

**Polio case from Tank reported
F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the NIH, Islamabad, has confirmed a new case of polio from District Tank in South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A 10-month-old boy from Union Council Mullazai in District Tank, has been confirmed as the eleventh polio case from the province this year, bringing the total number of polio cases in Pakistan in 2025 to eighteen.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 181

Regd. No. 241

SAFAR 07 1447 -- SATURDAY, AUGUST 02 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

Pakistan rejects ‘baseless statements’ by Indian leaders

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday categorically rejected what it called “baseless and irresponsible statements” made by Indian political leaders in the Lok Sabha regarding the so-called “Operation Sindhoor,” reiterating that such rhetoric only fuels instability in South Asia.

Foreign Office spokesperson, Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan, addressing the weekly press briefing, said, “The world knows that India carried out attacks on Pakistani territory without a shred of credible evidence. The so-called strikes on alleged terrorist sites led to the martyrdom of innocent civilians. India failed to avail itself of Pakistan’s immediate offer for a joint probe into the Pahalgam incident, which speaks volumes about the falsity of their claims.” Ambassador Khan underscored that Pakistan’s defense capabilities remain a strong deterrent against any adventurism by India.

“For us, the only path to normalcy lies in mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and adherence to international laws and UN charters. India’s continued reliance on jingoism, chest-thumping, and empty rhetoric is jeopardizing regional peace and stability,” he added. The spokesperson also dismissed recent remarks by the

Indian Home Minister on the Indus Waters Treaty, saying such “displaced assertions carry no legal weight and cannot alter established international agreements.”

Updating on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister’s (DPM) ongoing diplomatic outreach in the United States, Ambassador Khan said Pakistan remained actively engaged on key multilateral issues. The DPM chaired a high-level UN Security Council session in his capacity as its President, where he reiterated Pakistan’s principled stance on peaceful dispute resolution and the right to self-determination for Palestinians and Kashmiris, he said. The DPM/FM also held meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, during which both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strong bilateral ties and enhanced coordination at multilateral forums.

Moreover, Pakistan’s role in supporting a two-state solution for Palestine was highlighted during interactions with the foreign ministers of Kuwait, Norway, Egypt, and other OIC member states, he said. The spokesperson further said that Pakistan welcomed the successful de-escalation of tensions between Cambodia and Thailand, noting the US’s continued support for peaceful conflict resolution worldwide.

Commenting on key regional and

bilateral updates, he said Pakistan and Iran are set to strengthen ties, with Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian arriving in Islamabad on August 2 for his first official visit after assuming office. He added that Pakistan successfully launched a remote sensing satellite, enhancing its earth monitoring, climate change analysis, and water resource management capabilities.

Bilateral consultations were also held with Somalia and China, focusing on trade, defense, and regional cooperation, he added. Reaffirming Pakistan’s position on terrorism, Ambassador Khan stated: “Groups like BLA and TTP are recognized as terrorist organizations. Evidence shows they are being funded and facilitated from across the border. We have consistently raised this matter with Afghan authorities and expect decisive action.”

On relations with India, he said Pakistan remained open to dialogue based on mutual respect and international law but would continue to vigorously defend its sovereignty against any false narratives or hostile actions. “Our message is clear: baseless claims and militaristic posturing will not bring peace to South Asia. Only diplomacy and adherence to international norms can pave the way forward,” the spokesperson concluded.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding floods in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

Narrative of PTI, nothing but pack of lies: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Friday dismissed the narrative of the disintegrated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as a pack of lies. In reaction to the opposition’s Press Conference, the minister said their narrative had nothing to do with reality, absolutely based on lies, deceit and fraud.

He said those people who were betting on the country’s default are now stunned by the economic milestones achieved by Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The current account surplus, the increase in foreign exchange reserves, and a decrease in inflation and petrol prices are the major cause of their frustration, he said, adding the opposition is wary of the Foreign Direct Investment in the country.

He also noted the daily rise in the stock market, which reflects investors’ confidence in the economy. “They are doing criticism just for the sake of criticism,” he said highlighting a pattern of the PTI’s actions aimed at undermining the success of country.

Citing the upcoming visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan-a major milestone in Pakistan’s foreign policy, he said their press conference is aimed at sabotaging the high-level visit. The PTI had the history of always siding with those who are hostile to Pakistan, he stressed.

Tarar said the trials of May 9 riots were conducted on merits and supported by the concrete evidence. The videos showing ransacking and vandalizing of state installations and memorials of martyrs by the PTI goons are on the record.

The opposition’s outcry on this matter is baseless, as they have no real answer for their actions on the May 9, he said. “They have no policy, just a worn-out narrative,” he said, adding the opposition is trying all-out to deceive the nation.

He also directly addressed Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, urging him to disclose his assets to the nation. Tarar compared the current government’s foreign policy successes with the PTI’s tenure, which he said had left Pakistan isolated with poor relations with every other country.

Pak-China partnership to continue: COAS

Says Islamabad, Beijing armies to continue safeguarding shared strategic interests

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) on Friday emphasized that Pakistan Army and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) of China enduring partnership will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting regional stability and safeguarding shared strategic interests.

Speaking at a ceremony to commemorate 98th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) of China here at General Headquarters, the COAS reaffirmed that the Pakistan Army and the PLA are true brothers-in-arms. Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Pakistan Mr. Jiang Zaidong graced the occasion as the chief guest, said

a news release issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The ceremony was also attended by Major General Wang Zhong, Defence Attaché, officials from the Chinese Embassy, and senior military officers from the tri-services of Pakistan. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir extended a warm welcome to the Chinese guests and congratulated the PLA on its 98th founding anniversary. He lauded the PLA’s pivotal role in China’s defence, security, and nation-building.

The COAS underscored the strength and strategic significance of Pakistan-China relations, emphasizing that the bond between the two nations is unique, time-tested, and exceptionally resilient amid evolving

regional and global challenges. The Field Marshal highlighted that the Pakistan-China strategic relationship exemplifies mutual trust, unwavering support, and shared commitment. He stressed that despite shifting strategic dynamics, the friendship between the two nations has remained steadfast and unshakable.

Addressing the gathering, the Chinese Ambassador expressed his sincere gratitude to the COAS for hosting the event commemorating the PLA’s 98th anniversary. He acknowledged the steadfast role of the Pakistan Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism and reaffirmed China’s unwavering support for and commitment to its strategic partnership with Pakistan.

Opposition alliance calls for grand national dialogue

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The joint opposition on Friday sought a grand dialogue between all the political parties to get the country out of prevailing crises.

Briefing the media after the All Parties Conference (APC) organised under the banner of “Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Aain-e-Pakistan”, the opposition leaders called for another ‘Charter of Democracy’ to end the political stalemate.

Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Aain-e-Pakistan (TTAP) leader Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar said that deliberate efforts are underway to eliminate the opposition from Pakistan’s political landscape. “We have prepared a joint declaration after the APC that serves as a guiding light for all segments of society,” he said, adding that input from all parties had been incorporated into the document.

According to the declaration, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive and collective strategy to overcome Pakistan’s mounting challenges. “Yesterday marked one of the darkest days for democracy in Pakistan,” the statement read, as the confer-

ence strongly condemned the sentencing of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders.

The declaration stated that repeated assaults by the hybrid regime have rendered Pakistan’s parliamentary democracy meaningless. It demanded solutions for the issues faced by tribal districts and Balochistan, the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the immediate dissolution of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

According to the statement, judicial independence in Pakistan has effectively ended since the passage of the 26th Amendment. It demanded that all missing persons should be immediately presented in courts and called for an end to extrajudicial killings. The APC also condemned what it described as fabricated cases against BNP’s Akhtar Mengal and his family, and called for their immediate dismissal.

It rejected the results of the 2024 general elections, calling them unrepresentative. “Fascism is at its peak in Pakistan. Political chaos reigns, and both human rights

and the parliamentary democratic system have been completely destroyed,” the communiqué concluded.

Imran’s sons applied for visas to visit Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan’s sister Aleema Khan has confirmed that the former prime minister’s sons – Kasim and Sulaiman Khan – have formally applied for visas to visit Pakistan.

Taking to social media platform X, Aleema revealed that the application was submitted to the Pakistan High Commission in London a few days ago. She added that the commission has informed the family that it is still awaiting approval from the Ministry of Interior. Sulaiman Khan, 28, and Kasim Khan, 26, are expected to visit Pakistan as part of a broader campaign for their father’s release. In May this year, the two sons publicly voiced their concern over the PTI founder’s incarceration for the first time.

Iranian President due today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian is scheduled to arrive here on Saturday for a two-day state visit to Pakistan on August 2-3, 2025, at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Dr. Pezeshkian will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Foreign Minister of Iran Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, senior ministers, and other high-ranking officials, according to a Foreign Office press release. During his stay, President Pezeshkian will meet with President Asif Ali Zardari, and hold delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Lawyer shot dead

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Prominent lawyer Khawaja Shamsul Islam was shot dead outside a mosque in Karachi’s Defence Phase 6 area on Friday. According to police, both Khawaja Shamsul Islam and his son were shot at in the assassination attempt.

He was rushed to the hospital in critical condition but succumbed to his injuries on the way, SSP South confirmed. Two bullet casings were recovered from the scene and will be sent for forensic analysis. Khawaja Shamsul Islam had been practicing law for over 30 years and had previously survived an assassination attempt in 2024.

PM reaffirms support for GB, AJK after Monsoon devastation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed the support of the federal government to ensure relief and recovery in the monsoon devastation affected regions of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The prime minister chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the human and material losses caused by the ongoing monsoon season, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The session focused on immediate relief efforts, future preparedness, and federal support to the affected regions, a Prime Minister’s Office news release said.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed

deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives and extensive damage inflicted by torrential rains across the country, especially in GB and AJK. He reiterated the federal government’s unwavering solidarity with the regional governments and the affected people.

“The federal government stands shoulder to shoulder with the administrations and citizens of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir in this hour of grief,” the prime minister stated. “I will soon visit Gilgit-Baltistan to express solidarity with the victims, and a comprehensive federal relief package will be announced to support recovery and rehabilitation efforts,” he added.

The Prime Minister issued special directives to all federal agencies to collaborate closely with regional authorities to conduct

damage assessments and expedite relief measures. He stressed the need to prioritize life-saving interventions and safeguard both human lives and property. Highlighting the need for better disaster preparedness, the Prime Minister ordered an urgent overhaul of the early warning system run by the Pakistan Meteorological Department to make it more proactive and effective.

He also directed the concerned departments to restore and repair road networks and communication infrastructure on an emergency basis to ensure timely aid delivery and mobility in affected areas. The Prime Minister emphasized a coordinated and rapid response to minimize further damage and ensure that those affected receive timely assistance and rehabilitation.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir interacting with Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of Peoples Republic of China to Pakistan.

Pakistan-India conflict: Bilawal hails journalists role

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has lauded the role of Pakistan’s journalist community and Gen Z on the digital front during the recent Pakistan-India conflict, describing them as a national asset.

According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, while addressing a ceremony at the Sindh Chief Minister’s House marking the 75th anniversary of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), commended the organization’s long and distinguished struggle for safeguarding freedom of expression and strengthening democracy during periods of authoritarian rule. He said that the PFUJ is not just an organization, but a movement-one in which every generation of journalists has played a vital role. Whether during the MRD movement or the struggle for the restoration of democracy under the ARD, the journalist community across the country stood shoulder to

shoulder with political workers and pro-democracy leaders, unwavering in their fight for the right to freedom of expression and press freedom.

He recalled a moment during the ARD-led struggle, saying: “I remember the time when the then-dictator, in his final days in power, began imposing restrictions-even on television channels-and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto stood firmly with you (journalists), side by side.” Bilawal, while appreciating the role of Pakistani journalists during the recent Pakistan-India conflict, said, “I want to thank all of you for the role you played in India’s false and disinformation-driven narrative on the global stage-it is truly commendable.” He added, “I can proudly say that just as Pakistan’s Air Force defeated India with a score of 6-0, our journalist community similarly outclassed the Indian media.” He continued saying that the world witnessed that while many senior figures and anchors in Indian media became mere propagandists for their state-broadcasting disinformation and



lies-Pakistan, on the other hand, won the narrative battle even during the conflict. Thanks to our transparency, the credibility of our journalists, fact-based reporting, and responsible responses, we successfully countered their propaganda. And, Alhamdulillah, we continue to win this narrative battle to this day,” he said.

Bilawal Bhutto said that prior to the war with India, there were restrictions on digital media, but the conflict made it clear that these platforms are, in fact, national assets. “We are thankful that the government lifted those restrictions during the war, and to my

knowledge, they have not been reimposed since,” he said. He paid special tribute to Pakistan’s Generation Z for their remarkable performance on the digital front during the war against India. Expressing hope, he said the federal government should take note of the journalist community’s vital role and reconsider certain policies in recognition of their efforts.

PPP Chairman, while addressing the journalist community and its representative leadership, emphasized the need for their active role in countering disinformation and misinformation. He especially urged them to assist the Sindh government in draft-

ing effective legislation in this regard. He said, “Disinformation and misinformation have become weaponized tools - often used by extremists, terrorists, and hate mongers - and unfortunately, our hostile neighbor India also resorts to such tactics.” He added that while efforts to improve legislation for the protection of journalists must continue, he looks forward to PFUJ’s support in helping the Sindh government frame laws that can effectively combat disinformation and misinformation, and protect citizens from the harmful impact of false narratives.

Bilawal instructed Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon to continue arranging visits for journalists from other provinces to Sindh, so that accurate information regarding the development initiatives of the PPP’s people-centric government could reach the wider public across the country. He pointed out that the Government of Sindh has introduced revolutionary measures in various public service sectors, including healthcare. He further highlighted that the project for the reconstruction of

2.1 million houses for the 2022 flood-affected population is the largest of its kind in the world.

