrukh Sabzwari, CEO PSX, Presidents, CEOs of banks and other stakeholders were also present on the occasion.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb launching Capital Market Development Fund and Agahi Portal during consultative workshop organized by PBA.

## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 1,704 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,704.79 points, a positive of 1.16 percent, closing at 148,196.42 points against 146,491.63 points last trading day.

A total of 610,314,508 shares were traded during the day as compared to 473,601,407 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 39.173 billion against Rs 32.882 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 487 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 283 of them recorded gains and 175 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 29 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 40,719,854 shares at Rs 1.40 per share, Pervaz Ahmed Company with 29,750,970 shares at Rs2.82 per share and Al-Shaheer Corporation with 26,351,931 shares at Rs 12.24 per share.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 323.88 per share price, closing at Rs 3,830.59, whereas the runner-up was PIA Holding Company LimitedB with Rs186.13 rise in its per share price to Rs 28,001.10.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs259.15 per share closing at Rs 8,394.94 followed by Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs100.00 decline in its share price to close at Rs31,900.00.

Meanwhile, in the future market, as many as 323 companies traded shares in the market out of which 213 witnessed gain, 102 loss where the prices of 8 companies remained unchanged.

## Rupee gains 05 paise against US Dollar

The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 05 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.01 against the previous day's closing of Rs 282.06. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 283.5 and Rs 284.5, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 0.30 to close at Rs 329.28 against the last day's closing of Rs 329.58, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

## Swedish Ambassador, Jam Kamal discuss trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Monday held a meeting with the Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan, Alexandra Berg von Linde, at his office here on Monday to discuss bilateral trade, investment opportunities, and areas of mutual collaboration.

The Ambassador expressed condolences over the recent loss of lives and property in Pakistan caused by heavy rains and cloudburst incidents.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan thanked her for the gesture, terming it a natural disaster, and underlined the urgent need for collective efforts to address climate change challenges, said a release issued on Monday.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed avenues to strengthen economic cooperation, with a special focus on trade enhancement.

The minister highlighted Pakistan's potential in textiles, ready-made garments, IT and technical education, mining, surgical goods, and sports equipment, noting that Swedish companies could greatly benefit from investing in these sectors.

The Ambassador acknowledged Pakistan's reputation in textile

exports, noting that Swedish buyers consider Pakistani products among the best in the world. She added that many Swedish small and medium-sized enterprises are eager to explore opportunities in Pakistan, particularly in the garment sector.

A Swedish business delegation is expected to visit Karachi soon to interact with local manufacturers and explore export opportunities.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan informed the Ambassador that, for the first time in Pakistan's history, the government—under the Prime Minister's direction—is gradually reducing import tariffs, which will be brought down to 15–20 percent within the next five years. He explained that the policy aims to support exports while allowing imports of quality products not available domestically, enabling value addition before re-export.

He also highlighted Pakistan's progress in compliance reforms, noting the establishment of the National Compliance Centre (NCC) to help local businesses meet national and international standards. He proposed organizing

seminars through NCC to educate foreign companies and diplomatic missions on compliance processes in Pakistan.

Both sides identified mining, renewable energy, green technologies, vocational training, and skill development as areas for future collaboration.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan emphasized Pakistan's large pool of skilled youth, especially in healthcare, where Pakistani professionals could help meet shortages in Europe, including nursing staff.

He further underscored that more than 40 Swedish companies, including global brands such as H&M and IKEA, are already sourcing from Pakistan, reflecting the strength of bilateral economic ties.

He invited greater Swedish investment in renewable energy, sustainable manufacturing, IT, and infrastructure, while also encouraging Sweden's participation in upcoming trade events in Pakistan, such as FoodAg 2025.

The Minister appreciated Sweden's consistent support for Pakistan's GSP+ status in the European Union and urged continued advocacy during the next review process.

## Ahsan visits Millat Tractors Factory

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: Millat Tractors Limited (MTL) proudly hosted the Honorable Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at MTL Factory, in Lahore, on Monday. He was the Chief Guest in an event at the plant to celebrate the start of exports of Millat Tractors to Mexico, expanding Pakistan's foot print in international agricultural machinery markets.

On this historic event, the Minister appreciated the efforts of MTL for achieving more than 90% deletion level in tractors, resulting in saving of precious foreign exchange reserves.

The honorable Federal Minister acknowledged the contributions of MTL in the



growth and prosperity of the nation and pledged to support tractor and the allied vending industry for the economic growth.

The Minister was briefed on the issues being faced by the tractor industry, especially with respect to implementation of a long term

“National Tractor Policy”, the absence of which has resulted in inconsistent growth and rollercoaster pattern like sales figures of the industry. Ahsan reaffirmed the government's commitment to support the local sales & exports of Pakistan made tractors and

assured facilitation to MTL for enhancing its production capacities and its reach in global markets.

The honorable Minister agreed to discuss the issues of the tractor industry with the relevant ministries and try his level best to resolve them as soon as possible.

## OGDCL completes Jhal Magsi project

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In compliance with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's instructions for the fast-track development of Jhal Magsi district, Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has announced the successful completion and commissioning of the Jhal Magsi Development Project and launched a series of CSR initiatives in the remote Jhal Magsi district of Balochistan. The fast-track development was made possible through incentives approved by the Government of Pakistan.

The project is currently producing around 14 Million Standard Cubic Feet per Day (MMSCFD) of pipeline-quality gas and 45 Barrels per Day (BPD) of condensate. The gas has been injected into the Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) network through a newly built 98-

kilometer pipeline constructed by SSGCL from the Jhal Magsi field to its tie-in point.

Development work on the project began in February 2024 after the Government of Pakistan approved incentives, including the conversion from the 1997 Petroleum Policy to the Marginal Field Gas Pricing Policy. The project was accorded high priority to address the country's energy needs and was completed on an accelerated timeline despite various technical and territorial challenges. The scope of work included the installation of an Amine Unit, Dehydration Unit, Hot Oil Package, power generation facilities, and gathering systems.

The Jhal Magsi Field consists of two wells and is a joint venture operated by OGDCL, which holds a 56 percent working interest. Pakistan Oilfields Limited (POL) holds 24 percent,

while Government Holdings Private Limited (GHPL) has 20 percent.

As part of its community development efforts, OGDCL has launched several Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the Jhal Magsi district.

These include the construction of the OGDCL Grammar School (50 percent completed) and a Mother & Child Health Care Facility in collaboration with Indus Hospital (60 percent completed). The company has also built 84 climate-resilient houses, awarded fully funded four-year scholarships to students at Sukkur IBA, and provided technical training to 55 local youth through NAVTTC, with 30 already trained and 25 in progress.

To improve healthcare facilities in the remote district, Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has gifted two ambulances, organ-

ized annual free eye camps, and provided ration bags to 800 families. Furthermore, two RO plants and an underground water tank have been installed to ensure clean drinking water. The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has also sponsored the Jhal Magsi Desert Rally to support local culture and sports.

The successful commissioning of the Jhal Magsi Development Project, along with Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL)'s CSR initiatives, reflects the company's commitment to national energy security and community development in its operational areas. These efforts are in line with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's instructions to accelerate development in remote areas, ensuring that local communities benefit directly from national resource development.

## The art of Usaydh Agha - memory as myth, violence as form



Usaydh Agha

In the evocative oeuvre of Usaydh Agha, history is fluid, alive, and ceaselessly contested, a reflection of Pakistan's own complex relationship with its past. Through his powerful canvases, Agha delves deeply into the tangled legacies of memory and identity that shape our collective consciousness. His art moves beyond mere representation; it inhabits the

uneasy space between communal myth and personal history, echoing the ambivalence and trauma that mark our nation's post-colonial journey.

Agha's paintings, such as the ones seen in his recent RCA (Royal Academy of Arts) summer exhibition, are urgent meditations on the violence of remembrance. The figures—often spectral, contemplative, and frozen in scenes of ambiguous confrontation—are more archet-

type than portrait. They do not demand to be recognized as individuals. Rather, they are stand-ins for a greater psychological inheritance: men in shalwar kameez standing in fields as if witnessing aftermaths; turbaned custodians of empire staring into fractured mirrors. These are not simply representations of Pakistan or its diaspora, but metaphors for the suspended space between colonial history and post-colonial identity.

One particularly arresting painting features a man wearing a traditional white pagri and coat, staring into a mirror, but what he sees is disjointed, almost foreign. The mirror reflects a grandiose colonial setting, with Corinthian pillars and imperial hues—a stark reminder of how colonial structures linger in our collective psyche. This duality in Agha's work interrogates

what it means to search for selfhood within inherited frameworks, underscoring a familiar tension in Pakistani consciousness: when do we recognize ourselves, and when do we become strangers to our own image?

Another canvas, taut with silence and intensity, depicts four men in a rural Pakistani wheat field, quietly witnessing the aftermath of violence—a harsh yet unembellished reality for many communities marked by inter-ethnic strife, feudal conflicts, and the scars of partition. The stillness of the scene reflects the normalized brutality that often goes unnoticed but deeply permeates social life in Pakistan's villages and towns. Agha's approach does not aestheticize suffering; rather, it presents violence not as spectacle but as somber testimony ingrained in lived experience.