Bilawal Bhutto, while speaking about Balochistan, said that the province’s issues and challenges are historical in nature and can only be resolved through substantial investment and dedicated efforts. He urged Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif to pay special attention and take concrete steps to accelerate the development process in Balochistan. He also called upon the journalist community to visit Balochistan and witness firsthand the challenges faced by the provincial government. Furthermore, he appreciated the Balochistan government’s scholarship program for students under the leadership of Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti. Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, and other dignitaries also addressed the ceremony. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presented traditional Sindhi caps and ajraks as gifts to the leadership of the journalist community.



Sindh CM demands increased water share for Karachi

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah today criticized the federal government for its insufficient funding of the crucial K-IV water project for Karachi.

Inaugurating the 20th "My Karachi – Oasis of Harmony" International Exhibition, the chief minister emphasized the urgent need to resolve the city's water crisis and demanded an increased share from the Hub Dam.

Shah revealed that the federal government allocated a mere Rs3 billion for K-IV this year, against a promised Rs78 billion. In sharp contrast, he said, the Sindh government has fully financed all related parts of the project.

He outlined ongoing water initiatives, including four K-IV sub-projects, a Rs. 50 billion project to boost water feeder capacity, a Rs. 170 billion project to bring water from

Keenjhar Lake, and a new power plant for pumping stations.

The chief minister announced the upcoming inauguration of a new 100 MGD Hub Canal on August 14th, with plans to restore the old Hub Canal to the same capacity. He expects Karachi to receive 200 MGD from Hub Dam by year-end. He also mentioned the Dumlottee project, projected to add another 150 MGD this year.

Shah highlighted the province's Independence Day celebrations, themed "Maarka-e-Haq," symbolizing Pakistan's pursuit of sovereignty and justice.

He also referenced a 2015-16 World Bank analysis that estimated Karachi's infrastructure needs at Rs3 trillion, stressing the necessity of federal partnership in such massive undertakings.

Criticizing the federal government's handling of

natural gas distribution, Shah pointed out that despite Sindh producing 70% of the nation's gas, it does not receive its due share. He vowed to raise this issue at the next Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting, which he noted is overdue.

KCCI Chairman Zubair Motiwala acknowledged the Sindh government's support but called for further assistance with persistent issues, particularly gas and water shortages. KCCI President Jawed Bilwani expressed gratitude for the Independence Day theme, "Marka-e-Haq," and urged the Sindh government to upgrade Karachi's Expo Center to global standards.

He echoed concerns about water scarcity, K-IV delays, high water tariffs, gas shortages, and the need for infrastructure improvements and enhanced security measures.

40-km Green Corridor launched in Lahore

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Punjab government, in collaboration with Pakistan Railways, has decided to launch the Green Corridor Project to establish green belts along a 40-kilometer stretch of railway track between Shahdara and Raiwind, Lahore, covering 700 kanals of adjacent land. Valued at over Rs2.25 billion, the project is scheduled for completion within one year. It aims to reduce environmental pollution and enhance urban aesthetics through sustainable development.

As part of the initiative, old railway carriages will be converted into libraries and cafes, adding a cultural and recreational dimension to the corridor. The project has been divided into four development packages: Shahdara to Railway Station, Walton, Walton to Kot Lakhpat, and Raiwind.

The Housing Department of Punjab has submitted the PC-1 of the project to the Planning and Development Department for formal approval. Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi expressed gratitude to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for her support and cooperation in advancing the project.

Two accused in Chung gang rape case killed

LAHORE (APP): Two prime suspects involved in the gang rape of a woman in Lahore's Chung area were killed in an exchange of fire with the Crime Control Department (CCD) on Friday.

According to a spokesperson for the CCD, the incident happened last night when the suspects gang-raped a woman in the presence of her husband and also recorded a video of the heinous act. A First Information Report (FIR) was lodged at Chung Police Station following the incident.

Acting swiftly, the CCD traced the suspects within 12 hours and conducted a raid to arrest them. However, the accused opened fire on the CCD team in an attempt to resist arrest, injuring one police official. The CCD personnel returned fire in self-defense, resulting in the deaths of the two main suspects.

The spokesperson added that two other suspects managed to flee the scene while firing. A search operation is underway to apprehend the absconding culprits, and the area has been cordoned off.

UAE ambassador calls on Nawaz Sharif, Punjab CM

LAHORE (APP): United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, here on Friday.

According to a handout issued here, detailed discussion was held during the meeting on how to expand bilateral cooperation in fraternal relations, economic partnership,

education, science and sustainable development.

Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz warmly welcomed the UAE ambassador, and conveyed their best wishes and goodwill of people of Punjab to the visionary leadership and people of the UAE.

They agreed to take cooperation between Pakistan and UAE to new heights and paid tribute to the leadership of UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al

Nahyan.

They appreciated the scientific progress, environmental friendliness and modern vision of UAE leadership.

The PML-N president said, "Relationship between Pakistan and the UAE is not just diplomatic but a bond of hearts."

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "We are keen to further expand cooperation with the UAE in fields of education, research and environment."

She said, "Visa-free entry for official and diplomatic passport holders between Pakistan and the UAE is commendable."

She highlighted, "Increase in Pak-UAE bilateral trade volume is a source of joy. Education, health, infrastructure and renewable energy sectors in Punjab have been put on the path of innovation."

The Punjab CM invited the UAE investors, institutions and business community to invest in Punjab.

FBR transfers officers to boost performance and efficiency

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has undertaken the transfer and posting of officers in BS-17, BS-18, and BS-21, with postings for officers in other grades currently in process. This administrative reshuffle reflects FBR's ongoing efforts to improve organizational effectiveness, optimize resource allocation, and enhance revenue performance across the board.

A key goal of these postings is to expose officers to a variety of operational environments and responsibilities. By rotating officers through different geographical regions and functional areas—ranging from audit, enforcement, to taxpayer facilitation—the FBR aims to build a more versatile, skilled, and adaptable cadre of officers.

This approach not only strengthens institutional capacity but also contributes to the professional growth and career development of individual officers. Moreover, such an approach reinforces federal structure of FBR's service cadres.

Officers have been posted based on a transparent evaluation of their past performance and overall contribution to the organization. This meritocratic approach is intended to foster a culture of accountability and motivation within the FBR, while ensuring that high-performing officers are placed in positions where their capabilities can have the greatest impact.

By diluting concentrations of officers within specific formations, the FBR also aims to prevent stagnation and promote a more balanced distribution

of human resources.

Recognizing the critical role of field formations in national revenue mobilization, FBR has prioritized the placement of capable and experienced officers in high-potential revenue zones. Strengthening these critical areas is essential to meeting the country's fiscal targets and improving compliance, enforcement, and taxpayer services. The new postings are thus aligned with FBR's broader objective of enhancing revenue collection through better leadership, oversight, and field-level performance.

Additionally, FBR has taken steps to ensure the smooth relocation of officers and to provide necessary support at their new places of posting. The organization remains committed to facilitating its workforce as it implements these changes to advance institutional goals.

PTI describes Imran's solitary confinement as inhumane

KARACHI (PPI): PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh today denounced the ongoing solitary confinement of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, labeling it a breach of the Constitution, legal principles, and human decency.

In a Friday declaration, Sheikh criticized the two-year detention of Khan, a national figure and former elected leader, in what he called politically driven, unsubstantiated cases. He asserted that Khan has been deprived of legal entitlements and basic ethical treatment.

Sheikh criticized the clandestine legal proceedings against Khan and the limitations on his interactions with relatives, legal counsel, and physicians. He described these measures as unconstitutional and deliberate efforts to weaken

Khan, both mentally and physically, despite Khan's unwavering commitment to public rights and constitutional supremacy.

Sheikh detailed Khan's harsh incarceration, alleging he is isolated for 22 hours daily, refused access to medical care, and denied standard jail amenities. He called this state-sanctioned brutality. Secret trials without legal representation or family presence are a display of modern-day tyranny, he claimed.

Sheikh also condemned recent Anti-Terrorism Court rulings against senior PTI officials as a shameful example of judicial surrender to governmental pressure. He alleged the rulings aim to disrupt the party's planned August 5 protest movement.

He asserted that the gov-

ernment is employing all means to obstruct the democratic alliance and stifle opposition, but vowed that his party will not yield. August 5 will initiate a decisive national public movement, including widespread demonstrations in every Sindh district.

Reaffirming PTI's determination, Sheikh stated that the party's members remain undeterred by fabricated charges and oppressive measures. He maintained that the nation supports Khan, who symbolizes resistance against inflation, corruption, and inequity.

Sheikh warned that continuing injustice and political persecution are fueling public anger. He concluded that widespread resentment against state oppression is growing, and the nation will soon unite against tyranny.

Dr. Usman Ghani: Transforming IMSciences through visionary leadership



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani is a distinguished academic leader, researcher, and administrator with over 24 years of dedicated service at the Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar. Currently serving as the Vice Chancellor of IMSciences, he is widely recognized as a complete and impressive administrator whose visionary leadership has set IMSciences apart from other universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dr. Ghani holds the unique distinction of being the only Vice Chancellor in KPK whose university operates without a budget deficit—a testament to his strong financial stewardship and forward-looking policies. Under his leadership, student admissions have been steadily increasing year after year, making IMSciences one of the most sought-after institutions in the region.

He completed his Post-Doctorate in Management Science from the Gatton College of Business & Economics, University of Kentucky, USA, earned his Doctorate in Marketing from SZABIST,

Islamabad, and holds both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Business Administration (Marketing specialization) from the University of Peshawar.

Over the course of his career, Dr. Ghani has successfully combined academic excellence with institutional development. He has built strong linkages with national and international organizations, secured and managed multiple developmental projects, and positioned IMSciences as a forward-looking and financially sustainable model of higher education.

Among his landmark achievements, he led a World Bank-funded Capacity Building Program that trained over 1,600 faculty and staff members from Pakistan's public and private HEIs—a contribution highly acclaimed across the higher education sector.

His influence extends beyond IMSciences as well. He is a respected member of Pakistan's academic fraternity, actively serving on HEC's national panels for Institutional Performance Evaluation and MS/PhD program reviews. For his outstanding contributions to teaching, he received the HEC Best University Teacher Award in 2010.

A prolific researcher and thought leader, Dr. Ghani has published extensively in national and international journals and presented at leading global conferences. He is also a trusted advisor in higher education governance, serving on the Boards of Governors, Academic Councils, Boards of Studies, and Selection Boards of several universities across Pakistan.

With his blend of academic brilliance, administrative excellence, and financial prudence, Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani stands as a role model Vice Chancellor—leading an institution that is not only academically strong but also financially sustainable and growing each day.

LHC orders alternate routes before projects

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday directed that no development project should commence unless alternative routes are provided for the public.

Justice Shahid Karim issued the directive while hearing a set of petitions

filed by Haroon Farooq and others against ineffective measures to control smog. The Director General (DG) and Managing Director (MD) of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) appeared before the court on being summoned.

During the proceedings, the court expressed concern over the state of civic infrastructure in the city, questioning the WASA officials, "Have you seen the current condition of the city? Delays in development works are severely affecting citizens?"



KARACHI: Poor gypsy people established their make-shift houses under flyover as huge numbers of flood affected people arriving from ruler areas of province, at Qayyumabad area in Karachi.

US Consulate Lahore has new CG in Stetson Sanders

LAHORE (APP): The US Consulate General in Lahore announces the arrival of Stetson Sanders as the 35th US Consul General in Lahore. His assumption of duties was marked at a US National Day celebration on July 31, during which attendees also bade farewell to the outgoing Consul General Kristin Hawkins.

The event brought together prominent figures from the government - including Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, who attended the occasion as Chief Guest- alongside leaders from business, civil society, and the diplomatic corps, underscoring the enduring partnership between the United States and Pakistan.

Departing Consul General Hawkins expressed her appreciation for the warmth of the people of Punjab, saying "It has been an honor to represent the United States in Punjab, a province full of rich history, vibrant culture, and generous hospitality."

Incoming Consul

General Stetson Sanders remarked, "I am thrilled to return to Pakistan and am honored to serve in this important role. I look forward to deepening our collaboration with our many partners across Punjab."

Consul General Sanders brings over 20 years of experience in diplomacy. This is his third Pakistan-related assignment, reflecting his deep commitment to U.S.-Pakistan relations. He previously served at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad as well as in Washington D.C., overseeing a portfolio including Pakistan and Central Asia.

He has also served in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, India, and Spain. Before joining the State Department, he was a Peace Corps volunteer in Russia and Executive Director of a Washington, D.C. based policy institute. A California native, he holds degrees from Bradley University and Johns Hopkins University.

The celebration served as

a reminder of the shared values of the United States and Pakistan, as well as the importance of people-to-peo-

ple connections in strengthening bilateral ties. The U.S. Consulate General in Lahore remains committed to pro-

moting mutual understanding, prosperity, and security through partnerships across Punjab Province.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT (PMU) PRIMARY HEALTH CARE REFORMS PROJECT HEALTH DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

FRAMEWORK CONTRACT FOR PROCUREMENT OF JANITORIAL AND AYA SERVICES FOR 24/7 RHCs & BHUs OF HEALTH DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA.

- Project Management Unit (PMU), Primary Health Care Reforms Project Health Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, invites sealed Proposals (Technical & Financial) from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) registered firms to provide janitorial and Aya services for 24/7 RHCs & BHUs of Health Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under National Competitive Bidding for F.Y 2025-26.
- Process shall be conducted through **Single Stage - Two Envelopes Bidding** Procedure comprising a single package containing two envelopes as per KPPRA Rules-2014. firms are invited to submit their sealed offers/Bids according to the Single Stage Two Envelopes procedure online through EPADS i.e. www.eprocure.gov.pk.
- Process shall be carried out through **Least Cost-Based Selection (LCS)** method as per KPPRA regime where the Proposals that score higher than the minimum technical required score, the Proposal with the lowest evaluated cost is considered the Most Advantageous Proposal.
- Request for Proposal (RFP) document can be downloaded from the websites of Health Department. Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa www.healthkp.gov.pk, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) www.kppra.gov.pk and from e-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (EPADS) www.eprocure.gov.pk till **20th August 2025 (11:00AM)**.
- The bidders are required to submit their inputs in writing, as Pre-Proposal meeting with the interested bidders will be held on **12th Aug 2025 at 11.00AM sharp** in the office of the Project Director Project Management Unit Primary Health Care Reforms Project.
- The closing date for the online submission of sealed tender documents is **20th August, 2025, 12:00 AM** and tender documents will be opened online on the same day (20th August, 2025) at 11:00AM in the presence of authorize representatives of the firms. (In case of any situation beyond control, the same will be opened on next working day at the same time and venue).
- The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the bids as per provisions contained in Rule 47 of KPPRA Rules 2014.