Agha's choice of palette, vibrant yet unsettling, mirrors the emotional complexity of Pakistan's landscape. Greens vibrate with unnatural intensity reminiscent of fertile yet contested land; blues carry the weight of historical memory; skin tones appear weathered by dust and sun, evoking the harsh realities of rural existence and the passage of time. These colors function as emotional signifiers, transcending their visual appeal to tap into collective feelings of nostalgia, trauma, and resilience.

His practice is marked by psychological realism rather than documentary fidelity. Agha paints not what is visible but what lingers in memory, often fragmented, paradoxical, inherited. His works refuse linear storytelling, instead embodying the fractured, cyclical nature of history

and memory in Pakistan, where the past is never fully settled but continuously reinterpreted.

Agha calls his method “personified impersonal,” encapsulating the paradox facing many Pakistanis whose identities straddle tradition and modernity, memory and erasure. His figures, though intimate in their gaze, remain universally estranged, displaced yet rooted, speaking to the complexities of belonging in a country shaped by partition, migration, and an ongoing struggle with its historical narratives.

Through his sensitive use of paint and carefully layered themes, Usaydh Agha is shaping a striking visual language that speaks to the postcolonial experience. His work doesn't aim to resolve history, but instead poses a quiet, recurring question: What does it

mean to belong, when the past is both erased and remembered, when one's inheritance holds both violence and beauty?

At a time when identity is often reduced to spectacle or simplified narratives, Agha's work refuses easy categorization. It is neither overtly political nor detached. It remembers—but more importantly, it prompts reflection.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is published through this notice that I Mr. Asif Noor Son of Fazal Noor Resident of Pir Khel Jungle Khel Kohat Presently R/o Al Ain Abu Dhabi UAE is the owner of Plot no. 77 Sector no. 8 Size 11.1 Marla Phase 1 KDA Kohat Has Appointed as Relative Mr. Momin Son of Khan Zada Resident of Pir Khel Jungle Khel Kohat Through (Special) Deed no. 335 Bahi no. 04 Dated 04 August 2025 which is registered in The office Kohat of Tehsilidar/Sub Registrar the Attorney Holder now wants to Transfer the above said plot if any Bank/Institution/ Firm/ Person has any objection about the transfer he should contact the Housing officer UADA Within 15 Days in writing with Proofs otherwise Plot will be Transfer and no objection will be accepted (Housing Officer Urban Area KDA Kohat)

## Correction of Name

My name is Uzma Rehmat, daughter of Rehmat Ullah. However, in the school records, my name has mistakenly been written as Uzma Rahmat D/O Rahmat Ullah. It should be corrected, and from now onwards, I should be written and called as Uzma Rehmat, daughter of Rehmat Ullah.

IN THE COURT OF SYED ZAMARRUD SHAH, JUDGE BANKING COURT-II  
FEDERAL JUDICIAL COMPLEX PHASE-7 HAYATABAD PESHAWAR  
Case No: 339/1, Next Date: 23-9-2025, Suit for recovery of Rs.949074/97,  
BAF Saddar Road Branch Pesh. VS Mahmood ul Hassan  
Notice Versus: Mahmood ul Hassan S/o Muhammad Sadiqui R/o Rano Ghari, Green Near Motorway Toll Plaza, Peshawar. Office Address: Moon Gold Tehleel System Laboratory, Street Pusthchabothra, Sarafa Bazar, Andar Sheher, Peshawar. Address as per CNIC: House No. 1060 Mohalla Dhakki Munawar Shah Andar Sheher, Post Office Qissa Khwani, Peshawar. Where is the plaintiff Bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.949074/97 against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institutions (Recovery of Finances) Ordinance 2001. You are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/publication of the notice in the newspaper filling which an expert decree shall be passed in favor of the plaintiff Bank with costs.  
Issue today on 02-08-2025 under my signature & seal of the court.  
Judge Banking Court-II Peshawar





## In brief

## Ashab bags Johns Creek Open title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's squash sensation Ashab Irfan showcased exceptional skills in the Johns Creek Open at the United States as he downed Nathan from Malaysia in the tournament. Irfan displayed top notch performance and defeated Nathan by 3-1 (8-11, 11-2, 11-2, 11-6) and claimed the title, said a statement. The tournament, which boasted a prize purse of \$12,000, saw Irfan deliver a stellar performance.

## Lahore lifts Basketball Trophy

RAWALPINDI (APP): Lahore team showcased a commanding performance to defeat Islamabad 94-74 in the Basketball Legacy Trophy 2025 final, securing the coveted title on Sunday. A large number of spectators witnessed the thrilling match in Taxila. Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora, the chief guest at the closing ceremony, presented the trophy and awards to the victorious Lahore team. He appreciated the event for promoting harmony and curbing intolerance, emphasizing that under Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's leadership, initiatives for minority welfare and youth engagement through positive activities are gaining momentum. Chairman of the Presbyterian Medical Board of Pakistan, Majid Abel, highlighted the tournament's significance, stating that hosting it in Taxila underscores the role of sports in fostering community unity and encouraging youth to embrace healthy activities. The ceremony was attended by Provincial Assembly members Mohsin Ayub Khan and Imran Ilyas, who joined in celebrating the spirit of sportsmanship and community engagement.

## Dina Alaa shot dead by her husband

CAIRO (Agencies): Egyptian judo player Dina Alaa was found dead with three gunshot wounds in her apartment in Alexandria on Sunday. According to global media reports, the Egyptian authorities discovered the body of the 28-year-old Dina Alaa, an active judo player with the Smouha Sporting Club, inside her apartment after a fatal shooting that police believe stemmed from a domestic dispute. Her husband, found nearby with a gunshot wound, remains under heavy guard at a hospital pending interrogation. Their two young children were inside the home at the time of the attack but were unharmed. Preliminary investigations suggested the husband is the prime suspect. Witnesses and neighbours reported frequent quarrels between the couple. Officials said he is believed to have shot his wife during a heated argument before attempting to take his own life. Forensic experts are conducting an autopsy to confirm the precise cause of death. Investigators found evidence indicating that Dina Alaa tried to shield her children in her final moments before she was struck by three bullets. The Smouha Club issued a statement mourning Dina Alaa, calling her "a beloved member of the judo team" and expressing condolences to her family. Authorities continue to gather evidence and take witness statements, as grief lingers over the loss of the young athlete whose career was cut short in a moment of violence.

## Pakistan tell Babar to improve strike rate for T20 comeback

LAHORE (Reuters): Former Pakistan captain Babar Azam has been told to improve his batting against spin and boost his overall strike rate to be considered for Twenty20 Internationals, coach Mike Hesson said.

Babar is Pakistan's batting mainstay in other formats but has not played a T20 International since their tour of South Africa late last year.

The 30-year-old could not find a place in the Pakistan squad for the Asia Cup next month as the team management showed faith

in rising players such as Sahibzada Farhan.

"There's no doubt Babar's been asked to improve in some areas around taking on spin and in terms of his strike rate," Hesson said of the top-order batter who has a modest strike rate of 129 in T20 Internationals.

"Those are things he's working really hard on. But at the moment the players we have, have done exceptionally well.

"Sahibzada Farhan has played six games and won three player-of-the-match

awards."

Babar should use the Big Bash League in Australia to improve his 20-overs batting and stage a comeback, Hesson said.

"A player like Babar has an opportunity to play in the BBL and show he's improving in those areas in T20s. He's too good a player not to consider," he said.

Pakistan will begin their Asia Cup Group A campaign against Oman in Dubai on September 12 before meeting arch-rivals India at the same venue two days later.

## PCB chairman makes major announcement for hockey team ahead of Pro League

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Federal Interior Minister and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Monday assured Pakistan hockey team captain Aamir Butt of his full support to ensure the national team's participation in the upcoming Pro Hockey League.

During their meeting, Butt briefed Naqvi on key issues concerning the revival of hockey in Pakistan and the team's preparations for the league. Discussions also focused on player welfare and rehabilitation matters.

Naqvi termed qualifying the national team for the Pro Hockey League an honor and emphasised that he would play a proactive role in facilitating the team's participation.

Naqvi announced a reward of PKR one million per player and assured that any visa-related issues would be resolved promptly. The PCB's professional medical team will handle players' medical and fitness cases, while the logistics team will ensure all necessary support and facilities are provided.

The meeting also saw hockey captain Aamir Butt congratulating Naqvi on receiving the prestigious Nishan-e-Imtiaz.



For the unversed, earlier this month, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) made a major decision regarding participation in the Pro Hockey League, offering the government and the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) that not a single rupee allocated for the Pro League should be given to the PHF.

PHF Secretary Rana Mujahid, speaking to private channel in Karachi said that the Pro League requires PKR 700 million and the federation does not need any funds directly.

Instead, the Pakistan Sports Board should pay the event fees for the Pro League itself. "It does not matter whether the money

for the Pro League comes from the Hockey Federation or the PSB; what matters is that the Pro League is extremely important for Pakistan hockey," Rana Mujahid said.

He further said that players' daily allowances should be given to them directly and the PSB should handle all arrangements, including booking international travel tickets and hotels. "Our only aim is to improve the national sport and resolve players' issues," he emphasised.

The PHF secretary added that participation in the Pro League will not only enhance players' skills but also improve Pakistan's global ranking.

For the unversed, earlier this week, PHF president Tariq Bugti revealed that the federation has requested an extension in the deadline set by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) to confirm its national team's participation in the Pro League.

The apex hockey federation, last month, formally invited the Pakistan men's team to participate in the Pro League following New Zealand's withdrawal from the tournament despite winning the Nations Cup.

Meanwhile, the PHF was given a deadline of August 12 to inform the apex federation of their decision to accept or deny the invitation.

## Samad's 110 hands Shaheens 73-run win over Renegades

DARWIN (Monitoring Desk): Abdul Samad's unbeaten 110 off 63 balls helped Pakistan Shaheens bag their second win in the Top End T20 Series as they beat Melbourne Renegades by 73 runs here at the TIO Stadium in Darwin on Monday evening.

Pakistan Shaheens will face Chicago Kingsmen in their next fixture on Tuesday with the first ball expected to be bowled at 1pm local time.

Shaheens dismissed Renegades for 105 in 19.2 overs after posting 178-5 in their allotted 20 overs on the back of Samad's 56-ball century. The right hander walked in to bat in the first over and found Shaheens reeling at 2-2 as both opening batters returned for ducks.

Samad stitched a 32-run stand with Mohammad Faiq (21, 18b, 2x4s, 1x6) before the latter fell in the seventh over, while Maaz Sadaqat followed him in the 10th over with the scorecard reading 55-4.

From thereon, Samad and skipper Muhammad Irfan Khan put on a game-changing 109-run stand. Samad struck six fours and as many sixes during his unbeaten stay at the crease, while Irfan returned for a run-a-ball 23 comprising one four and a solitary six.

For Renegades, Oliver Peake, Fergus O'Neill, Will



Sutherland, Callum Stow and Michael Archer picked up one wicket each.

In turn, Renegades slid to 66-8 and then 105 all out after being 25-1. Apart from opening batter Josh Brown (36, 30b, 5x4s, 1x6) none of the top eight batters entered double figures.

Xavier Crone (11, 17b), Callum Stow (15, 16b, 1x4) and Michael Archer (14 not out 19b) pushed their team past the 100-run mark batting at no.9, 10 and 11, respectively.

For Shaheens, Maaz Sadaqat returned figures of 4-0-22-3, while Faisal Akram backed up his five-for from previous game with 2-19 in four overs. Mubasir Khan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Ubaid Shah and Saad Masood dismissed one batter each.

Scores in brief: Pakistan Shaheens beat Melbourne Renegades by 73 runs at the TIO Stadium,

Darwin Pakistan Shaheens 178-5, 20 overs (Abdul Samad 110, Muhammad Irfan Khan 23, Mohammad Faiq 21; Oliver Peake 1-12)

Melbourne Renegades 105 all out, 19.2 overs (Josh Brown 36; Maaz Sadaqat 3-22, Faisal Akram 2-19)

Player of the match – Abdul Samad (Pakistan Shaheens)

Pakistan Shaheens' Top End T20 schedule:

14 Aug – Pakistan Shaheens won by 79 runs

16 Aug – Perth Scorchers won by two wickets

18 Aug – Pakistan Shaheens won by 73 runs

19 Aug – vs Kingsmen, DXC Arena (1pm local time)

20 Aug – vs Strikers, DXC Arena (7pm local time)

22 Aug – vs Nepal, DXC Arena (7pm local time).

## Pakistani boxers win Int'l titles

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistani fighters secured both int'l belt titles against Afghanistan in the "Marka-e-Haq King of the Ring Kickboxing" and "Pakistan Professional Boxing Fight Night" held in Rawalpindi on August 16 and 17, in connection to Independence Day celebrations.

Pakistan's Bushra Akhtar knocked out Afghanistan's Munira Bakhtiar in the second round of the kickboxing title fight, while Usama Sajid Malik defeated Afghanistan's Asadullah in the third round of the professional boxing title fight.

Organized by the District Sports Department Rawalpindi at the Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex, the event featured 18 kickboxing fights and 4 professional boxing matches, including the two international title competitions. The closing ceremony was attended by Sehrish Qamar Malik, Chairperson of the Women's Wing of Muslim League (N) Azad Kashmir, who awarded medals to winning fighters and shields to the event officials. District Sports Officer Shams Tauhid Abbasi, Organizing Secretary Mudassar Bashir, and Malik Muhammad Sajid Awan.

Sehrish Qamar Malik praised the District Sports Department for the event's success and honored the martyrs of Marka-e-Haq, stating that those who sacrificed their lives for the nation will always be remembered as heroes.

## Spurs captain Romero signs new four-year contract

LONDON (Agencies): Tottenham Hotspur captain Cristian Romero has signed a new four-year contract to commit his future to the club. The 27-year-old Argentine centre-back joined Spurs from Atalanta in August 2021, initially on loan before the move was made permanent the following summer.

He has made 126 appearances for the club, scoring eight goals, and captained the side in the Europa League final as Tottenham beat Manchester United to end their 17-year wait for a trophy. After being heavily linked with a move to Atletico Madrid over the summer, Romero was named club captain by new head coach Thomas Frank and the deal ensures he will remain under contract in north London until 2029.

Romero said he was "very happy" at Spurs and after helping them win the Europa League in the previous campaign has predicted a "special season" ahead for the club.



CAIRNS: Temba Bavuma and Mitchell Marsh ahead of the ODI series.

## Asia Cup sponsorship and ad rates hit record highs

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The much-anticipated Pakistan-India cricket match in the upcoming Asia Cup 2025 has sent advertising and sponsorship prices soaring to unprecedented levels, according to Indian media reports.

According to a report, the rates of sponsorship and advertising in the Asia Cup 2025 have skyrocketed.

The rate for a 10-second television advertisement during the Pakistan-India match has surged to INR 1.6 million, while a full advertising package is priced at INR 44.8 million.

The co-presenting part-

nership has been valued at INR 180 million, with the co-powered package available at the same rate.

Associate partnerships have been set at INR 1.3 million, while digital advertising packages for co-presenting and high-lights partners are priced at INR 30 million each.

Indian media also noted that rights holders are anticipating record viewership for the Asia Cup, reflecting the immense popularity and high stakes of the India-Pakistan clash.

It is pertinent to mention that the Asia Cup 2025 will begin with a Group B fixture between

Afghanistan and Hong Kong on September 9.

A total of eight teams, divided into two groups, will vie for the prestigious title. Fierce rivals Pakistan and India are placed in Group A, alongside UAE and Oman, while Group B features Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Hong Kong.

Pakistan will open its campaign against Oman on September 12, followed by the blockbuster match against India on September 14. Their final group-stage game is scheduled for September 17 against the UAE.

## Gianni Infantino condemns 'unacceptable' racism

ZURICH (AP): FIFA President Gianni Infantino says that two incidents of alleged racist abuse which marred German Cup games are "unacceptable" as German police investigate.

Infantino's comments came a day after Schalke's Christopher Antwi-Adjei said he was subjected to racist abuse in a cup game at Lokomotive Leipzig.

He was whistled by fans throughout the match after reporting the incident to officials. In another incident, a Kaiserslautern substitute was racially abused while warming up in a game at RSV Eintracht, the team's coach said. He did not name the player affected. Both incidents occurred as lower-league clubs from the former East Germany hosted larger teams in first-round games.

"It is unacceptable that incidents have occurred at two DFB-Pokal matches in Germany," Infantino wrote on social media, using the German name for the competition. "Football has no place for racism or any form of discrimination."

Infantino said FIFA's Players' Voice Panel would



be "in touch" with the German football federation.

"Everyone at FIFA, The Players' Voice Panel and the whole football community stands firmly with all those impacted by these events – we are committed to ensuring that players are respected and protected, and that competition organizers and law enforcement authorities take appropriate action," Infantino added.

Antwi-Adjei filed a complaint about the incident at Lokomotive Leipzig and police were investigating, Schalke said late Sunday. At RSV Eintracht, fans and security quickly identified the alleged perpetrator and fans of both teams chanted

"Nazis out," German agency dpa reported.

The incidents in Germany came two days after Bournemouth forward Antoine Semenyo reported that he was racially abused by a spectator while playing at Liverpool. The game was briefly paused as the referee spoke to the coaches and captains of both teams.

Police said Saturday that a 47-year-old man from Liverpool was arrested on suspicion of a racially aggravated public order offense. He was taken into custody to be interviewed. Infantino has said FIFA's Players' Voice Panel would contact Semenyo.

## Amateur golfers shine at Hot Weather Independence Cup 2025

PESHAWAR (APP): The Hot Weather Independence Cup 2025, a prestigious two-day amateur golf tournament, concluded here with 55 talented golfers, including both boys and girls, competing in various categories.

The tournament was organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Golf Association and jointly hosted by the City University of Science and Information Technology (CUSIT), Peshawar, and the PAF Golf Club, Peshawar.