Project Director
Project Management Unit (PMU)
Primary Health Care Reforms Project, House NO: 7
National Bank colony Warsak Road Peshawar
Health Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Contact # 091-7514905, Email: pherevamping@gmail.com

Zero Tolerance to Corruption

INF/P3359/25

PPC honors young achievers in colorful award ceremony



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Press Club organized a vibrant and dignified awards ceremony to recognize and encourage the outstanding academic achievements of children in the recent annual examinations. Held at Nishtar Hall, Peshawar, the event drew a large attendance of children and their parents from the journalistic community.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Fawad Sadozai, Senior Executive Vice President of the Bank of Khyber, congratulated the high-achieving students, praised their academic accomplishments, and personally awarded them medals. In his address, he emphasized that education is the foundation of national progress. He commended journalist parents for balancing their professional responsibilities with their children's education and upbringing, calling it an admirable example for society.

The ceremony was presided over by Peshawar Press Club President Mr. M. Riaz. Distinguished guests included General Secretary Tayyab Usman Awan, President of the Khyber Union of Journalists Mr. Kashifuddin Syed, General Secretary Mr. Irshad Ali, senior journalist Mr. Shamim Shahid, Chairman of the Education Committee Mr. Fareedullah Khan, and other prominent members of the media fraternity.

Speakers praised the initiative taken by the Education Committee of Peshawar Press Club, stating that such events not only motivate children but also acknowledge the dedication and sacrifices of their parents. Over 150 outstanding students from Class 1 to Class 8 were honored with certificates, medals, awards, and cash prizes.

To make the event even more memorable, special entertainment activities were arranged for the children. A captivating magic show and a jumping castle brought immense joy to the young participants. Their laughter and excitement lit up the venue, making the celebration truly unforgettable.

Parents lauded the Press Club's efforts, appreciating the recognition given to their children's hard work and success. They noted that such initiatives inspire children to excel further while boosting morale within journalist families.

In his closing remarks, President M. Riaz, lauded the services rendered by the Bank of Khyber for the economic development as well as social well being and thanked the BoK management, all the guests and reaffirmed the Press Club's commitment to organizing similar programs in the future.

He emphasized that promoting education and recognizing young talent are essential steps toward building a more positive and progressive society.

First to rise, last to fall: The glorious legacy of Sindh police

Sabahat Sarwar

THE history of the Sindh Police is a vibrant bouquet of brave, fearless, and intelligent officers. These individuals have not only strengthened the force in terms of capacity and numbers but have also devised effective strategies to deal with various challenges, including the maintenance of public safety and security. The province of Sindh has faced extremely challenging circumstances, including terrorism and various other crimes. Yet, the Sindh Police has consistently overcoming these hurdles with resilience and determination. The credit for the restoration of peace in Sindh goes to the brave officers and personnel of the Sindh Police who have tirelessly devoted themselves to their duties, often at great personal risk. The sacrifices made by these valiant officers, who laid down their lives in the line of duty, are an enduring part of the province's journey toward peace. Behind every success and sacrifice in the history of the Sindh Police stands a force of dedicated officers and personnel who have worked relentlessly for the restoration of peace and have never hesitated to give their lives for the homeland.



The police always stood as the first line of defense against every threat that challenges the safety and security of our nation. In every crisis, every emergency, and every moment of uncertainty, it is the police who step forward, placing themselves in harm's way to protect the lives of countless others. To honor the extraordinary bravery and selfless devotion of police officers who laid down their lives for the motherland, Pakistan observes Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Police on August 4 each year. This solemn day serves as a tribute to the martyrs of the police, whose sacrifices remain etched in the heart of the nation. The observance of Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Police was initiated in 2010 following the martyrdom of Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Safwat Ghayoor, who lost his life in a tragic suicide attack. His sacrifice became a symbol of the countless heroes who embraced martyrdom while standing guard over the nation. Since then, every August 4 stands as a day of remembrance for the police officers who have fallen in the line of duty—whether in suicide bombings, targeted attacks, deadly blasts, high-risk operations, or while confronting terrorism and crime.

A look into history reveals that the Sindh Police holds the distinction of being the first modern police force in the subcontinent. Throughout its existence, the Sindh Police has dutifully fulfilled its responsibility of maintaining law and order with utmost dedication and professionalism. With a legacy spanning over 180 years, the Sindh Police has consistently remained at the forefront of maintaining law and order, often at great personal risk. To date, more than 2,500 valiant officers of this force have laid down their lives in the line of duty, embodying the highest ideals of sacrifice and dedication.

One of the most striking examples of the Sindh Police's courage was demonstrated on June 29, 2020, during the terrorist attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange. On that day, four heavily armed attackers attempted to storm the building, aiming to inflict mass casualties. However, the swift and heroic response of the police thwarted their sinister plans. One such hero was Sub-Inspector Muhammad Shahid, who fearlessly confronted terrorists without regard for his own life. Alongside him, the brave personnel of the Rapid Response Force (RRF) and snipers kept a vigilant eye on every move of the attackers and prevented them from entering the Pakistan Stock Exchange building. Within just eight minutes, the nefarious plans of the terrorists were thwarted, preserving countless lives thanks to the bravery, skill, and quick action of the Sindh police, all four terrorists were eliminated within just eight minutes. Tragically, Sub-Inspector Muhammad Shahid, three security guards, and two civilians lost their lives, while seven others sustained injuries.

The Sindh Police has always stood at the forefront in safeguarding the lives and peace of its people—often at the cost of their own. The sacrifices made by the brave officers who laid down their lives in the line of duty are not forgotten. Their legacy continues to live on through the unwavering support extended to their families and the comprehensive Shuhada Compensation Package.

Shuhada Package: A commitment to the families of martyrs, understanding the magnitude of the sacrifices made by its personnel, the Sindh Police has established a generous compensation package for the families of martyred officers. This package not only serves as a token of respect but also aims to provide long-term security and support to the bereaved families. The high status of martyrs is also affirmed in the Holy Quran. In Surah Al-Baqarah (2:154), Allah says: "And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Rather, they are alive, but you do not perceive." This verse reminds us that the sacrifices of our martyrs are eternal and honored in both this life and the Hereafter. A Salute to the Guardians of Peace. As citizens, it is our moral and national duty to stand in gratitude and respect for the selfless services of our police. They are the true guardians who risk their lives daily to ensure our safety and peace.

"Sindh Police Zindabad, Pakistan Paindabad"

Chairman KPEZDMC pledges support for industrial growth



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Secretary Industries, Commerce and Technical Education (IC&TE) Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chairman Board of Directors, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC), Masood Ahmad, paid a visit to the KPEZDMC Head Office at Hayatabad, Peshawar. Officiating Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KPEZDMC, Aadil Salahuddin, along with senior management officials, warmly received the Chairman upon his arrival.

During the visit, the Secretary IC&TE was given a comprehensive briefing on KPEZDMC's mandate, the current status of economic zones and the company's strategic plans to catalyze industrial development in the province.

The discussions focused on KPEZDMC's role in facilitating investment, infrastructure development and job creation through industrial expansion.

To commemorate the occasion, the Chairman planted a tree sapling at the head office premises, symbolizing the commitment to sustainable and eco-friendly industrial growth.

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To commemorate the occasion, the Chairman planted a tree sapling at the head office premises, symbolizing the commitment to sustainable and eco-friendly industrial growth.

Expressing his appreciation for the company's efforts, the Secretary assured his full support to further strengthen KPEZDMC's initiatives aimed at driving economic prosperity and sustainable industrialization across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Kaiwan Wadood shines in SSC Exam



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Kaiwan Wadood has earned a distinctive position by securing 1017 marks in the 2025 SSC annual examination conducted by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar (BISEP).

A student of Forward Model High School, Saeedabad, Peshawar, Kaiwan credits his success to the grace of Allah, along with his tireless efforts, unwavering support and heartfelt prayers of his teachers and parents.

RTI has good impact on media landscape

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: RTI enhances journalists' credibility, by giving them access to authentic figures and information held by public entities. By using this Act, they can get authentic and fact based information for investigative journalism, which resultantly puts pressure on institutions for ensuring merit and transparency. This was stated by the Chief (care-taking) Information Commissioner, KP Information Commission (KPIC) while interacting with a group of journalists and members of civil society, in a session, arranged by Individualland, here at a local hotel in Peshawar.

Commissioner (Legal) Arshad Ahmad and Deputy Director Communication, KPIC, Syed Saadat Jehan were also present on the occasion. Answering the Participants' queries, Arshad Ahmad said that, RTI has been instrumental in exposing corruption in public affairs. "KPIC is committed to ensure the implementation of this Act specially its section-5, in public entities.

That maximum information should be pro-actively available on their respective websites", the Commissioner added.

ANP for improved security

PESHAWAR (APP): Member Provincial Assembly Awami National Party, Nisar Baz said on Friday that law and order was vital for development and demanded effective measures to improve security situation in merged areas.

Road clearance system in Galyat made more efficient

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In line with the vision of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and the directives of Tourism Secretary Dr. Abdul Samad, the road clearance system in Galyat has been made more efficient and rapid in case of landslides or snowfall. Now, in any emergency situation, traffic is restored within minutes instead of days or hours, ensuring tourists face no inconvenience.

According to Engineer Sajid Mahmood, an engineer at the Galyat Development Authority, the KITE Project of the KP Tourism Department has

provided modern machinery to Galyat, enabling roads blocked by landslides or snowfall—which previously remained closed for up to 10 days—to be cleared within minutes in case of any emergency. Our response time 5 minutes our team 24 hours alert This machinery has been in use for several years and, by the grace of Allah, has operated for thousands of hours without major breakdowns. Regular cleaning, maintenance, and immediate repairs are ensured.

The machinery operators stated that the equipment provided by the KITE Project is unmatched, with no parallel in performance. They shared that during the Murree incident of 2021,

despite seven feet of snow in Galyat, their team safely relocated all tourists to secure locations without any happenings.

By the grace of Allah, their hard work led to a successful clearance operation with no accidents, and all tourists were safely evacuated.

They explained that two operational circles have been established in Galyat, Circle One in Nathiagali, equipped with four heavy machinery vehicles and one tractor, and Circle Two in Changlagali, with three heavy machinery vehicles and one tractor.

Each circle has 20 operators and 20 helpers on duty. During snowfall, snow helpers are stationed at

every kilometer onward.

The operators are regularly trained and periodically receive additional training, making them highly skilled in handling the machinery.

They expressed deep gratitude to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, particularly the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Archaeology & Museums, for providing such excellent machinery, which allows them to perform their duties without difficulty.

Thanks to these equipment and machinery, road clearance operations are completed in minimal time. "This machinery is our livelihood, and we take full care of it," they added.

Maternal, child health is at the heart of public health priorities: Ihtisham

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali met with a high-level delegation of the province's leading paediatricians, led by former senator and renowned child health expert, Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani here on Friday.

During the meeting, wide-ranging discussions were held on key areas concerning maternal and child health, neonatal care, promotion of breastfeeding, activation of the Khyber Institute of Child Healthcare, strengthening of the Lady Health Worker (LHW) Programme, establishment of Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) and daycare centres, and the promotion and capacity building of paediatric super-specialist services across the province.

Advisor Ihtisham Ali assured the delegation that under his leadership, the Health Department is taking all necessary and result-oriented steps to sustainably address the province's

pressing child health challenges.

"Maternal and child health is a foundational pillar of our public health policy. We are committed to deploying all available resources to ensure modern, efficient, and accessible healthcare services for our people," he stated.

The Advisor highlighted the government's commitment to institutionalising breastfeeding support as a policy and budgetary priority.

He informed the delegation that relevant departments have been mobilised to ensure implementation of the revised Breastfeeding Act, which includes robust regulatory frameworks to curb unethical marketing of formula milk.

The delegation was also briefed on progress toward the full operationalisation of the Khyber Institute of Child Healthcare, which will serve as a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to advanced paediatric care in the province.

Advisor Health added that top-performing officers

will be appointed to lead the institute, and that transparency and accountability in healthcare governance remain central to these efforts.

Referring to the LHW programme, Ihtisham Ali noted that measures are being taken to revitalise community-based health outreach, especially in under-served areas. He also shared that a list of the top 30 paediatric super-specialists in the province has been finalised, with the aim of strengthening referral systems and access to specialised paediatric care.

The delegation appreciated the Health Department's ongoing reform efforts and shared expert recommendations related to child health services.

Ihtisham Ali welcomed the suggestions and directed the concerned officers to take immediate steps to translate those recommendations into practical action.

Concluding the meeting, the Health Advisor expressed gratitude to the delegation and reaffirmed the government's commitment to collaborative progress.

ment to collaborative progress.

"Real change is only possible through joint efforts by medical professionals, policymakers, and the community. We welcome every sincere initiative that advances the public good and protects the health of our children," he said.

Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Health Advisor, Ihtisham Ali, on Thursday underscored the urgent need to prioritise breastfeeding as a public health and policy imperative, while addressing a ceremony marking the World Breastfeeding Month 2025.

The event, held in Peshawar, was attended by Director General Health Services Dr. Mohammad Saleem, former Senator and paediatrician Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani, representatives from the Paediatric Association, UNICEF officials, Director Nutrition Dr. Fazal Majeed, Director MCH Dr. Khizar Hayat, KP President Insaf Doctors Forum Dr. Nabi Jan, and other relevant stakeholders.