The event highlighted the dedication and sportsmanship of emerging golfers, making it a vibrant celebration of both competition and camaraderie. The prize distribution ceremony was attended by Lt Gen. Omer Ahmed Bukhari HI(M) as the chief guest.

He congratulated the participants and winners on their achievements and was presented with a City University souvenir by Vice Chancellor Engr. Dr. Nasrullah Khan.

Expressing their enthu-

siasm, Dr. Nasrullah Khan and Ayub Sethi, Executive Director of City University, said, "We are proud to support an event that not only celebrates the spirit of competition but also encourages youth participation, unity, and sportsmanship."

With the combined efforts of City University Peshawar and PAF Golf Club, the Hot Weather Independence Cup 2025 stood out as a significant step in promoting amateur golf in KP.

## Pakistan secures silver medal in Badminton C'ship



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's U-23 badminton team has secured a silver medal in the Team Event in the South Asian Regional Badminton Championship.

The talented squad, comprising Muhammad Adnan, Rana Hasan Mujtaba, Umama Usman, and Amara Ishtiaq, displayed impressive performances throughout the

tournament.

The Pakistani team demonstrated their prowess with convincing victories, defeating Nepal 3-2, Bhutan 5-0, and Sri Lanka 5-0.

Their second-place finish was confirmed on the final day when Sri Lanka's win over Nepal cemented Pakistan's position in the standings.

In the Under-17 catego-

ry, Pakistan's young shuttlers claimed the bronze medal after winning one of their matches, securing third place in the competition.

The championship now moves into its next phase, with individual matches scheduled to begin tomorrow, offering players another opportunity to showcase their skills on the regional stage.





## In brief

### Ashrafi appeals for unity above politics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Monday, appealed to political parties, civil society and influential personalities to set aside political differences and stand united in helping those affected by the floods. In an exclusive video message with the state news channel, Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, made a heartfelt appeal to the nation. He urged everyone to come together and show unity during these challenging times caused by the devastating floods. He emphasized the importance of turning to Allah in prayer, seeking His mercy and blessings for the affected communities. Ashrafi reminded viewers that collective prayers and compassion are powerful tools to overcome adversity. The Chairman called on all political parties, public figures and citizens to put aside their differences and work hand in hand to support the flood victims, stressing that humanitarian assistance must rise above politics.

### Man arrested for making fake call

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a man on charges of making a fake emergency call to helpline 15 about a vehicle snatching incident. According to police, the suspect had reported that 10 men had forcibly taken away his vehicle. Responding swiftly, a police team reached on spot. During investigation, it was revealed that no such crime had occurred. Instead, the issue turned out to be a financial transaction between the parties involved. Police registered a case against the caller for misusing the emergency helpline and took him into custody. SP Rawal Saad Arshad warned that helpline 15 is a public service meant strictly for emergencies and cautioned that strict action will be taken against those involved to misuse it, he added.

### IRSA releases 544,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 544,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 541,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1546.60 feet which was 144.60 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 338,300 cusecs and 379,100 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1213.00 feet, which was 163.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 46,100 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 431,500, 453,900, 299,000 and 189,800 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 55,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 74,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia presenting a green legacy award to Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. —APP Photo

## Gilani calls for collective action against climate change threats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday said that climate change is a pressing reality, and although Pakistan contributes less than one percent to global emissions, it remains among the most vulnerable countries, facing floods, melting glaciers, and droughts.

He was speaking at the Ethiopia-Pakistan Green Dialogue: Lessons from Ethiopia's Green Legacy, held at the COMSTECH Auditorium. The event was organized by COMSTECH in collaboration with the Ethiopian Embassy. Gilani praised Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative as a successful global model of reforestation and sustainability. He said both Pakistan and Ethiopia share similar challenges and can work together through South-South cooperation.

Highlighting Pakistan's role in climate diplomacy, he recalled its leadership in pushing for the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 and advancing climate finance discussions at COP29. He suggested practical cooperation through

joint task forces, parliamentary exchanges, and research partnerships, while also inviting Ethiopia's parliamentary leadership to the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference in Islamabad next year.

The Senate Chairman said parliament has already passed important laws like the Pakistan Climate Change Act and the National Energy Efficiency Act. He urged parliamentary committees to closely monitor climate finance, adaptation projects, and carbon markets to ensure implementation. He also linked Pakistan's Green Pakistan Programme, Living Indus Initiative, and Indus Delta Blue Carbon Project with Ethiopia's Green Legacy campaign.

"If climate change is our biggest challenge, then South-South cooperation is our strongest tool," he said, stressing that both countries face limited climate finance, exposure to extreme weather, and climate-reliant economies. Gilani added that progress required coordinated efforts at government, parliamentary, and institution-

al levels, with stronger linkages between academia and research bodies.

In his welcome remarks, COMSTECH Coordinator General Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary stressed the importance of green diplomacy and joint action against environmental challenges. Ethiopian Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula highlighted Ethiopia's achievements through its Green Legacy campaign, which has become a global benchmark for mass tree plantation and sustainable practices.

During the event, Green Legacy Awards were presented, followed by a symbolic tree plantation and a group photo. A panel discussion brought together experts and policymakers who shared strategies for long-term environmental sustainability. The session concluded with a Q&A and networking lunch, where participants reaffirmed their commitment to closer Pakistan-Ethiopia cooperation in climate resilience, ecological restoration, and sustainable development.

## CDA, LEAs unite to expel illegal immigrants

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad administration have launched a coordinated crackdown on foreign nationals residing illegally in the federal capital and surrounding districts.

CDA chief following a high-level task force meeting directed the formulation of a comprehensive plan to prevent the resettlement of undocumented foreigners and called for an integrated database containing complete records, including residential details. "Seamless data synchronization among all relevant institutions is essential. Only foreigners with valid visas will be allowed to stay, and strict legal action will be taken against violators," he said.

The task force decided to declare Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Murree, and Haripur as "safe zones" by ensuring no undocumented foreign nationals could settle there. Authorities will monitor adjoining areas, enforce action against unregistered foreign tenants, and strengthen coordination through the appointment of focal persons in each district. In addition, it was agreed that stamp papers will no longer be issued for property transactions involving undocumented foreigners, while the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) will block mobile SIM issuance to those without valid visas. The Tenancy Act will also be strictly enforced.

Randhawa underscored that district administrations will immediately begin data collection on foreign nationals residing without legal documents. He stressed that the government is committed to national security and stability by permanently resolving the issue of illegal immigrants.

"All relevant institutions are working together to implement robust measures against illegal immigration," he added. The meeting, held at CDA Headquarters, brought together senior officials from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Murree, and Haripur, along with representatives from the Ministry of Interior, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), and other law enforcement bodies.

## Naqvi pays surprise visits to NADRA Centre, Shahdara Passport Office

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday paid a surprise visit to the NADRA Centre in Kot Abdul Malik and the Passport Office in Shahdara, reviewing the procedures for issuing CNICs, passports and other official documents.

At the Kot Abdul Malik NADRA Centre, operations were halted due to ongoing renovation work. Two mobile service vans were stationed outside, but an internet outage had rendered them non-functional, resulting in long queues of citizens. NADRA staff cited the system outage as the cause of the delays. Citizens also complained

about the lack of proper guidance on the helpline.

Minister Naqvi listened to the grievances of those waiting and issued immediate instructions to resolve their issues. He also ordered that the internet connectivity problem be addressed without delay. Emphasising the importance of accessibility, he stated that redirecting citizens to other centres is unacceptable and directed that the Kot Abdul Malik centre be made operational as soon as possible.

Later, at the Shahdara Passport Office, the minister met with citizens and inquired about the passport issuance process.

Complaints were raised regarding delays in passport delivery. Expressing dissatisfaction with the disorganised state of physical records, Minister Naqvi ordered the immediate digitisation of all files. He further instructed that passport delivery timelines must be strictly adhered to.

The Interior Minister reiterated that citizens should be able to obtain passports from any centre, and forcing them to visit multiple locations is intolerable. He also mentioned that a policy is being developed to facilitate the issuance of passports for children whose fathers are living abroad.

## Rubina inaugurates BISP dynamic registration center

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Monday inaugurated the BISP Dynamic Registration Center in Kaghan, aimed at providing deserving families with accessible and efficient survey facilities closer to their homes.

Speaking at the inauguration, Senator Rubina Khalid said the establishment of the center would ease the difficulties faced by residents, particularly women and the elderly, who previously had to travel long and challenging mountainous

routes to Balakot for registration.

She emphasized that the initiative reflects BISP's vision that "no deserving family should be left behind. Upon her arrival, the BISP Chairperson received a warm welcome from local women and young girls, who presented her with flowers and prayers for success.

During the visit, she also held a Khuli Kacheri, where she directly listened to the concerns of women and guided them about key BISP initiatives such as Benazir Kafalat, Benazir Nishonuma, and Benazir Taleemi Wazaif.

She explained the regis-

tration process, procedures for lodging complaints about unauthorized deductions, the use of the 8171 helpline, and the importance of biometric verification.

"The purpose of my visit is to listen directly to the problems of women and take practical steps for their immediate resolution," she said. Later, the chairperson personally supervised the registration process at the newly established center.

She instructed staff to ensure respectful treatment of poor and elderly women, enabling them to complete their registration with ease and dignity.

## CDA Chief, Envoy advance Islamabad-Dhaka partnership



ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, met with Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mohammad Iqbal Hossain Khan, on Monday to discuss the establishment of "sister city" ties between Islamabad and Dhaka and explore avenues for enhanced bilateral cooperation.

Randhawa emphasized the importance of strengthening "brotherly and friendly relations" between Pakistan and Bangladesh, noting that the proposed sister-city partnership could open up new opportunities for

cooperation in urban development, environment, and civic management. "Pakistan holds Bangladesh in high regard, and CDA is fully committed to supporting the establishment of sister-city relations between Islamabad and Dhaka," he said.

The Bangladeshi envoy praised the ongoing development work in Islamabad, including infrastructure upgrades, flood management systems, and environmental initiatives. He expressed his government's strong interest in contributing to joint projects, including Islamabad's ongoing tree plantation campaign. "We are determined to further strengthen the ties

between our two nations and actively participate in initiatives that benefit our people," Khan remarked.

During the discussions, Randhawa briefed the delegation on Islamabad's road infrastructure improvements, monsoon drainage systems, and environmental sustainability efforts. Both sides underlined that closer cooperation could provide tangible benefits for citizens in both capitals.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from both Pakistan and Bangladesh to deepen collaboration and advance the memorandum of understanding (MoU) for formalizing the Islamabad-Dhaka sister-city relationship.

## Anti-polio campaign to commence from Sept 1

RAWALPINDI (APP): An anti-polio campaign will commence in Rawalpindi from September 01 to 04, during which children aged one to five years across the district will be administered protective polio drops. A target has been set to vaccinate over 800,000 children in Rawalpindi district during this campaign, with teams going door-to-door to fulfill their duties.

This was briefed during an important meeting, chaired by senior PML N leader Tahira Aurangzeb MNA, and Deputy Commissioner Dr. Hassan Waqar Cheema. Officers from the Health Department, Education Department, World Health Organization (WHO), and other relevant departments attended the meeting.

During the briefing, the CEO Health informed the meeting that two districts of Punjab, including Rawalpindi, have been moved from the red zone

to the yellow zone due to their excellent performance in the anti-polio campaign, which is an honor for the district.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Hassan Waqar Cheema said that Rawalpindi has a significant population of migrants, which contributes to cases of polio, dengue, and other diseases. "Due to the administration's efforts, the number of cases remains very low," he said.

DC directed that measures at the micro-level should be made more effective and warned that strict action would be taken against officers or staff showing negligence or laxity, as they would not be entitled to any leniency.

Tahira Aurangzeb emphasized that special attention should be given to the union councils in Rawalpindi where a large number of migrants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other peripheral areas reside, ensuring that not a single child is deprived of

polio drops.

Additionally, the meeting conducted a detailed review of the dengue situation. The District Coordinator for Dengue provided a briefing, following which the Deputy Commissioner made it clear that all departments must perform their responsibilities with full commitment, and immediate action would be taken against personnel showing poor performance.

After thorough deliberation, directives were issued to devise the best strategy for the anti-polio campaign and dengue control and to ensure its strict implementation. The district administration and Health Department have appealed to parents and guardians to ensure that their children under five years of age receive polio drops during the forthcoming anti-polio campaign so that future generations can be permanently protected from this debilitating disease.



ISLAMABAD: Students travelling on rooftop of passenger bus at Tralai may cause any misshape and needs the attention of concerned authorities. —APP Photo

## ITP issues over 9,400 fines in ongoing traffic crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) took strict action against more than 9,400 traffic violations during the past week as part of its rigorous enforcement campaign against motorists and motorcyclists flouting traffic laws.

A police spokesperson told APP on Monday that during the week-long drive, action was taken against 1,433 vehicles and motorcycles, with 873 motorbikes and 560 vehicles shifted to police stations for serious violations committed during driving.

He said 535 motorists were fined for lane viola-

tions, 53 for driving without a licence, 1,556 for illegal parking, and 630 for driving against the traffic flow.

He said action was also taken against 828 vehicles with fancy number plates, 713 drivers involved in signal violations, 797 motorcyclists riding without helmets, and 52 vehicles operating without fitness certificates. To curb overloading of heavy transport, 2,738 challans were issued.

According to the spokesperson, rickshaws remain prohibited in the federal capital and 287 rickshaws were impounded for violation. The

enforcement teams also utilised drone technology, issuing 73 challans and providing awareness to 45 drivers.

CTO Captain (R) Zeeshan Haider directed that indiscriminate action must continue under the special campaign.

He instructed traffic officials to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against underage drivers and those without licences.

"Strict legal action will be taken against one-wheelers and stunt performers," he said, urging citizens to cooperate with traffic personnel and prove themselves responsible citizens.



Floods cause financial losses

CHAKRIKAR (Pajhwok): Flash floods have destroyed dozens of acres of farmland, more than two kilometers of roads, 21 irrigation canals and two residential buildings in central Parwan province, an official said on Monday. Head of Natural Disasters Preparedness Maulvi Abdul Alim Afzali said the floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains last night hit the Fanduqistan valley of Siah Gerd district and the Mandiqu valley of Koh-e-Safi district.

Man harassing tourists held

KUNDUZ CITY (Pajhwok): Security forces have arrested an individual accused of harassing foreign tourists in northern Kunduz province, police said on Monday. In a statement, the police headquarters said security forces from the counter-terrorism department detained the man after a video of his actions recently circulated on social media. It said the suspect had confessed to his actions and expressed deep regret, saying his behaviour was due to ignorance.

# Iran plans repatriation of 2m undocumented migrants

KABUL (Ariana News): Iran's Interior Minister, Eskandar Momeni, announced that Tehran has begun implementing a plan to repatriate two million undocumented Afghan migrants, with more than 1.2 million already having left the country through Khorasan Razavi province's border.

Speaking during a visit to the holy city of Mashhad on Sunday, Momeni said that the highest number of migrant exits has been recorded at Khorasan Razavi's crossing points.

"So far, 1.2 million Afghan nationals have exited the country, and the gradual return of two million unauthorized migrants is on the agenda," he stated.

The minister said a high-

level meeting would be held in Mashhad with national and provincial authorities to review border management policies and address the presence of foreign nationals.

He emphasized that one of the Interior Ministry's top priorities is to strengthen border controls and regulate the status of undocumented migrants.

"Currently, more than six million Afghan nationals are living in Iran. Managing such a large population requires serious national and international cooperation," Momeni added.

The announcement has sparked concern among humanitarian agencies and rights organizations, who

warn that large-scale deportations could deepen Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations has repeatedly called on Iran to ensure that returns are voluntary, safe, and dignified.

A spokesperson for the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said: "Afghanistan is facing severe economic challenges, natural disasters, and ongoing instability. Forced returns on this scale risk exacerbating vulnerabilities and placing enormous strain on communities already struggling to cope."

Afghan officials, meanwhile, have urged neighboring countries to coordinate closely to avoid sudden pressures on border

provinces. Kabul has repeatedly asked for international support to reintegrate returning migrants, noting that resources remain limited.

Iran has hosted millions of Afghans for decades, many of whom fled conflict, instability, and economic hardship in their homeland.

However, authorities have increasingly moved to regulate or repatriate those without legal residency documents, citing security, economic, and social pressures.

Observers say the scale and speed of the current repatriation drive could have far-reaching humanitarian and political implications, both for Afghanistan and the wider region.

## 1 killed, 2 hurt as floods play havoc in Logar

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): One person was killed and two teenagers were injured as heavy flash floods unleashed havoc in Logar province, an official and residents said on Monday.

Juma Gul, a resident of Azra district, told Pajhwok Afghan News a young man lost his life due to the flash floods in Bar-e-Chutra area and two teenagers were injured in Akbar Khel area last night.

He explained two individuals were rescued from the flood by local residents.

Wali Khan, another resident of Azra district, said the floods destroyed numerous residential homes, mosques, highways, and bridges, and destroyed hundreds of acres of agricultural land and crops.

He asked the government to provide emergency assistance to flood-affected families in Azra district.

On the other hand, governor spokesman Sediq Ahmad Sediqqi, confirmed that floods caused heavy damage to people in Azra district following heavy rainfall last day and night.

According to Sediqqi, there is no accurate information about the damage caused by the floods in the district, but a survey of affected families has been started, and emergency assistance will be provided to them once it is completed.

Recently, flash floods in Azra district caused severe damage to agriculture crops, Abdul Basir Shahid, press officer for Agriculture and Livestock Department said.

# Coordinate with IEA, Ghani tells aid groups



KABUL (Pajhwok): Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has urged international aid organisations to cooperate in Afghanistan's reconstruction.

He also said progress has been made in various sectors since the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

He said this at a meeting with President of ACBAR Organisation Namik Heydarov on Monday, his office said in a statement.

The deputy premier

praised the activities of ACBAR organisation in Afghanistan and urged its officials to pay special attention to expanding and effectively implementing development projects in coordination with the Islamic Emirate's institutions.