In brief

Commissioner visits school F.P. Report

KALAYA: Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah along with the Deputy Commissioner Orakzai Muhammad Irfanuddin, made a surprise visit to Government Higher Secondary School Andkhel Lower Orakzai and checked the attendance of teaching staff, cleanliness of the school and the preparations made by the school on the eve of the return of students from the summer vacations, on Friday. Commissioner highly appreciated the welcome placards prepared by the school administration on the arrival of the students and congratulated the principal and other staff for wonderful arrangements. He also issued necessary instructions to the teaching staff of the school to work hard with the students. Meanwhile, the Commissioner also visited the Civil Veterinary Dispensary Andkhel and reviewed the staff attendance, cleanliness and facilities provided in the Civil Veterinary. He gave necessary instructions to the concerned staff regarding the provision of best facilities to the public. During the visit, the Commissioner Kohat also inspected the Government High School and Basic Health Center at Marai Payan, Kohat and construction work on the Zira Road and strictly directed the concerned authorities and the contractor to ensure quality work and its timely completion.

Minister visits player residence F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Advocate, along with the Chairman Gumbat Tehsil Sajid Iqbal, has visited the U-16 Volleyball Player Wahab Abdullah's residence, who led the Pakistani team in the Asia Volleyball Final Under-16 at Tehsil Gumbat, Kohat, the other day. The Minister congratulated Wahab Abdullah and his father Farhat Mahmood and eulogized his excellent performance and expressed his pride and good wishes. Aftab Alam on the occasion, said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has already announced a reward of Rs.5 lakhs for those gold medalist players who have brought glory to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the national and international levels. He assured to patronize this great player from Kohat at every level and said that the entire province, especially the people of Kohat, are proud of him.

Police busts 271 gangs F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad claimed dismantling of 271 criminal gangs leading to the arrest of 691 gang members and the registration of 2,361 cases against them from January to July 2025, on Friday. The police also made significant recoveries of stolen property including 61 cars, 1,176 motorcycles, 81 tolas of gold, 268 mobile phones and 272 stolen buffaloes. The total value of recovered cash and valuables is estimated at over Rs1.8 billion. The department's efforts against drug trafficking resulted in the arrest of 3,623 drug peddlers and the registration of 3,822 cases. Large quantities of narcotics were seized, including 1,304 kg of cannabis, 49 kg of crystal meth (ICE), 261 kg of heroin, 232 kg of opium, and 51,520 bottles of liquor.

PTI women's wing held worker convention

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf women's wing held a convention here the other day in Garhi Kapura area with the purpose to mobilize women activists of the party for the PTI protest in Islamabad scheduled on 5th August.

Dr. Riffat Sardar organized the women's convention which was attended by hundreds of female workers. The PTI Senator Rubina Naz Chaired the convention event. She was also the chief guest on the occasion.

Other attendees included Nayab (President of the Swabi Women's Wing), Danish (General Secretary), Muslim Taj (President of Peshawar District), Shakeela, Alia Nawab, Farah Tariq, and other women leaders.

While addressing the convention, Senator Rubina Naz and Dr. Riffat Sardar stated that in the context of August 5, women will go to the last extent for the release of their beloved leader Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, who have been imprisoned without any crime.

The entire nation stands with Imran Khan, who is behind bars today for the sake of Pakistan, while an imposed group is inflicting great injustices on the people. On the occasion other PTI prominent women leaders also addressed the convention gathering. They emphasized that they must come out of their homes for these political prisoners and

participate actively on August 5.

They further said that the state had not just imprisoned Imran Khan, but had also imprisoned the Constitution, human rights, the judiciary, rule of law, and justice. When these were free, Imran Khan would be free — and when Imran Khan was free, these institutions would also be restored and liberated. The speakers went on to say that their movement was not only for the release of Imran Khan but for the sovereignty of the nation. They pledged to make the movement successful so that they could breathe in freedom and liberty.

They also praised the efforts of PTI Women's Wing Provincial General Secretary Dr. Riffat Sardar and MPA Amir Farzand Khan for organizing this grand women's convention in Tehsil Garhi Kapura, and paid them tribute for their dedication and enthusiasm.

Food authority seizes 600 rotten eggs from unlicensed bakery: Acting on a tip-off, Food Safety Team 2 conducted a swift operation and raided an unlicensed bakery unit located in Doran Abad, Katlang Road, Mardan. During the raid, nearly 600 rotten, filthy, and foul-smelling eggs were recovered.

These eggs were being used in bakery products such as biscuits, cakes, and other items, which were intended for distribution in various areas of Mardan. Assistant Director Food Safety, Ruqia Nawaz Khan,

along with her team, conducted the operation just as the spoiled eggs were being used in the preparation of bakery items. The team caught the bakery owners red-handed during the inspection.

Further revelations during the raid exposed the use of substandard and harmful oil, extremely poor hygiene conditions, and the absence of medical fitness certificates for the staff. Due to these serious violations, the bakery unit was immediately sealed, and fines along with legal action have been initiated against the owners under the Food Safety Act.

Excise police intensified crackdown: The Excise Police Station, Mardan Region, has intensified operations against drug smuggling, foiling a large-scale drug smuggling attempt, recovering 60 kilograms of hashish and arresting four suspects.

According to a press release issued by the Excise Police Station Mardan Region, successful operations against drugs are underway. Excise and Taxation Officer (Counter Narcotics Operations), Circle Officer, Station House Officer (SHO) Excise Police Station Mardan Region, Inspector, Assistant Sub-Inspector and other personnel, on a tip-off, during a search operation on the Ring Road towards Chamtar Chowk, vehicle number ANV 934 Islamabad recovered 60,000 grams (60 kilograms) of high-quality hashish and arrested four suspects on the spot.

Cholera & diarrheal diseases sharply impacting children

F.P. Report

WANA: A sharp rise in cholera and diarrheal diseases among children has been reported in several areas of Lower Waziristan, with health officials attributing the surge to recent climatic changes and poor sanitation conditions. Sources within the Health Department confirmed that dozens of children across the district's four tehsils have been affected.

District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Adnan Khan said several government hospitals have seen a notable increase in the number of patients in recent days. However, he assured the public that the situation remains under control and that swift measures are being taken to curb the spread of the disease.

Local residents expressed concern over the deteriorating sanitation system and lack of access to clean drinking water, which

they believe are the primary factors fueling the outbreak. They have called on the district administration and the Health Department to step up efforts to improve hygiene conditions and provide immediate medical assistance to affected children.

Dr. Khan confirmed that special medical teams have already been dispatched to the affected areas to assess the severity of the situation and implement necessary preventive measures. "The current increase in diarrheal and stomach-related illnesses has not reached epidemic proportions," he clarified, adding that such cases tend to spike during the ongoing monsoon season.

Awareness event organized: An awareness event emphasizing the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for six months was held at the office of the Deputy District Health Officer

(DDHO) in Wana, South Waziristan Lower. The program was organized by INP KP with the support of UNICEF as part of the global awareness week on breastfeeding.

The event drew a large number of participants, including religious scholars, tribal elders, teachers, and members of political and social circles. Addressing the gathering, Maulana Ijaz highlighted that breastfeeding plays a vital role in building a child's confidence and shaping personality, adding that Islam allows breastfeeding up to 30 months.

Other key speakers included Deputy DHO Dr. Irfanullah, Senior National Nutrition Program Coordinator Dr. Zain-ul-Abidin, EPI Coordinator Dr. Hameedullah, and District Nutrition Manager Waris Khan, who spoke extensively on the health benefits of breastfeeding.

Readers Forum blames SPSC for nepotism in recruitment

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The Readers Forum of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto Library in Larkana took out a rally in front of the Press Club against the alleged merit violation during the recruitment of ASIs in the Police Department by the Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC).

The protests also raised slogans against the SPSC with placards and banners in their hands. Addressing the protesters, leaders Siraj Jatoi, Wajid Ali, Waqar Hussain and others protested and said that recently, the Sindh Public Service Commission has pushed

back the hard-working and deserving poor candidates who scored more marks in the interview for ASI recruitment in the Sindh Police Department and declared the children of the rich and the wealthy as the winners, which we will not accept under any circumstances.

They alleged that the officials of the Sindh Public Service Commission took a bribe of Rs. 50 to 60 lakhs from each candidate who passed the ASI jobs in the police department and declared them as winners. Such an act has violated the rights of hardworking and intelligent candidates,

which is condemned. They further said that we are deeply sorry for the Sindh government that even after obtaining the required marks, we are being deprived of our rights.

The Reader Forum appealed to the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Chief Justices of the Sindh High Court to strictly question the officials of the Sindh Public Service Commission and to cancel the orders issued by the ASIs and give a new interview date so that the restlessness created among the candidates can be eliminated, otherwise the scope of the protest will be expanded.

CEO health visits THQ hospital Kamalia

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Toba Tek Singh Dr. Kashif Nadeem visited Tehsil Headquarters Hospital (THQ) Kamalia. He was accompanied by Medical Superintendent Dr. Mian Adeel Arif, who conducted a detailed inspection of the hospital's emergency, dialysis unit, main store and various wards.

DMS Dr. Ghulam Abbas and Admin Officer Ali Tasaram were also present on the occasion. On this occasion, Dr. Mian Adeel Arif said that all medical facilities are being provided completely free of cost to the patients coming to the hospi-

tal's emergency, dialysis, CCU and other departments. He said that the care and treatment of the patients is continuing as per standard principles.

CEO Health Dr. Kashif Nadeem, while appreciating the efforts of the hospital administration, directed that in accordance with the vision of the Punjab government, all possible quality and timely medical facilities should be provided to the patients so that the public's trust in government health institutions is further strengthened.

Agriculture dept recovers 100 kgs illegal Phosphine tablets: The Pesticide Warning & Quality Control of Pesticides Wing

of the Agriculture Department Punjab has launched stringent operations against the illegal sale of toxic phosphine tablets, which are used for wheat storage. These operations are ongoing across various districts of the province.

So far, 22 FIRs have been registered, and 100 kilograms of illegally stored phosphine tablets worth Rs. 700,000 have been recovered and confiscated. During these operations, 17 individuals have been taken into custody. Phosphine tablets are highly toxic chemicals. Their use without proper conditions and expert supervision poses a severe risk to human life and environmental safety.

Cleanness drive kicks off in Bara F.P. Report

BARA: Fifteen days long cleanliness campaign began in Bara Bazaar on Friday. On the direction of the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, district administration with assistance of Tehsil Municipal Authority (TMA) Bara initiated the drive.

In this connection an opening ceremony was held on the main highway in Bara Bazaar that was attended by Tehsil Chairman, Bara Mufti Kafel as chief guest besides Tehsil Municipal Officer (TMO) Bara Fazal Subhan, tribal elders and officials.

Addressing on the occasion Mufti Kafel said that a clean environment was the guarantee of a healthy society. The cleanliness drive is not an official formality but it is the duty of every single citizen to play his due role to keep his surroundings clean and healthy, he opined.

He cautioned the local shopkeepers and traders that they would fine on throwing waste and garbage on the road during the campaign. TMO Fazal Subhan, Bara said that daily TMA workers will be deployed in the Bazaar in two shifts to keep streets and roads clean.

Cleanliness drives launched F.P. Report

BUNER: Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs) Daggar and Gadezai on Friday have formally launched special cleanliness campaigns in their jurisdictions. During this special campaign the big and small markets would be cleaned from August 1 to 14th August.

At the start of these campaigns, awareness walks were held from the TMA office to Daggar chowk. TMA Gadezai was held the awareness walk from TMA office to Jowkhela Chowk. Assistant Commissioner Daggar Basharat Shah, Chairman, Haji Rozi Khan, TMO Daggar Zahoor Ahmed Khan, Supervisor of Sanitation drive, Sadaqat Khan, sanitation staff, local people and shopkeepers participated.

Similarly, the Tehsil Gadezai Chairman Sher Alam Khan and TMO Anwar Shamim Khan led awareness walk from office to Jowkhela Chowk. Office staff locals and shopkeepers participated.

After the walk, AC, Daggar Chairman, Daggar and TMO, Daggar, Chairman Gadezai TMO Gadezai distributed face masks, shoppers and hygienic gloves among the local people and shopkeepers so that they could use them during sanitation. They further said that the aim of this campaign is to provide a clean and healthy environment to the people to celebrate the Independence Day with great zeal and national fervour.

Awareness campaign launched F.P. Report

SHANGLA: District Health Department Shangla and the Provincial Nutritional Cell, with the support of UNICEF and Nutrition International, launched an awareness campaign at Government Primary School Alpuri No. 2, highlighting the importance and benefits of breastfeeding.

Ikhtham Khan welcomed all the guests, including DHO, DDHO, LHWs, and LHS Coordinators, and shared four key messages related to the program. He then invited Muhammad Ahmad Naeem from Nutrition International to deliver a comprehensive lecture on breastfeeding. Mr. Naeem elaborated on the four key messages and strongly emphasized that there is no substitute for a mother's milk, which has long-lasting effects on the child's health and also benefits the mother.

District Health Officer (DHO) Shangla, Nazir Muhammad, termed the Breastfeeding Campaign as a commendable step towards a healthier future for children.

Blood donation camp organizes in memory of martyrs



F.P. Report

JAMRUD: In the memory of martyred police officials, a blood donation camp was organized here in police line, Shahkas, Jamrud, district Khyber on Friday. Number of police officials actively participated in the activity by donating blood.

District Police Officer (DPO) Khyber Rai Mazhar Iqbal visited the camp and

appreciated the spirit of the police officials. He inaugurated the camp first by donating his blood.

Speaking on the occasion DPO said that the martyred police sacrificed their present to save our future and by donating blood was to honor and recognize their unmatched sacrifice. Praising dedication of the Khyber Police, DPO said that the wellbeing activity

was not just a medical necessity but a spiritual attachment with the sacrifices, given by the police force and a continued will of public service.

It is to be stated here that 04 August is observed as police martyrs day across the country to remember and recognize valuable sacrifices of the police forces rendered in the line of duty.

Addl Secy E&SED visits govt school Lower Dir

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Additional Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Fayaz Alam, paid a one-day visit to Lower Dir district. Upon the instructions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, he welcomed students at Government Centennial Model High School Timergara and participated as a chief guest in the assembly ceremony held to mark the resumption of academic activities after summer vacations.