He emphasised that since the IEA return, progress had been achieved in various fields in Afghanistan and international aid organisations should also play their part in the country's reconstruction.

For his part, President of ACBAR Organisation Namik Heydarov noted that the restoration of nationwide security has created favourable conditions for development initiatives.

He added that his organisation would strive to take advantage of this opportunity to attract international assistance for the implementation of development projects in Afghanistan and to execute them effectively in coordination with the Islamic Emirate's institutions and relevant agencies.

# Afghanistan, Uzbekistan sign \$243m power project deal



KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghanistan and Uzbekistan have signed agreements worth \$243 million for four electricity projects. Once completed, these schemes will enable Afghanistan to receive between 800 and 1,000 megawatts of power from Uzbekistan.

The agreements include the construction of a 500-kilovolt transmission line stretching 210 kilometres, the expansion of the Dashti-Khawaja Alwan and Arghandi substations and the extension of a 220-kilovolt transmission line from

the Arghandi substation to Nangarhar, where a new Sheikh Mesri substation will be established.

The accords were signed in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Uzbekistan's Minister of Energy, Jurabek Mirzamakhmudov and other senior officials on Sunday.

Speaking at the ceremony, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) Chief Executive Officer, Dr Abdul Bari Omar, said Uzbekistan would invest

approximately \$243 million in the four projects, which are expected to be completed within 18 months.

Upon completion, Afghanistan will be able to import 800 to 1,000 megawatts of electricity from its northern neighbour.

"With the launch of these new projects, we will witness modern facilities and further development across many sectors," Dr Omar remarked.

He stressed that the transfer of nearly 1,000 megawatts of electricity

from Uzbekistan would play a pivotal role in boosting industry and agriculture, as well as creating employment opportunities for young people.

He expressed satisfaction with the strengthening of bilateral relations and described the agreements as a significant transformation in the energy sector, which he said would have wide-ranging positive impacts on Afghanistan's economy.

"Progress is intrinsically tied to electricity," he emphasised. "Even in these challenging circumstances, Afghanistan is moving forward with firm determination towards development and prosperity."

For his part, Mirzamakhmudov said: "These projects, for which agreements are being signed today, are highly important and valuable for the growth and expansion of industry. I also discussed with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Uzbekistan's firm commitment to implementing them properly and swiftly."

He added that the agreements were the outcome of joint cooperation between the leaderships of the two nations.

## Afghanistan producing 60% of its annual flour

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan is now meeting about 60% of its annual flour requirements through domestic production, according to the Economic Deputy of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Official figures show that the country consumes roughly six million tons of flour each year, of which 3.5 million tons are supplied locally.

Around 200 flour factories are currently operating nationwide with a combined investment of nearly \$150 million, employing more than 2,500 permanent workers.

These factories produce about one million tons of flour annually, while local mills contribute the remainder.

The prime minister's office noted that the Islamic Emirate has introduced a series of measures to strengthen domestic production and support farmers. These include reducing import tariffs on wheat and flour, curbing wheat smuggling, and ensuring fair purchase prices for farmers during harvest season.

Officials say the policies are designed to secure a stable and timely flour supply for Afghan households, reduce dependency on imports, and stimulate the rural economy.

# Women still barred from education and work: UN

KABUL (TOLONews): The UN Special Representative for Women in Afghanistan has said that four years into the current rule, women remain excluded from government structures as well as the right to education and work.

Susan Ferguson stressed that the continuation of this situation is harmful not only to women but to Afghanistan as a whole.

She stated: "Regarding education and employment, women and girls are still barred from attending secondary schools, universities, and most jobs. This has destroyed the future of an entire generation of young Afghan girls. The exclusion of women not only harms them personally, but also damages families, communities, and the country as a whole."

According to UN findings, half of female

employees in civil society organizations have lost their jobs this year due to reduced funding. Ferguson emphasized that Afghan women and girls are bearing the heaviest burden of declining international aid.

She added: "Half of female staff in civil society organizations have lost their jobs due to funding cuts. More than one-third of these organizations reported that if the current situation continues, their ability to reach women and girls will be severely reduced, limited, or completely halted."

The UN stressed that despite ongoing challenges, it remains committed to investing in organizations, businesses, and ensuring women's participation in international dialogues to safeguard their rights.

Women's rights activist Faryal Sayedzada told

TOLONews: "The deprivation of Afghan girls and women from education will have negative consequences and will harm Afghanistan in the years to come. We hope that with the start of the new academic year, the Afghan government will prepare a procedure that allows Afghan girls to continue their education."

Human rights issues especially women's right to education and employment remain key points of contention between the international community and Afghanistan's interim government, frequently debated over the past four years.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan recently said that work is underway on this matter in order to obtain proper Sharia approval.

# Blackouts force Nimroz residents to turn to solar power

ZARANJ (Pajhwok): Local residents in northwestern Nimroz province say the use of solar energy is steadily increasing.

Experts note that the province has great potential for solar power generation and stress that officials should take steps to expand it. Electricity shortages remain a major challenge across the country, with residents in most provinces—including Nimroz—repeatedly complaining and demanding a lasting solution.

Solar equipment vendors Azizullah, a solar equipment vendor in Zaranj city, said his sales had doubled this year, with several people visiting his shop daily to buy solar panels.

According to him, solar panels and equipment were imported from Iran and

Pakistan and their prices sometimes rise in line with the US dollar's value against the afghani. He added: "This price increase is mostly due to fluctuations in the dollar rate, transport costs and shortages in the market. Nevertheless, people still prefer solar because it is cheaper to run and more suitable for Nimroz than generators or imported electricity."

Another seller, Neda Mohammad, also reported higher sales: "Thanks God, our business has improved a lot. In the past five years I didn't sell as much as I did in just last two months, when electricity in Nimroz has been unstable."

He explained that previously he sold only a few panels daily, but now he sold dozens every day.

Families turning to solar power

Zari Gul, a 35-year-old woman from Zaranj, sat with her children in front of a fan powered by solar energy. She said she had managed to set up a small system with difficulty because of the unbearable summer heat and frequent blackouts.

She added: "The children used to cry at night from the heat and couldn't sleep. Now at least we have a lamp and a solar fan. It's a blessing, and it costs little to run."

Another resident, Abdul Hamid, said he had spent 150,000 afghanis on a system that now powers his entire house.

He said: "Although solar power is expensive, it is very effective. We no

longer rely on state electricity. When the grid goes down and the city goes dark, our home is lit, the fridge, cooler and other appliances keep working. Especially now, when Nimroz has no steady power, solar really makes life easier."

Similarly, Afsana, a resident of Muhajirabad area of the provincial capital, explained: "This summer is hotter than previous years. Without coolers, the children can't tolerate the heat. Recently, electricity imports from Iran were cut for two or three days, and it was very difficult." She said the extreme heat and frequent blackouts forced them to switch to solar: "Solar is cheaper and always available. Most of our neighbours now use it too."

# Deprived of education, girls in Badakhshan turn to carpet weaving



B A D A K H S H A N (TOLONews):

schools closed to girls above the sixth grade, a number of girls deprived of education in

Badakhshan have turned to carpet weaving.

They are learning skills in vocational workshops in Faizabad city and are calling for support from the caretaker government.

Hamasa, one of the carpet weavers, said: "Our products are good, and some of our carpets are nearly finished."

Sultana, another weaver, said: "We turned to carpet weaving so we could learn something and build a better future for ourselves and our children."

Meanwhile, the Carpet Weavers' Union of Badakhshan says the carpet weaving industry in the province has seen significant growth compared to previous years.

Abdul Ali Yafitali, head of the Badakhshan Carpet Weavers' Union, said: "Carpet production has increased in Badakhshan. When we started this work, there wasn't a single carpet weaver in the province."

The Badakhshan Department of Industry and Commerce also reports that over the past year, in coordination with aid organizations, it has supported 600 women across various sectors.

According to officials at the department, more than 1,000 women across 15 districts of Badakhshan province are currently active in different commercial areas, including carpet weaving.

# Afghanistan holds conference in Nangarhar



JALALABAD CITY (TOLONews): The eastern Jalalabad city is hosting a two-day conference under the title "Assessment of Afghanistan's Environmental Situation."

During a speech at the event, the head of the National Environmental Protection Agency stated that during past wars, foreign forces used prohibited weapons in Afghanistan, and the impacts of these weapons are still felt on the environment and the people.

Matulhaq Khalis said: "They brought globally banned weapons and used them in Afghanistan. For example, in 2001, in the Spin Ghar area of Nangarhar, certain weapons were used. In Shinwari, the 'Mother of All Bombs' was deployed. These weapons did not leave our soil, air, or water unaffected. Our waters are polluted, our air is damaged, and our people's mental health is harmed. All these have had negative effects on our environment. Even now, in many areas, we see children being born with deformities and developing various diseases as they grow."

Although Afghanistan does not contribute to global greenhouse gas emissions, it is among the countries severely affected by the adverse impacts of environmental pollution and climate change.

Environmental experts emphasized the need to develop a comprehensive strategy for environmental protection and highlighted the importance of public cooperation in this regard.

Environmental expert Atta-ul-Haq Bushri said: "The destruction of forests has had a severe negative impact on air pollution and has also contributed to climate warming."

Izzatullah Siddiqui, the event organizer, said: "Opinions on various environmental topics, including energy, water, forests, biodiversity, and pollution, will be collected

and a national-level report will be prepared."

Some farmers also called on relevant authorities to not only prevent deforestation and deep well drilling but also to pay more attention to building check dams.

Jumagul, a farmer in Nangarhar, told TOLONews: "The wells people have dug and installed solar panels on are depleting our water resources. Instead, water storage systems should be built on running water sources to solve people's problems."

Azizullah, another farmer from Nangarhar, said: "People cut down forests for firewood, while these forests are the beauty of our homeland, and this must be stopped."

According to the National Environmental Protection Agency, while the target for tree planting this year was 25 million for government departments, the number of trees planted nationwide has exceeded 40 million.





ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to review ongoing relief efforts by federal government in flood affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

## Floods washed away homes and drowned livelihoods too

E.P. Report

BUNER: Until last week, Rehan Shah's modest poultry shop in the quiet village of Bishnoi nestled in Buner was his entire world. "I woke up early on Friday, like I always do, and left for Sowari Bazaar to get fresh chickens," he recalls, his voice crackling. "Then the sky turned black." That morning—August 15—clouds burst over the serene green hills, unleashing a catastrophic flash flood that changed thousands of lives forever. Within minutes, torrents of water swept through villages like Bishnoi, carrying with them trees, boulders, homes and dreams.

Rehan never got back to his shop as he found only rubble where it once stood. "I don't even know where my shop was anymore," he says, tears streaking his dust-covered face. "That was everything I had. My only income."

Until days ago, Bishnoi was postcard-worthy. A picturesque stream ran through its heart, lined by stone houses and surrounded by dense forests and fruit-laden trees. Now, massive boulders that was never seen before lie piled over the remains of homes. Uprooted trees and shattered concrete blocks litter the streets. For many, it feels as though nature ripped up the ground and rewrote the area map. "Every stone you step on here could be someone's home," says Ikramullah, a local fish dealer. His shop was also washed away. "We're not walking on earth; we're walking on what's left of people's lives."

He points to a rock the size of a car and said it wasn't here before. This huge rock is now on the second floor of someone's buried house." The flood, triggered by a rare cloudburst, struck without warning. According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), 380 people have lost their lives across the region, with 150 missing from Buner alone—the highest number in any district. Among the victims are 279 men, 15 women, and 13 children. Homes, schools, health centers—all ravaged.

Beyond the staggering death toll and infrastructure collapse, another loss goes quietly mourned: the destruction of small-scale poultry and fish businesses that many families relied on. In villages like Bishnoi and Pir Baba, dozens of small shops were wiped out in minutes. "Chickens don't just grow overnight," says Rehan. "I had invested everything I had into that little shop—feed, cages, the birds themselves. Now there's nothing."

According to local authorities, 50% of homes in the village were

### Death toll in Shangla reached to 38

E.P. Report

SHANGLA: The recent floods in Shangla's Tehsil Puran have caused significant damage to the Judicial Magistrate's court and residential complex. The compound wall of the court and residential complex has collapsed, while one of the walls has been partially damaged.

According to sources, the District and Sessions Judge Shangla, Mamriz Khan Khalil, has submitted a written report to the Peshawar High Court. In the report, it has been stated that the recent rains have caused the wall of the Judicial Magistrate's court and residence to collapse. The collapse of the compound wall has raised security concerns for the court and residence. The report emphasizes that the reconstruction of the compound wall is essential to ensure the security of the court and residence. Given the security risks, the District and Sessions Judge has requested the Peshawar High Court to include the partially damaged wall in the list of damages and approve the reconstruction of the compound wall.

Moreover, district administration stated that continuous heavy rains over the past several days have wreaked havoc across the district. As per the official report, 38 people have so far lost their lives while many others sustained injuries. In addition, between 60 to 65 individuals are still trapped in the affected areas. Due to ongoing rains, landslides and road blockages have cut off several villages from one another as well as from the main towns. In areas including Oplari, Chitar, Wachag, and Amrot Hab, residential houses have been either completely or partially destroyed. Severe shortages of food supplies and the unavailability of basic necessities have further worsened the plight of the local population. Agricultural lands in Dhoda Ahtan Oplari have also suffered heavy losses, with damages estimated at Rs. 17-18 per kanal. Meanwhile, road closures have completely disrupted the transportation system in the region. The district administration has launched relief operations; however, given the gravity of the situation, immediate relief efforts and the provision of additional resources have become imperative. Authorities have pledged to take all possible measures to ensure the rehabilitation of the affected families.

completely destroyed, while the remaining are no longer habitable. The economic impact of the floods is already being felt, particularly among daily wage earners and small traders like Rehan and Ikramullah. In the aftermath, health services are buckling under the weight of climate disaster that worried all. With 21 hospitals partially damaged and one completely destroyed, medical workers are struggling to keep up. 289 emergency medical camps have been established, treating over 5,600 patients in 24 hours, mostly women, children, and the elderly.

Infectious diseases are rising fast: 354 cases have been reported so far in Swat and Bajaur, including respiratory infections and diarrhea. Fortunately, no fatalities have been reported due to these outbreaks.yet. Top government officials have flocked to the area. Prime Minister's Coordinator Ikhtair Wali Khan, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, and several federal and provincial leaders visited the affected regions, expressing solidarity and promising compensation.

"The devastation in Buner is beyond imagination," said Ikhtair Wali, while standing amidst the wreckage at Bishnoi. "The federal government will ensure every victim

is supported." CM KP Ali Amin Gandapur echoed the sentiment: "Human lives cannot be replaced, but we will not leave the victims alone. Every affected family will be rehabilitated."

But for Rehan and hundreds like him, compensation—if it comes—may not be enough to replace a lifetime's worth of labour. Despite the destruction, a spirit of community and resilience shines through. Local youth, rescue workers, and volunteers continue to clear debris, search for survivors, and offer food and comfort. In Pir Baba, more than 400 schoolchildren were rescued safely. In flood hit areas, helicopters are dropping relief goods, while mosques and community hujras shelter the displaced.

"It's not just my shop I lost," Rehan says quietly, looking at the scarred hills that once surrounded his peaceful village. "It's my dignity, my future." As Buner begins the slow work of rebuilding, the story of Rehan—and thousands like him—stands as a poignant reminder that in every disaster, beyond the headlines and numbers, it's the ordinary lives that bear the heaviest loss. Equal red-pisibilities rest on civil society to come forward and generously contribute for assistance of flood victims.

### Kohistan scam: Court extends remand of NBP ex-official Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Accountability Court Peshawar Judge Ali Gohar has extended the physical remand of former Manager of National Bank's Dasu branch Zahoor Ahmad for four days in connection with the Upper Kohistan corruption scandal. Zahoor Ahmad was presented before the court after completing a 9-day physical remand, on Monday.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) informed the court that Zahoor Ahmad, while serving as the branch manager, allegedly established a private construction firm in his brother's name and conducted transactions worth up to one billion rupees through the firm's account. NAB claims that Zahoor Ahmad is involved in the scandal and the investigation is ongoing.

The Accountability court extended Zahoor Ahmad's physical remand for four more days, citing the need for further investigation. The prosecution argued that the inquiry is not yet complete, and additional time is required to gather evidence.

The Upper Kohistan corruption scandal involves the alleged embezzlement of over 40 billion rupees from the national treasury under the guise of developmental projects. NAB is investigating multiple individuals and entities linked to the scandal.

### Militant execute their affiliate publicly

E.P. Report

WANA: Militants in Azam Warsak, Tehsil Birmal, publicly executed one of their own associates on Monday, in a shocking display of violence that has left locals gripped with fear.

The victim, identified as Siddiq Khan, a resident from across the border, was accused of involvement in the August 11 killing of Maulvi Sanaullah, son of Sarwar Khan of the Malakshahi tribe. Sanaullah, who served as prayer leader at Masjid Niaz Wali in Karabagh, was gunned down by unknown assailants just a week ago. According to sources, militants accused Siddiq of carrying out the attack and, under the guise of dispensing "justice," shot him dead in front of a gathered crowd near a ground close to Azam Warsak Bazaar.

Unknown culprits abducted social worker: Unknown armed men abducted principal of a private school and president of the Wana Welfare Association Rehmatullah Wazir in Lower South Waziristan, sparking outrage among the education community.

At an emergency press conference in Wana Press Club, led by Humayun Wazir, president of the Private Education Network, school principals issued an ultimatum demanding Rehmatullah's recovery by this evening. They warned that otherwise all entry and exit routes of the district would be blocked. Speakers, including Principal Mumtaz Khalil, condemned the abduction as "an attack on the nation's future," and announced that students' protests would continue until his release.

### Chinese FM visits India

NEW DELHI (Reuters): Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar began talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in New Delhi on Monday and stressed that there could be positive momentum in ties between the neighbours only if there was peace on their border.