District Education Officer and Principal Government Centennial Model School Rahat Ullah will be the Additional Secretary and briefed him

on the school's issues. Addressing the assembly, Additional Secretary Fayaz Alam praised the performance of Government Centennial Model High School Timergara, saying it is a model school that provides quality education. He distributed gifts and sweets among students who attended school on the first day after summer vacations and also congratulated students who passed the matriculation exams.

The Additional Secretary emphasized the importance of education in today's world, saying that only nations that possess knowledge and wisdom can progress. He urged students to focus on their studies and make their country proud with their abilities and tal-

ents. He also highlighted that education is a fundamental right of every human being and is essential for becoming a useful and productive member of society.

Additional Secretary E&SED appreciated the school's performance, citing its high enrollment and excellent results in the matriculation exams. He attributed the school's success to the hard work of teachers and students. He assured that the provincial government and the Elementary and Secondary Education Department would continue to support the school's progress. After the assembly ceremony, the Additional Secretary visited the school's laboratories and reviewed the available facilities.

Rescue Malakand provided assistances to 431 emergencies

F.P. Report

MALAKAND: District Emergency Officer (DEO) Rescue 1122 Malakand, Nasir Khan has released the monthly performance report for July 2025. According to the spokesperson for Rescue 1122 Malakand, under the leadership of District Emergency Officer Nasir Khan, Rescue Malakand responded to a total of 431 emergencies in July, providing timely services to the public.

According to details, Rescue 1122 Malakand

Control Room received a total of 21,159 calls in July 2025, including 3,762 information calls and 16,966 fake/non-essential calls. Rescue Malakand provided services in 431 emergencies, including Medical Emergencies 336, Road Traffic Accidents 47, Fire Incidents 7, Fights/Firing Incidents 11, Drowning Incidents 12, Recovery Emergencies 17, one Building Collapse Emergency, and Health Referral Ambulance Services.

Rescue 1122 Malakand provided services in 235

emergencies through Health Referral Ambulance Services, including transfers within district 91 emergencies, transfers to larger hospitals outside district 144 emergencies.

The performance report highlights the crucial role played by Rescue 1122 Malakand in providing emergency services to the public in District Malakand. The organization's timely response and efficient services are a testament to its commitment to saving lives and providing assistances in times of need.

PASCO negligence spoils tons of wheat at warehouses

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Gross negligence by PASCO officials during the recent spell of monsoon rains has resulted in the massive spoilage of wheat worth millions of rupees stored at various PASCO warehouses across Hafizabad. Due to the absence of basic protective measures, the rainwater infiltrated storage sites, rendering the wheat unfit for human consumption.

Reports reveal that major procurement centers including Sukheke, Kaleke, and Kot Sarwar were among the most affected. Stored under open skies and without adequate waterproofing, the wheat stock remained exposed to heavy downpours for several days. Now soaked and discolored, the grain has effectively become flood-damaged.

Local farmers and landowners have expressed deep anger and disappointment over the incident. "This wheat was grown with the sweat of our brow," said one distressed farmer. "But due to the sheer negligence and carelessness of PASCO officials, our hard work has gone to waste. The national treasury has suffered a loss of millions."

What adds insult to injury is that no disciplinary

action has been taken so far against PASCO officers who have held their positions for years. Instead of accepting responsibility, these officials are now allegedly trying to cover up their incompetence, with fears growing that they might attempt to reintroduce the tainted wheat into public food supply chains under future government subsidy schemes, posing a serious health risk to the public.

When questioned, PASCO Area In-Charge Mr. Umair downplayed the severity of the situation. "This wheat has been in storage for the past five years," he said. "What could we possibly do to preserve it for so long? We are currently assessing the damage with our teams to determine the extent of spoilage to both the grain and the storage bags (bardana). Only after the full report is compiled will the actual loss be known." The silence from higher authorities and the continued inaction against the responsible PASCO personnel have sparked growing calls for an independent investigation and urgent accountability.

Agri Development key for national prosperity: National development and prosperity are directly linked to the progress of the

agricultural sector and the socio-economic uplift of farmers. Recognizing this, the Punjab government under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched several historic and revolutionary initiatives worth billions of rupees to enhance per-acre yield and ensure the welfare of farmers across the province.

These remarks were made by Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad, Abdul Razzaq, while addressing a meeting of the District Agriculture Advisory Committee. The meeting was attended by Deputy Director Agriculture Muhammad Yousaf, Additional Director Livestock Dr. Laeeq Ahmad, representatives of the farming community, and officials from relevant departments.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Deputy Director Water Management to conduct a detailed survey of irrigation water channels, with a focus on the rehabilitation of distributaries to ensure water supply reaches tail-end farmers. Additionally, the meeting was briefed on an ongoing crackdown against the sale of counterfeit fertilizers and pesticides, aimed at protecting crop quality and ensuring farmer safety.



Jordanian crew drops lifeline to civilians

GAZA (AFP): Aboard a Jordanian military plane, aid crates are parachuted into Gaza, where war and blockade have pushed more than two million Palestinians to the brink of famine. The Jordanian Air Force C-130's crew of eight soldiers pushes pallets of food out of the rear hatch. Parachutes unfurl, and the crates -- stamped with the Jordanian flag -- drift toward the devastated Gaza Strip, nearly 22 months into the war, an AFP journalist on board reported. Journalists were only allowed to film the airdrop operation but not the vast swathes of destruction during the two-hour flight, which overflowed Palestinian territory for just a few minutes. The flight departed a base near Amman and was joined by a second plane from the United Arab Emirates. Approaching Gaza by sea, the aircraft released aid packages containing sugar, pulses and baby milk. Aid agencies, while grateful, stress that airdrops -- first launched in early 2024 -- are no substitute for overland access. This latest round of air-

drops, authorised by Israel last week, is led by Jordan and the UAE. The United Kingdom carried out its first drop, while France plans to deliver 40 tonnes of aid starting. Inside the aircraft, crew members whispered prayers as the packages were released. "There's a big difference between what we see of Gaza on television and what we see now, and what (Gaza) was like before," said the captain, peering down at the landscape from 2,000 feet (600 metres). "It's a tragic and very sad scene -- entire neighborhoods are being razed." The pilot, who asked not to be identified, said he could see people on the ground tracking the plane's path. "It shows how bad their situation is," he said. Israel imposed a total blockade on aid entering Gaza in March, before allowing very limited quantities in late May. Jordan's King Abdullah II said the "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza was the worst in modern history, and said current levels of aid were far from sufficient. UN-backed experts warned that a "worst-case scenario"

famine was happening in Gaza that cannot be reversed unless humanitarian groups get immediate and unimpeded access. The Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) said airdrops over Gaza, announced by various countries in recent days, would not be enough to avert the "humanitarian catastrophe". "The worst-case scenario of famine is now unfolding in the Gaza Strip," the IPC said in a statement. The World Food Programme, UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organisation warned time was running out and that Gaza was "on the brink of a full-scale famine". "We need to flood Gaza with large-scale food aid, immediately and without obstruction, and keep it flowing each and every day to prevent mass starvation," WFP executive director Cindy McCain said in a joint statement by the three UN agencies. Facing intense international pressure, Israel announced a daytime pause in hostilities in certain areas for humanitarian purposes.

WHO chief says continuous medical aid into Gaza 'critical'

GENEVA (AFP): The World Health Organization's chief said getting a continuous flow of medical supplies into Gaza was "critical", as WHO trucks carrying aid headed for the border. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the UN health agency had moved 10 trucks from El-Arish in Egypt to Israel's Kerem Shalom border crossing into the Gaza Strip. The trucks are carrying "essential medicines, laboratory and water testing supplies", he said, with two additional trucks with medical supplies, along with 12 pallets of blood products, expected to join them. "All WHO supplies will then be moved into Gaza, along with three trucks with medical supplies from health partners," Tedros said on X. "The health needs in Gaza are immense. A continuous flow of medical supplies is critical. "We continue to call for sustained, safe, and unhindered access for medical aid into and across Gaza and for a ceasefire. Peace is the best medicine." Israel imposed a total blockade on Gaza on March 2 after ceasefire talks broke down. In late May, it began allowing a small trickle of aid to resume, amid warnings of a wave of starvation. This week, Israel launched daily pauses in its military operations in some parts of Gaza and opened secure routes to enable UN agencies and other aid groups to distribute food in the densely populated territory of more than two million. The WHO says that in Gaza, airstrikes and a lack of medical supplies, food, water and fuel have "virtually depleted" the under-resourced health system, with many hospitals out of operation and others barely functioning. The provision of essential health services -- from maternal and newborn care to treatment for chronic conditions -- has been "severely compromised", the UN health agency it says. A WHO spokesman told AFP that nine of the agency's trucks had gone into Gaza on June 25; four on June 28; 11 on July 8; and six more on July 20. "None of the trucks were looted since we resumed supplies," he added.

Ukraine will fix anti-graft law

KYIV (AFP): Ukraine will fix a controversial anti-graft law that sparked protests last week, its foreign minister told AFP ahead of a crucial parliamentary vote Thursday, but critics said some MPs might be reluctant to back the changes. President Volodymyr Zelensky changed the law that curbed the powers of anti-graft bodies after the original legislation sparked the largest public unrest since Russia's invasion more than three years ago.

The law had put the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) under the direct authority of the prosecutor general, who is appointed by the president. Critics said the move could facilitate presidential interference in corruption probes. The parliament is to vote on a new version, approved by the agencies, which restores their independence, but also provides for regular lie detector tests for anti-graft officials. "We anticipate the vote tomorrow. The relevant parliamentary committee has already given its approval. We are getting this fixed," Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga told AFP in an interview. Several hundred people staged a new protest in the rain in central Kyiv on the eve of the vote to put pressure on lawmakers. "Hands off NABU and SAPO," they chanted. "I hope that things will improve somehow, but it will be almost impossible to completely restore our reputation," Olena, a 51-year-old IT worker, told AFP at the protest. Another protester, Pavlo, said however that he did not think the action "did any harm" as people were focused on the war with Russia. But he added that the law has damaged public trust in the government, which already "wasn't very high".



MOSCOW: This handout picture released by the Sakhalin Region Government, shows the tsunami-hit Severo-Kurilsk on Paramushir, one of Russia's northern Kuril Islands.

Brazil slams 'unacceptable' US sanctions on judge

BRASILIA (AFP): Brazil has criticised the United States Department of the Treasury's decision to impose sanctions on Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes over alleged suppression of freedom of expression and the ongoing trial of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva also released a statement condemning what he called the "US government's interference in the Brazilian justice system". "The Brazilian government stands in solidarity with [de Moraes], who is the target of sanctions motivated by the actions of Brazilian politicians who betray our country and our people in defence of their own interests," President Lula said, without naming Bolsonaro. De Moraes is overseeing a case against the former president, who stands accused of masterminding a plot to orchestrate a coup and stay in power after his 2022 election defeat to Lula. Announcing sanctions against de Moraes, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the Brazilian Supreme Court justice had "taken it upon himself to be judge and jury in an unlawful witch-hunt".

"De Moraes is responsible for an oppressive campaign of censorship, arbitrary detentions that violate human rights, and politicised prosecutions - including against former President Jair Bolsonaro," Bessent said. De Moraes was sanctioned under the Global Magnitsky Act, which allows the US to impose economic penalties against foreigners it considers to have a record of corruption or human rights abuses. Bessent's statement accused de Moraes of "serious human rights abuse[s]" for targeting opposition politicians - including Bolsonaro - journalists, newspapers, and US and international companies, including social media platforms. The decision orders the freezing of any assets or property de Moraes may have in the US. US President Donald Trump previously tied tariffs on Brazil to what he called a "witch-hunt" against his right-wing ally. In a letter in mid-July announcing a 50-percent tariff on Brazilian goods, which will start on August 6, Trump opened the message with criticism of Bolsonaro's prosecution. Trump has since softened the blow by excluding key sectors in Brazil, such as aircraft, energy and

orange juice, from the heaviest levies. "We're not facing the worst-case scenario," Brazilian Treasury Secretary Rogerio Ceron told reporters. Responding to the 50-percent tariff in his statement, President Lula criticised Washington's "unjustifiable" attempts to use "political arguments to validate the trade measures" against his country. "The political motivation behind the measures against Brazil undermines national sovereignty and the historical relationship between the two countries," he said. On July 18, Brazilian police swooped on Bolsonaro's home and political headquarters, while de Moraes ordered the former president to wear an ankle bracelet and stop using social media over allegations he courted interference in his trial from Trump. Hours later, Washington imposed US visa restrictions on de Moraes, his family and other unnamed court officials, escalating tensions with the government of Latin America's largest economy. Bolsonaro has denied attempting to overthrow the government, but has acknowledged taking part in meetings aimed at reversing the election's outcome.

'Class war': outsiders moving to Puerto Rico trigger displacement

PUERTO RICO: Gloria Cuevas thought she would live forever in her pink, century-old house on Puerto Rico's west coast -- but then her landlord decided to transform the home into an Airbnb. Cuevas left her home -- now purple and split in two -- and her beloved city for another further south, forced out by the rising cost of living and an explosion of short-term rentals on the US Caribbean island territory. Puerto Rico -- long a draw for sun-worshipping tourists -- is also a hotspot for foreign investment and offers tax incentives to attract outsiders. "At first, I couldn't come back here," Cuevas, 68, told AFP, gazing at the home she once made her own. "It made me feel sad and angry at the same time." Cuevas's experience is becoming an all too familiar tale across the island, where signs promote mansions for sale, and the Airbnb logo is plastered on homes where locals once lived. Intensifying Puerto Rico's gentrification are laws that encourage primarily wealthy mainland Americans to move there in exchange for preferential tax treatment.

The program originally enacted in 2012 was meant to spur economic growth and attract investment on the island, an unincorporated territory under US control since 1898. Those relocating must acquire residency and buy property to keep the significant incentives -- but many Puerto Ricans as well as some US lawmakers say this is driving up housing prices and encouraging tax evasion. "Colonialism kills us, it suffocates us," Cuevas said. "It's a global theme. It's a class war." Ricki Rebeiro, 30, moved to San Juan more than a year ago, bringing his packaging and marketing business that services cannabis companies with him. He told AFP that basing his work in Puerto Rico saves his company millions of dollars annually, and that he pays zero personal income tax -- what amounts to the equivalent of "a whole second income" that he says he tries to reinvest locally. "I believe that the locals are probably upset that they're not reaping the same benefits of somebody like me," said the entrepreneur, whose family is based in Pennsylvania and

Oklahoma. The system is "unfair," Rebeiro said, "but I also don't believe that I should be the one to blame for that. I didn't structure the program." Puerto Ricans in recent years have slammed their government for what they say is a hyperfocus on outsiders at the expense of locals, as the rich -- including people like the famous content creator-turned-boxer Jake Paul -- move in. In Cabo Rojo, a seaside city about an hour's drive south of Rincon on the island's western coast, some residents are taking the matter into their own hands. During a recent canvassing effort, a group of activists urged their neighbors to protest a project called Esencia, which aims to build a \$2 billion luxury resort and residential development on coastal land. Dafne Javier said her family goes back generations in this area -- her great-grandfather was the last mayor in the municipality under Spanish occupation, and the first under US rule. The 77-year-old told AFP the Esencia project would "totally change the landscape," saying it would create a gated town within a town and predicting that

wealthy newcomers "won't mix with us." Protesters noted that the planned development would be in the vicinity of protected areas. They say it would destroy the natural habitat of some endangered species, while exacerbating problems with potable water, electricity supply and trash pick-up. Roberto Ruiz Vargas -- COO of Three Rules Capital, the developer behind Esencia -- disputes those notions, and told AFP that "from the outset, our intention has been to develop the land responsibly and sensitively, minimizing impact." He pointed to plans to power the development primarily with solar energy. He also said developers were working with both the water authority and the Department of Natural Resources to "address concerns about our water sources" including "independent systems that will reuse rainwater and treated wastewater for irrigation uses." Ruiz Vargas said developers estimate the project will directly create more than 4,000 jobs, and thousands more across the island. — Aljazeera

Myanmar's military govt enacts new electoral law

BANGKOK (AP): Myanmar's military government has enacted a new electoral law that imposes punishments of up to the death penalty for anyone who opposes or disrupts the elections it has promised to hold at the end of this year. The new law was published in the state-run Myanma Alinn newspaper. It comes as the country continues to suffer from the turmoil that followed the army's seizure of power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, which triggered widespread popular opposition. The military sought to justify its seizure of power by claiming massive fraud took place in the 2020 election, though independent observers did not find major irregularities. After peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations were put down with lethal force, many opponents of military rule took up arms. Large parts of Myanmar are now embroiled in conflict. The ruling military had said after its takeover that an election was its primary goal but repeatedly pushed back the date. The plan for a general election is widely seen as an attempt to normalize the military's

seizure of power through the ballot box and deliver a result that ensures that the generals retain control. The new law, signed by Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, says anyone who orates, speaks, organizes, incites, protests or distributes letters to disrupt any part of the electoral process shall be punished with three to 10 years imprisonment, as well as a fine. It also says that anyone who threatens, obstructs, abuses or severely hurts any personnel of the election commission, candidates or voters could be sentenced to three years to life in prison. It says whoever destroys or damages any equipment or materials used in elections, including ballot papers, or any related building or structure, could get five years to life in prison. "If the action results in the death of a person, each person involved shall be sentenced to death," the law says. Security committees will be formed to monitor the activities of internal and international organizations that may threaten security during the election period, it says. Critics have said the military-planned election will be neither free

nor fair because there is no free media and most of the leaders of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party have been arrested. The country's current security situation also poses a serious challenge to holding elections, with the military believed to control less than half the country. However, the military-appointed state election commission said in June that it would hold the elections in 267 of the total 330 townships, depending on the security situation. The National Unity Government, Myanmar's main opposition organization, and the powerful ethnic armed groups that have been fighting the central government for greater autonomy have said they would try to prevent the election. Padoh Saw Taw Nee, spokesperson for the Karen National Union, the main ethnic Karen fighting force battling Myanmar's army in the southeast, told The Associated Press that the new law showed the military was tenacious in trying to hold the "illegal and sham" election. "We will continue with our own methods and plans regarding that election matter," he said.

22 killed at Angola fuel price hike protests

LUANDA: At least 22 people were killed and 197 others were injured in violence that erupted during protests against a fuel price hike this week, Angola's government has said. The unrest broke out when minibus taxi associations launched a three-day strike against a government decision to increase the price of diesel by one-third, part of efforts to curb costly subsidies and shore up public finances. Looting, vandalism and clashes with police started in the capital, Luanda, and then spread to six other provinces. Sporadic gunfire was heard across Luanda and several other cities as people looted shops and clashed with police. President Joao Lourenco's cabinet met and received an update on the security situation and police response. A presidency statement said there had been 22 deaths, 197 people injured and 1,214 arrests. Sixty-six shops and 25 vehicles had been van-

dalised, and some supermarkets and warehouses looted, the statement said. The statement added that the army was deployed to restore order as the riots "triggered a climate of widespread insecurity". Interior Minister Manuel Homem told reporters that a police officer was among the 22 people killed. The streets of Luanda were tense and largely empty, although there were some queues outside petrol stations and some shops. There was a heavy presence of security forces. Many shops remained closed, but public transport slowly resumed after a two-day standstill. When the latest wave of protests began two weeks ago, Human Rights Watch accused the police of excessive force against what was a largely peaceful demonstration. Police unnecessarily fired tear gas and rubber bullets and assaulted protesters in those demonstrations, the

US-based rights group said. Angola has been gradually removing fuel subsidies since 2023, when a petrol price hike also triggered deadly protests, encouraged by the International Monetary Fund among others. Authorities have often been accused of clamping down harshly on protests to silence dissent in Angola, an oil-rich nation on Africa's Atlantic coast where the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola party has been in power for 50 years - since independence from Portugal in 1975. In a joint statement, the opposition UNITA and Bloco Democratico parties said Angola was in a "severe economic and social crisis" that was a result of government policies "disconnected from the country's reality". Subsidies amounted to as much as 4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) last year, according to the country's finance minister. — Aljazeera

Seven top Costa Rican ministers to step down

SAN JOSE (Reuters): Seven Costa Rican government ministers including the vice president and finance minister have presented their resignations, President Rodrigo Chaves said, adding they decided

"to seek new horizons to move the country forward." Vice President Stephen Brunner and Finance Minister Nogui Acosta are among those who chose to step down, Chaves said.

Major resignations were broadly expected as politicians prepare to pursue candidacies for the Central American nation's next general election, slated for February next year.

'All gone': Beijing villagers left with nothing after deadly floods

BEIJING (AFP): Villager Hu Yuefang returned to her home on the rural outskirts of Beijing to pick up medicine for her elderly and disabled father, only to find it had been washed away by some of worst flooding to hit the Chinese capital in years. Swathes of northern China have endured deadly rains and floods this week that killed at least 48 people and forced the evacuation of tens of thousands. As clean-up efforts began, AFP journalists visited the northern Beijing district of Huairou -- one of the worst-hit areas (less than 100 kilometres (62 miles) from the bustling city centre. In Anzhouba village, muddy waters had receded, exposing scraps of metal and broken branches. Local Hu recounted a frantic call to her stepdaughter, 23, who was home with her parents when the waters struck. "But before I could finish my words, the call

dropped," she told AFP. She later found out that rushing water from the river around 10 metres away had flooded the house and blocked the front door. Her daughter was forced to kick out the window and evacuate her grandparents to the neighbour's balcony, dragging her disabled grandfather as his wife pushed from below. "I've never seen this before, in all my 40 years of life. Neither have those who've lived 80 or 90 years," she said. "I returned today to retrieve my medicine, but the water swept it all away." Wearing slippers, she marched over downed powerlines and debris from broken fences and destroyed cars as she surveyed the damage to the village where she has lived her entire life. Mud with streaks of silt caked her walls -- evidence that the flood waters had reached at least over a metre high. "I've already

lived here for many years - my parents have lived here for almost 70 years, I've lived here for 40 -- I can't bear to leave." A small blue sofa near the front door had washed out into the alley. The family of six subsists off 2,000 (\$278) to 3,000 yuan a month, Hu -- a stay-at-home carer whose husband works as a labourer -- said. They grow their own vegetables -- from green beans, cucumbers, potatoes -- but the field has been destroyed. "It's gone. All gone, flushed away," she said. In Liulimiao town, which covers Anzhouba village, AFP journalists saw evacuations taking place, with elderly villagers driven by bus from their mountainous homes. An older woman who declined to give her name said she was "not allowed" to return home but had gone back anyway to check in. When the floods hit, she said, "there was nobody

paying attention to us", adding the water hit "suddenly". Another villager, surnamed Wang, gazed at the destruction to his home which he built with government subsidies 15 years ago. He estimated his losses to be around 100,000 yuan (\$14,000). His wife and two daughters were home and unable to open the doors when the waters "suddenly rose". The waters reached 1.5 metres (five feet), leaving brown muddy residue on the wall and a mounted TV. Their car, which Wang bought so his daughter could practice driving, was washed uphill from outside of their home. Five more minutes of flooding might have put his family's life in danger, he said. "It didn't give people a chance," Wang said. His home was now "unlivable", he explained tearfully. "We've become wards of the state," he said. "My heart feels very bad."

The Frontier Post

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Zelensky overturns law

AS Ukraine's MPs gathered at parliament in Kyiv on Thursday, some held cardboard signs that read, "We are with our people." It was a message to thousands of young protesters who had taken part in the biggest anti-government demonstrations since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. They were out in force again on Thursday. The MPs then entered parliament, the Rada, and took part in a vote that overwhelmingly overturned a law introduced by President Volodymyr Zelensky last week that curtailed the independence of two key anti-corruption agencies known as Nabu and Sap - the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office. The signs carried by the MPs outside the Rada were a nod to the placards carried by thousands of young people who had taken to the streets in towns and cities across Ukraine for almost a week. The protesters had demanded that Zelensky and his government "take their hands off" the two anti-corruption bodies, and they threatened to continue carry on until the government made a U-turn. Within days, it did. Zelensky's original bill had stripped the two bodies of their independent authority to decide who to prosecute in high-level corruption cases, giving that prerogative to the general prosecutor - a presidential appointee.

For the placard-waving protesters, safeguarding the independence of Nabu and Sap was as crucial to their European future as the war against Russia was a matter of life and death for their country. In 2022, Kyiv was granted the coveted status of EU candidate country - but on condition it mounted a credible fight against corruption. For Ukraine's Western partners, donors and investors who pour money into the country through international assistance and funding programmes, the existence and independence of the two anti-corruption bodies are non-negotiable. And for Ukraine and its war-shattered economy - that external financial help is critical. It was only 10 days earlier that MPs had backed Zelensky's controversial law, and yet they voted on Thursday by 331 to 0 to overturn it. On both occasions they appeared to be following Zelensky's direction.

However, Tsyvinski is a well-regarded anti-corruption expert and the selection commission still wants him appointed. All these elements resulted in one of the biggest power crises for Zelensky's team since he came to power in 2019. Three and a half years into the full-scale war, the risk of further such mis-steps could come at a significant cost. Next year, Ukraine's budget deficit could hit \$13bn (£10bn), according to a National Bank estimate. Kyiv would not be able to continue fighting the war if were to lose Western partners' support. Already, the EU has reduced some of its financial aid to Ukraine because the government has not kept up with promised reforms. Ukraine's young protesters appear to have understood that all too well, and were prepared to challenge their government in a country they chose to stay in despite the deadly threat of Russian drone and missile attacks.

Mass migration

TO many Brits, it has long been a statement of the obvious that mass, uncontrolled migration is fuelling crime. It's just common sense. Some societies have higher levels of violent and sexual crime, and individuals who migrate from those countries to the UK are unlikely to shed those cultural differences quickly. It's a point I made recently in the context of the rape gang scandal. We have imported thousands of people from alien cultures who possess mediaeval attitudes towards women. Cue much hysteria from the liberal establishment. Supposedly intelligent elites have smeared anyone advancing the link between immigration and crime as bigots. They have hidden behind the lack of data as a comfort blanket - this makes them unable to prove their hypothesis that immigration is enriching, but it also crucially prevents immigration restrictionists from proving it's making the country less safe either.

Belatedly the debate is now changing as the facts emerge. We now know 40 per cent of sexual assaults committed in London last year were by foreign nationals - across the whole country that figure is 26 per cent. And we now have indicative data by nationality too: Albanians, for example, remain the largest foreign national group in prison. Immigration liberals now have nowhere to hide. Tom Swarbrick recently asked the Minister for Women and Equalities, Jess Phillips: "Do you think there are people in this country who have a culturally very different view of men, and are therefore more likely to be engaged in [sex offences]?" She squirmed. All countries are patriarchal, she responded - as if the status of women in the UK and countries with FGM and forced marriage are somehow the same. Phillips was left stumped when confronted with the indicative data that Afghan men are twenty times more likely to be convicted of a sexual crime than Brits. She sidestepped the uncomfortable truth - unable to quibble it - and retreated to explaining that she has limited resources so it's not her focus. It was at that moment I can imagine listeners shouting at their radios. Well, of course, resources are tight - so let's not make our crime epidemic any worse through a ridiculously naive immigration system.

Today yet more data has emerged which represents another nail in the coffin for immigration liberals. We have imported so many sexual predators and violent individuals that there are now record numbers clogging up our prisons at extraordinary cost to the taxpayer. The progressive position must surely be to remove every single one of these sick individuals. Why on earth would we risk the safety of women - of our wives, sisters and daughters? I await the calls from women's equalities campaigners for deportations - but I'm not holding my breath. It's astonishing that so many self-described feminists continue to defend mass migration, directly or indirectly, even when the risks are now so clear. When forced to choose between the two, they seem to always choose mass migration over the interests of women in this country. Even with our criminal justice system at bursting point, Starmer has made no intervention to fix this problem. He has chosen to pass emergency legislation to release thousands of dangerous criminals from prison early, rather than initiate emergency measures to deport thousands of foreign offenders. And he's done nothing to restrict visas from those countries whose nationals are fuelling crime. But now he has nowhere to hide. The data is clear: failure to act would be an abdication of duty.