Wang arrived in the Indian capital on Monday for a two-day visit during which he will hold the 24th round of border talks with Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "This (discussing border issues) is very important because the basis for any positive momentum in our ties is the ability to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas," Jaishankar told Wang in his opening remarks. It is also important for the two countries to pull back their troops amassed along their disputed border in the western Himalayas since a deadly border clash in 2020, Jaishankar said.

## PAF dispatch relief items to KP flood-hit areas

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Upholding its legacy of responding to the nation's call during times of natural calamities, Pakistan Air Force, extended vital support to ongoing relief operations in flood-affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In this regard, a total of 48 tons of relief goods arranged by an NGO were airlifted from Karachi to Peshawar through an Air Eagle B-737 aircraft.

By establishing an air bridge, PAF has ensured the swift transportation of urgently needed supplies to support relief efforts in the flood-hit districts of Buner



and Shangla. The consignment comprising essential dry ration will be distributed among affected families in close coordination with National Disaster Management Authority.

This humanitarian mission reflects Pakistan Air

Force's enduring commitment to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the nation, not only in safeguarding the aerial frontiers of the country but also in providing timely assistance to fellow countrymen in times of crisis.

## Trump says he believes Putin wants war to end

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President Donald Trump said on Monday that the United States would "help out" Europe in providing security for Ukraine as part of any deal to end Russia's war in Ukraine, as he and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy began a hastily arranged White House meeting to discuss a path to peace.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office with Zelenskyy seated beside him, Trump also expressed hope that Monday's summit could eventually lead to a trilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, adding that he believes Putin wants the war to end. Zelenskyy and a group of European leaders arrived in Washington facing increased pressure from Trump to reach a resolution to end the war on terms more favorable to Moscow, after Trump and Putin met in Alaska on Friday for nearly three hours.

"We need to stop this war, to stop Russia and we need support - American and European partners," Zelenskyy told reporters. Trump greeted Zelenskyy outside the White House, shaking his hand and expressing delight at Zelenskyy's black suit, a departure from his typical military clothes. When a reporter asked Trump what his message was to the people of Ukraine, he said twice, "We love them."

Zelenskyy thanked him, and Trump put his hand on Zelenskyy's back in a show



of affection before the two men went inside to the Oval Office, where their last meeting in February ended in disaster after Trump dressed Zelenskyy down in front of television cameras. This time, the leaders of Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Finland, the European Union and NATO joined Zelenskyy to demonstrate solidarity with Ukraine and push for strong security guarantees in any post-war settlement.

Trump is pressing for a quick end to Europe's deadliest war in 80 years, and Kyiv and its allies worry he could seek to force an agreement on Russia's terms after the president on Friday in Alaska rolled out the red carpet - literally - for Putin, who faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for war crimes. The European leaders will meet with Trump afterwards in the White House's East Room at 3pm EDT (1900 GMT), according to the White House. Such a high-level gathering at the White House on such short notice appears to be unprecedented-

ed in recent times. Russian attacks overnight on Ukrainian cities killed at least 10 people, in what Zelenskyy called a "cynical" effort to undermine talks. Trump has rejected accusations that the Alaska summit had been a win for Putin, who has faced diplomatic isolation since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. "I know exactly what I'm doing, and I don't need the advice of people who have been working on all of these conflicts for years, and were never able to do a thing to stop them," Trump wrote on social media.

Trump's team has said there will have to be compromises on both sides to end the conflict. But the president himself has put the burden on Zelenskyy to end the war, saying Ukraine should give up hopes of getting back Crimea, annexed by Russia in 2014, or of joining the NATO military alliance. Zelenskyy "can end the war with Russia almost immediately, if he wants to, or he can continue to fight," Trump said on social media.



QUETTA: A convoy of unregistered Afghan Refugees going back to Afghanistan, at Kuchlak area.

## Russia pounds Ukraine, kills more civilians

KYIV: Russian attacks on major Ukrainian cities have killed at least 12 people as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visits Washington, DC, supported by European leaders, for high-stakes peace talks with United States President Donald Trump that could determine Ukraine's future and its fate in the war, now in its fourth year.

An entire family, including a toddler and a 16-year-old, were among seven people killed in an overnight drone strike on a residential neighbourhood in the northeastern city of Kharkiv, authorities said on Monday. The attack also injured 20 people, including six children. Russian forces killed five people and injured four in attacks in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, where some of the fiercest fighting on the ground rages on and where Russian President Vladimir Putin, feeling Moscow has the upper hand, seeks Ukraine's withdrawal from

the third of the region Kyiv still controls.

In Zaporizhzhia, a city in the southeast, 17 people were injured in an attack, according to Governor Ivan Fedorov. Russian air raids also targeted the northeastern region of Sumy and the southern region of Odesa. Ukraine's air force said Russian forces launched 140 drones and four missiles at Ukraine overnight, adding that 88 drones had been downed.

Russia has been intensifying its fight in Ukraine. According to the United Nations monitoring mission on Ukraine, about 2,600 drone attacks were recorded in the past month, the highest rate since the beginning of the war, and more than 300 civilians were killed. Meanwhile, Ukraine's military said on Monday that its drones had struck an oil-pumping station in the Tambov region, a strike 1,923km (1,195 miles) from Ukraine, leading to the suspension of supplies via the Druzhba

pipeline. "As a result of the strike, a fire broke out at the facility. Oil pumping through the Druzhba main oil pipeline," was completely stopped," the Ukrainian military's General Staff said in a statement. In Russia's border region of Belgorod, four people were injured in a Ukrainian drone attack while Russian officials reported shooting down hundreds of drones and munitions.

Zelenskyy called the latest attacks on Ukraine "demonstrative and cynical". "Putin will commit demonstrative killings to maintain pressure on Ukraine and Europe, as well as to humiliate diplomatic efforts," he wrote on X. Al Jazeera's Charles Stratford, reporting from Kyiv, said Zelenskyy saw the killing of civilians as a strategy aimed at giving Trump more bargaining chips with which to pressure Ukraine into accepting an unfavourable peace deal. — Aljazeera

### Polio cases rise to 21

E.P. Report

HYDERABAD: Pakistan will start a new anti-polio campaign from September 1, 2025, as the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) reported two more cases from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Sindh and total polio cases reached to 21 during the current year 2025.

The fresh cases were reported from the Lower Dir area of district Kohistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Badin area of Sindh. NEOC appealed to the parents to administer their children with polio vaccine to ensure their bright future and also complete the injection course timely.

NEOC stated that parents and the community can play a vital role in the anti-polio campaign. NEOC urged the people to cooperate with polio workers during the anti-polio campaign. Polio is a paralysing disease that has no cure. Multiple doses of the oral polio vaccine and completion of the routine vaccination schedule for all children under the age of five are essential to provide children with high immunity against this terrible disease. Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic. Despite global efforts to eradicate the virus, challenges such as security issues, vaccine hesitancy, and misinformation have slowed progress.

## Rescue, relief a joint responsibility: Tarar

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Monday that rescue, relief and restoration of affected areas of recent floods was a national obligation and the federal and provincial governments will work collectively to fulfil this responsibility.

During a media briefing along with Minister for Climate Change Musaddiq Malik and Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider here, he said an important meeting was chaired by Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif today on the recent flood situation caused by monsoon rains.

The minister said the meeting thoroughly discussed the flood situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan and reviewed the ongoing rescue and relief activities in flood hit areas. Attaulah Tarar said coordination was going on with the provincial governments in a better way.

He said that several meetings were held at the National Command and Control Center before the monsoon, in which representatives of all provincial governments participated. "Data has been regularly provided by NDMA to the relevant

authorities through the Early Warning System," Tarar remarked. Efforts are being made at the national level to deal with the current situation and on the instructions of the Prime Minister, the NDMA is in touch with the provincial governments, Tarar said.

He said that rescue activities and relief supplies were being carried out in a vigorous manner and the federal government was playing its role under national responsibility. He said that relief activities were being carried out by Armed Forces and several other organizations in floods and rain affected areas of KP, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan.

## IHC disposes of plea regarding recovery of two missing persons

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday disposed of a petition regarding recovery of the two citizens after the police submitted that the two persons were arrested in a case of illegal transplantation of human organs.

DSP Legal Islamabad Police told the court that the two accused including Rakesh Masih and Shaun Masih were arrested by the Airport Police Station, Rawalpindi in illegal transplantation of human organs. Justice Muhammad

Azam Khan heard the petitions filed by Waqas Masih seeking the recovery of his brothers Rakesh Masih while Saima Masih had filed plea for recovery of her husband Shaun Masih. DSP Legal Sajid Cheema of the Federal Police appeared in court and submitted the report.

The report said that Rakesh Masih and Shaun Masih and others are accused of illegal transplantation of human organs and currently they are in Adiala Jail on judicial remand. The court disposed of both the recovery petitions in light of

the police report. Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) served notices to Ministry of Religious Affairs in a petition challenging distribution of private Hajj quota. IHC's Justice Muhammad Azam Khan heard the case and sought comments from the respondents.

The petition's adopted the stance that quota distribution through Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan is illegal. It said that priority should be given to pilgrims who missed Hajj in 2025.