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Demonic humanitarianism: Silent deaths in Gaza

Hilal Elver

AS we approach the second anniversary of the horrific and genocidal assault on the civilian population of the Gaza Strip, we are witnessing Israel's systematic disregard for international law and human rights and its weaponization of humanitarian principles. In any armed conflict, the denial of food and water constitutes a war crime under international criminal law. But the mass starvation in Gaza-which quickly evolved into a man-made famine-is unlike any other crisis in modern times.

In Gaza, not only is access to food and water deliberately obstructed, but humanitarian aid itself has become a tool of warfare-used as leverage and denied as a means of collective punishment. The visibility of this crisis, the abundance of credible evidence of war crimes, the immense suffering of civilians-above all women and children-and the impunity of powerful actors make this both a test case for the erosion of humanitarian norms and a tragic outlier in the history of international law.

The blockade and starvation of Gaza are not new. They have a long history-and a uniquely bleak future compared to other conflict-related famines. Since 2007, Gaza has been under Israeli blockade. During this period, Israel systematically calculated the minimum caloric intake required for survival-creating a so-called "Gaza Diet."[1]

Entering the war, Israel had detailed knowledge of the population's basic needs and made a conscious, sustained choice to deny adequate access to food and clean water for over 21 months.

Unlike other conflicts, there is no escape from the devastation in Gaza. The entire territory is a war zone, and all 2.3 million Palestinians are treated as enemies[2]-collectively punished and militarily targeted. Humanitarian convoys wait at border crossings, fully loaded, but are denied entry. Food rots within sight of starving families, often just meters away.

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December 2023, with winter approaching, most homes and residential areas were destroyed. The majority of Gazans were living in tents or the ruins of buildings-without food, water, cooking facilities, heating, or sanitation. Evidence has long shown that catastrophic living conditions, a crumbling healthcare system, and severely inadequate and sporadic humanitarian aid produced mass malnutrition and imminent famine.

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denied UN and NGO reports about the use of starvation as a weapon. The US government also ignored clear warnings and overwhelming evidence. For months, most Western governments avoided using the words famine or genocide in relation to Gaza. The UN's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)[3], the authoritative global body on famine assessments, has yet to formally declare a famine in Gaza-despite mounting evidence due to political pressure from perpetrators. Statements by UN Special Rapporteurs, based on scientific data, and multiple interim rulings by the International Court of Justice [4] warning of the "plausibility of famine" have been disregarded. Instead, Israeli forces have responded with further attacks on aid convoys[5] and on civilians trying to collect sacks of flour.[6] These were not collateral damages; they were targeting tactics.

Day by day, the situation has gone from bad to

worse-to catastrophic. On March 2, 2025, during a broken ceasefire, Israel blocked all international humanitarian aid from entering Gaza, allowing only minimal deliveries through a militarized and dehumanizing distribution system it controls. In March 2025, the blockade entered a harsher phase, marked by stricter restrictions and the militarization of aid distribution. After two months without food and water, the United States, alongside private

tinues. Many are shot-by Israeli forces, private security, or armed groups. Gaza's civilians are forced to choose between being killed by snipers or dying of hunger. Today, simply following the path of supposed humanitarian aid amounts to a death sentence.

On July 20, 2025, Israeli tanks and snipers attacked a 25-truck World Food Programme convoy[9] at the Zikim crossing. More than 100 Palestinians waiting for food were killed. It is a demonic inversion of humanitarianism: starvation weaponized, aid turned into bait, and civilians punished for seeking sustenance.

Famine, though still undeclared, is now undeniably present in Gaza. Why does the IPC exist if it cannot act? In recent days alone, over 100 people have died of hunger[10], including infants. Humanitarian workers and medical staff are collapsing from exhaustion and malnutrition. Every day, 10-15 people die from starvation. Starvation is a silent death. It hides its cruelty. It is a societal torture.[11] People lose the energy to ask for help. Children stop crying. It is also one of the most painful deaths-the body consuming itself. Children suffer first, and if they survive, they are left with lifelong physical and cognitive damage. The effects of the Gaza famine will persist for generations.

Even the death toll has become a political battleground. Israel accuses Gaza's health authorities of inflating numbers, yet respected research institutions have reported far higher estimates. In July 2024, The Lancet [12] projected over 186,000 deaths-many from indirect causes such as starvation, dehydration, and exposure. Oxfam[13] now reports that in the past 100 days, the daily death rate in Gaza is over 250-higher than in any other 21st-century conflict.

Unless there is an immediate permanent ceasefire or a meaningful intervention by the international community, Gaza will become even more of a monstrous killing field-a real-life version of The Hunger Games. What once seemed like dystopian fiction is now a horrifying reality, unfolding in plain sight.

Giuseppe Spatafora

Türkiye still hopes that US President Donald Trump will behave differently in his second term and lift the F-35 ban. However, the administration's stated goal to disengage from Europe creates incentives for Ankara to reduce its dependencies and strengthen ties with Europe.

The final key ingredient was the change in the German government. The new chancellor, Friedrich Merz, has reversed the previous government's opposition to the sale of Typhoons to Ankara. Chancellor Olaf Scholtz had blocked the sale due to political considerations as well as fears that Türkiye could use the Typhoons against Greece. The new government agreed to lift its veto due to improvements in Turkish-Greek relations, Ankara's agreement to use the fighters in NATO frameworks only, and the need to strengthen Europe's defense partner-

ships. Could the Eurofighter sale be a first step towards intensified defense cooperation between Türkiye and its European counterparts? At first glance, it would make sense to strengthen ties. The upcoming US force posture review might recommend a significant reduction in the American presence in Europe - such as the 20,000 troops stationed in Poland since 2022. Europeans will need to make up for the reduction in the American conventional presence in Europe. The Turkish army, the second-largest force in NATO, appears a natural substitute. And Türkiye's role in patrolling the Black Sea, protecting NATO's southern flank and reaching out to the Global South make it a valuable ally.

Türkiye would also benefit from closer ties to the European defense and technological industrial base (EDTIB). NATO's countries

Turning point for Palestine in int'l law

Mutaz M. Qafisheh & Mazen Zaro

THIS piece comes at a pivotal moment marked by the collision of two key developments relating to the legal status and future of Palestine. One is the launch of the International Peace Conference to operationalize the two-state solution, co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia, which is expected to be followed by France's formal recognition of the state of Palestine in September. The second is the Israeli parliament's (Knesset) recent vote on a resolution urging the government to declare Israel's sovereignty over, and the annexation of the occupied West Bank.

The simultaneous push for recognition of Palestine and Israel's annexation policy marks a critical turning point for the two-state solution. Are we witnessing the emergence of a genuine global shift to enforce legal and institutional accountability, or is a colonial fait accompli once again outpacing international justice? The Knesset's resolution represents a state policy aimed at entrenching sovereignty over militarily occupied land, overtly contravening jus cogens norms (peremptory rules of international law that no state can override), particularly Article 2(4) of the UN Charter that prohibits the use of force to acquire territory and the right to self-determination. While technically non-binding and invalid under international law, the resolution's impact lies in its reflection of an official policy of annexation and an expression of state intent. It paves the way for formal gradual assimilation of the West Bank into the state of Israel as was the case with East Jerusalem and Syria's Golan Heights. Such a decision forms a wrongful act under the law of state responsibility.

The International Court of Justice's (ICJ) advisory opinion of July 19, 2024 affirmed that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory (the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza) constitutes a continuing breach of international law, exacerbated by settlement expansion and population transfer. The ICJ instructed all states and international organizations to refrain from recognizing the unlawful occupation and take effective measures towards its termination. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly's resolution on that Sept. 13 set a one-year time limit (by September 2025) for the end of occupation. Yet, as the deadline approaches, Israel's legislative push for annexation signals not just non-compliance but a deliberate challenge to the world court's order. The Knesset vote may also serve as critical evidence for the ongoing International Criminal Court investigation into "the Situation in the State of Palestine" (ICC-01/18). By endorsing annexation, Israel's parliament has explicitly revealed a state policy that underpins crimes under the ICC's Rome Statute, particularly Article 8(2)(b)(viii): transfer of civilian population from the territory of

the occupying power into occupied territory, i.e. Israeli settlements. This legislative act demonstrates Israel's unwillingness to investigate or prosecute its officials, the lack of which justifies the ICC investigation under the principle of complementarity. The vote is not a mere political rhetoric; rather, it is an institutionalization of mens rea (criminal intent) and policy, providing the ICC with a robust basis to indict high-ranking Israeli civil and military figures.

French President Emmanuel Macron's announcement that France will recognize the state of Palestine at the UN General Assembly in September signals a tectonic shift in Europe's approach toward Palestine. Traditionally, the EU conditioned recognition on the outcome of negotiations, treating it as a reward rather than a tool. Macron reversed the long-standing European position: framing recognition as a means to salvage the two-state solution.

As a UN Security Council permanent member and a key EU leader, France may have a catalytic effect. It might encourage other undecided states, such as the United Kingdom, to follow suit. These states must translate symbolism into effective measures: sanctions against settlement entities, diplomatic isolation of annexation advocates, economic boycott, armed embargo and support for Palestine state-building. When diplomatic recognition counteracts legislative annexation, the former must be reinforced by measures to confront the latter.

This nexus between recognition and annexation captures the tension that may well define the next phase of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With the General Assembly's September deadline looming, Israel's annexationist sprint demands more than condemnations. International law obliges states to withhold recognition of annexation, adopt measures by targeted sanctions, arms embargoes, trade restrictions, and empower judicial criminal mechanisms.

The Knesset vote shattered the legal ambiguity Israel has long invoked to justify its occupation under the guise of a "temporary situation." The international community now faces a moment of truth to translate international norms into action, or to witness the erosion of international legitimacy under the weight of normalized annexation. History shows that international law is not powerless when backed by political determination. The movement against apartheid in South Africa demonstrated how sustained pressure, through non-recognition, sanctions, and legal mobilization, can dismantle entrenched regimes. Palestine poses a parallel test. Will the world apply the same legal and moral position or let annexation normalize the illegality? This confrontation between recognition and annexation puts the future of international legitimacy at stake.

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Türkiye, Europe, and future of defense cooperation

ON July 23, Türkiye and the United Kingdom signed a memorandum of understanding allowing Ankara to operate Eurofighter Typhoon fighter planes. The agreement came after Germany's Security Council approved the sale of 40 Eurofighter jets. Turkish pilots will now be able to fly Typhoons, built by a consortium of stakeholders from the UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

This breakthrough - the result of changes in the strategic scenario, the German government, and US posture, even though they are not part of the project - could represent a step-change in operational cooperation between Türkiye and Europe. However, long-term challenges will not simply fade away.

We can point out three main changes that facilitated the Eurofighter deal. The first is the shift in the strategic context. Back in 2019,

Russia and Türkiye were normalizing relations after their 2015 aircraft shoot-down incident. But since 2022, the two countries have drifted further apart. The Russian invasion of Ukraine created distance between Moscow and Ankara, with the latter supporting Ukraine with drones. Relations between Türkiye and other NATO countries have improved since Ankara dropped its opposition to the alliance. Finally, the very volatile situation in the Middle East increased incentives for Ankara and other European capitals to cooperate to secure NATO's southern flank. These changes in context created the permissive conditions for the deal.

A second contextual factor was continued uncertainty about the US posture. Despite a successful NATO summit a month ago, allies remain deeply uncertain about the US commitments to European defense.

Europe's defense partnership with Türkiye was not immune to these shifts. The US posture review might recommend a significant reduction in the American presence in Europe - such as the 20,000 troops stationed in Poland since 2022. Europeans will need to make up for the reduction in the American conventional presence in Europe. The Turkish army, the second-largest force in NATO, appears a natural substitute. And Türkiye's role in patrolling the Black Sea, protecting NATO's southern flank and reaching out to the Global South make it a valuable ally.

Türkiye would also benefit from closer ties to the European defense and technological industrial base (EDTIB). NATO's countries

will increasingly invest in their defense base. Many of those investments will be in dual-use goods which could have implications for broader economic growth. The EU's Rearm Europe plan promises to bring additional investments to strengthen the continent's defense industry - including by integrating Ukraine's now-advanced defense sector. For the Turkish defense industry, which increasingly exports to the European market (in 2024, total defense exports reached \$7.15 billion, up 29% from 2023), it would be crucial to secure as large a share of this market as possible.

However, serious obstacles to cooperation will also remain. Some of the structural issues, such as the Cyprus question or recurring tensions with Greece, likely to continue limiting structural cooperation with the EU. Nevertheless, these underlying tensions have not prevented the EU and Türkiye

from meeting earlier this year under the framework of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). Hence, the near future could see increased cooperation between Türkiye and European counterparts. As the Eurofighter deal suggests, this will likely be matched by increased operational cooperation, both in NATO and in ad hoc coalitions (such as partnering with the reassurance force in Ukraine in the event of a ceasefire).

What does it mean for the future of the relationship? The worsening security environment is urging European and Turkish leaders to take a more pragmatic approach, in the name of strengthening European security. The Eurofighter deal could be part of this trend, and more deals could follow. Whether this will result in more structured cooperation remains uncertain. A more dynamic relationship may be on the horizon.

Pakistan’s abandoned and ignored SDGs

THE Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs are a set of 17 global goals established by the United Nations in 2015 to promote peace, prosperity, and environmental protection around the world. These goals aim to address major global challenges such as poverty, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, and climate change. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved by 2030, encouraging countries to work together for a better future. The SDGs emphasize the importance of leaving no one behind and ensuring that development is inclusive and sustainable for people everywhere.

Pakistan’s progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains slow and uneven. According to the 2023 SDG Index, Pakistan ranks 125th out of 166 countries, indicating significant gaps in achieving the 2030 Agenda. The country is on track for only 8 out of 17 SDGs, with regression in critical areas such as poverty, education, and climate resilience. Economic instability, political challenges, and climate-related disasters have further hindered progress. While the government has launched initiatives like Ehsaas and the Green Pakistan Initiative, weak implementation, insufficient funding, and governance issues continue to impede meaningful advancement. Here is the analysis of Pakistan’s dismal progress in all SDGs:

SDG 1: NO Poverty: Poverty remains a major challenge, with approximately 39.4% of Pakistanis living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2024). Rising inflation, economic crises, and climate shocks have exacerbated financial hardships for millions. The Ehsaas Program, which provides cash transfers and social protection, has offered some relief but struggles with coverage gaps and funding constraints. Without stronger economic reforms and job creation, Pakistan is unlikely to meet its SDG 1 targets by 2030.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger: Food insecurity is worsening, with 36.9% of Pakistanis experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity (WFP, 2024). Malnutrition affects 40% of children under five, leading to stunting and developmental issues. Climate change, water scarcity, and inefficient agricultural practices contribute to food shortages. While

programs like the National Zero Hunger Program exist, they lack sufficient scale and funding to address the crisis effectively.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being: Pakistan’s healthcare system faces significant challenges, including limited access to medical services, especially in rural areas. Maternal and child mortality rates remain high, though immunization efforts have seen some improvement. Infectious diseases like polio and dengue persist, while non-communicable diseases (diabetes, heart disease) are rising. Increased health funding and better infrastructure are essential to achieving SDG 3.

SDG 4: Quality Education: Pakistan has the second-highest number of out-of-school children in the world (22.8 million), with literacy rates stagnating at around 62%. Gender disparities persist, particularly in rural areas where girls’ education is often neglected. The education budget remains below 2% of GDP, far short of the recommended 4%. Without urgent reforms, Pakistan risks failing to meet SDG 4.

SDG 5: Gender Equality: Gender inequality remains severe, with Pakistan ranking 145th out of 146 countries in the 2024 Global Gender Gap Report. Female labor force participation is only 22%, and gender-based violence remains widespread. Early marriages and limited access to education for girls further restrict women’s empowerment. Stronger legal protections and societal change are needed to make progress.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation: Access to clean water and sanitation remains inadequate, with over 70% of water sources contaminated. Only 68% of Pakistanis have access to safe drinking water (UNICEF, 2024), and poor sanitation infrastructure contributes to disease outbreaks. Investments in water treatment and rural sanitation projects are critical for achieving SDG 6.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy: Pakistan continues to face an energy crisis, with frequent power outages and reliance on fossil fuels. Renewable energy accounts for only 12% of the energy mix, though solar and hydropower projects are expanding. Transitioning to sustainable energy sources is vital for economic stability and environmental sustainability.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: Unemployment stands at 8.5%, with most workers employed in the informal sector. Economic instability, high inflation, and low foreign investment hinder job creation. Policies promoting entrepreneurship and skills development are needed to boost employment and inclusive growth.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Pakistan’s infrastructure is underdeveloped, with poor road networks, unreliable railways, and limited digital connectivity. Investment in research and development is just 0.2% of GDP, stifling innovation. Modernizing infrastructure and boosting tech-driven industries are essential for economic progress.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities: Income inequality remains high, with a Gini coefficient of around 33.5. Regional disparities, particularly in Balochistan and Sindh, exacerbate poverty and social exclusion. Policies promoting equitable resource distribution and social protection are necessary to bridge these gaps.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities: Rapid urbanization has led to overcrowded cities, slum expansions, and severe pollution. Lahore frequently ranks among the world’s most polluted cities. Improving urban planning, waste management, and public transport is crucial for sustainable development.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production: Pakistan struggles with unsustainable practices, generating 3.3 million tons of plastic waste annually (only 1-3% recycled) and losing 40% of food post-harvest. Weak enforcement of bans on single-use plastics and industrial pollution regulations hampers progress, despite initiatives like the National Electric Vehicle Policy.

SDG 13: Climate Action: Pakistan is highly vulnerable to climate change, facing extreme weather events like floods and heatwaves. The 2022 floods caused \$30 billion in damages, yet climate adaptation efforts remain weak. Reducing carbon emissions and strengthening disaster preparedness are urgent priorities.

SDG 14: Life Below Water: Marine ecosystems face severe threats, with 90% of fish stocks overexploited and the Indus River dumping 165 million tons of plas-



tic into the sea yearly. Mangrove cover has shrunk by 60% since 1980. Current protections cover just 2% of coastal areas, far below the 10% target.

SDG 15: Life on Land: With only 5.1% forest cover (losing 27,000 hectares annually) and 40% land degradation, Pakistan’s terrestrial ecosystems are declining. Iconic species like snow leopards face extinction. While the 10 Billion Tree Project shows promise, corruption allegations and weak enforcement remain challenges.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Weak governance, corruption (ranked 133/180 in Transparency International’s 2023 index), and judicial delays undermine progress. Human rights concerns, including restrictions on press freedom, persist. Strengthening institutions and ensuring accountability are key to achieving SDG 16.

SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals: Pakistan relies heavily on international aid and loans to fund development projects. Domestic resource mobilization is weak due to low tax collection and debt burdens. Enhancing public-private partnerships and improving fiscal policies are necessary to accelerate SDG progress.

In nutshell, Pakistan faces significant hurdles in achieving the SDGs by 2030. While some initiatives show promise, greater political will, increased funding, and better governance are essential to accelerate progress. Without urgent action, millions of Pakistanis risk being left behind in critical areas like education, health, and economic stability.

What BRICS has to offer?

THE post-World War II liberal international order-crafted in the aftermath of global devastation-once promised peace, prosperity, and progress. For decades, this system, anchored in Western ideals and leadership, seemed unshakable. But now, cracks have widened. The order’s structural asymmetries, its selective application of norms, and its growing irrelevance to the aspirations of the Global South have rendered it no longer the undisputed framework for world affairs.

At this critical juncture, the BRICS+ grouping-comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, with prospective new members-offers not just an alternative forum, but a distinct vision of international governance grounded in multipolarity, trade, respect, and representativeness. This potential for a more inclusive global governance structure should inspire hope for greater equity.

It is crucial to state unequivocally: BRICS+ is not anti-Western. It is, rather, post-Western. It represents an evolution beyond the rigid hierarchies of the past, offering a more inclusive platform for global discourse. This alone makes BRICS+ an object of deep discomfort for those who have long equated order with domination, and stability with control. The idea that emerging powers can operate beyond the West’s ideological orbit challenges the core assumptions of the post-war international order.

Indeed, the West’s discomfort with BRICS+ borders on apprehension. Behind the polite diplomacy lies a visceral fear: that the pillars of Western hegemony-economic supremacy, military alliances, and normative dominance-may no longer be sufficient to uphold the status quo. The rising legitimacy of BRICS+, its increasing appeal to countries beyond its original five, and its capacity to project a new ethos of international engagement all point to the emergence of a more pluralistic world-one that refuses to conform to Cold War binaries or post-Cold War triumphalism.

What truly sets BRICS+ apart is its quintessential commitment to a multipolar world. This is not a rhetorical flourish-it is the bloc’s founding principle and enduring compass. Unlike the G7, whose cohesion rests on ideological alignment and entrenched privilege, BRICS+ thrives on diversity. BRICS+ encompasses Latin

America, Africa, and Eurasia, uniting democracies, major and middle powers, distinct cultures, and diverse civilizational perspectives. Such complexity, often cited as a weakness, is its strength. It mirrors the global reality-heterogeneous, plural, and multipolar.

And yet, it would be a profound mistake to read BRICS+ merely as a platform for Chinese power projection. China, without a doubt, commands global influence-evident in its Belt and Road Initiative, its comprehensive trade relations, and its institutional engagements with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), ASEAN, and other regional organizations. It is already the leading trading partner for many nations across continents. If China sought global dominance, there are other multilateral platforms better suited for that ambition. BRICS+, on the contrary, is not a theatre for hegemony, but a space for creating a more diverse, multilateral, and non-hierarchical international order. China’s participation is strategic, yes-but it is essential to emphasize that it is far from hegemonic, providing reassurance about the bloc’s intentions. It is part of a collective effort to redesign the global system in a manner that better reflects 21st-century realities.

However, to truly fulfil its promise, BRICS+ must do more than meet, speak, and symbolize. It must prioritize the expansion of trade, technological cooperation, and financial connectivity within its membership. Intra-BRICS+ commerce must be seen not merely as an economic imperative, but as a political one. The bloc’s backbone must be economic interdependence, forged not in response to sanctions or exclusion, but through a proactive commitment to building shared prosperity on its terms. Currently, intra-BRICS+ trade remains underdeveloped, accounting for only around 6% of their total trade volumes. The urgency of increasing this figure should be the bloc’s top priority, making the audience feel the need for immediate action in this area.

Equally urgent is the need to address the lack of mutual knowledge among BRICS+ nations themselves. This remains perhaps the bloc’s greatest unspoken challenge. Despite their geographic reach and cultural richness, a worrying unfamiliarity persists-businesses are hesitant, academicians rarely exchange information, and

policymakers too often rely on Western interlocutors for insights into their partners. This vacuum breeds misperception, inefficiency, and strategic underperformance.

For this reason, I have long advocated the creation of a BRICS+ educational and cultural exchange initiative-an "Erasmus of the South." This Gandhi-Yatsen Programme, as I propose it, would foster academic mobility, joint research, youth diplomacy, and professional secondments among BRICS+ countries. Named after two iconic leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Sun Yat-sen, this programme aims to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other’s cultures, histories, and perspectives. More than treaties or declarations, it is these human bridges that cultivate durable bonds of trust. Economic exchange alone cannot replace cultural intimacy and people-to-people interactions. When both move together, a new political consciousness emerges-one that resists division, embraces complexity, and sees the world from more than one center.

The challenge for BRICS+, however, goes beyond institution-building. It lies in confronting the narrative warfare waged against it. Dismissed as incoherent, disjointed, or lacking ambition, BRICS+ has long been subjected to a rhetoric of diminishment. However, this skepticism is less about its internal dynamics than about external anxieties. The West fears not what BRICS+ is, but what it could become. A space free from conditionality. A market large enough to set its own rules. A coalition capable of reshaping development thinking. And most dangerous of all-a voice that cannot be ignored.

BRICS+’ most significant test, therefore, will be not just geopolitical, but strategic. It must redefine the terms of debate, articulate its standards of success, and refuse to be measured by frameworks that were never designed to accommodate its existence. It must not emulate the G7 or NATO-but forge its path, animated by the experiences, hopes, and aspirations of most of humanity. As the liberal international order strains under the weight of its inconsistencies-championing globalization while retreating into protectionism, extolling democracy while selectively applying it-BRICS+ offers a more honest compact. One based not on uniformity, but mutuality; not on coercion, but cooperation; not on dominance, but dignity.

What is behind Russia’s wartime prosperity paradox?

THE conventional wisdom is that President Vladimir Putin’s war has showered Russians with newfound wealth. Workers, we are told, are raking it in, especially in industrial cities that languished after the breakup of the USSR. Once depressed towns now hum with overtime shifts, while soldiers are lured to Ukraine by signing bonuses running into the millions of rubles plus hazard pay, injury compensation and - grimly - generous benefits for their families in case of their death.

Nor is the bounty confined to the trenches. Truck drivers boast salaries that would make the tech sector envious. The data appear to confirm the boom. The government claims real disposable income surged 8.4% in the first quarter of 2025. The number of people living in poverty allegedly fell by 2 million, to 8.1% of the country’s population. Average monthly wages hit 97,000/rubles (\$1,240). The verdict looks clear: Russians are thriving. But reality paints a different picture. Thirty-eight percent of Russians have no savings at all. Another 24% could

last only a month or two without a paycheck.

Financial advisers say every household should keep six to twelve months of expenses in reserve. Only 7% could save enough for half a year, and just 6% for longer. Those savings would only cover bare subsistence, not an affluent lifestyle. Even the lucky few rarely have more than half their annual income saved. Perhaps Russians have simply forgotten how to save? Hardly. For two decades, Russians have had to spend about 30% of their income on food. As salaries rise, that share should come down. But it has not. In the developed world, food accounts for less than 20% of household budgets. In the United States and Singapore, it is under 7%.

The headline wage of 97,000 rubles - \$1,240 - is hardly dazzling. Serbia, hardly an economic powerhouse, now posts a higher average net salary. The winners of Russia’s wage growth are the already well off. Inequality has returned to post Soviet highs, while incomes only clawed

back to their 2013 level in 2023.

No wonder one in three Russians cannot afford essential medicines. Physicians have adapted, prescribing the miraculous properties of oak bark for cancer or plantain for anxiety. It resembles the old Soviet joke in which doctors advised rich patients to eat fruit, middle class patients to eat vegetables and the poor to take long walks. Fresh air may soon be back on prescription pads. What of the unprecedentedly rising incomes trumpeted by state media?

These, too, are misleading. If you look more carefully, you will see that those well-paid contract soldiers have to spend their salaries on their own uniforms and bringing their own commanders. What remains might cover a seaside holiday or a few gifts for family members. Even the cars supplied to the relatives they leave behind in this life are hardly a sign of wealth in the 21st century. Those supposedly shift couriers log 14 to 16 hour shifts without breaks. If they limited themselves to normal hours, their pay would drop to 60,000

rubles (\$760).

Meanwhile, the rich are flourishing. The tally of Russian billionaires has jumped from 100 to 146 in a single year and most have padded their fortunes. Senior officials, legislators and their entourages are similarly comfortable, without even accounting for the vast unofficial income earned through corruption. The pattern is eternal: the rich grow richer, the poor poorer, the rest cling to appearances, often by going into debt. For two years, economists have asked whether President Vladimir Putin can afford his war, and the consensus seems to be yes. But the Soviet Union could still afford its wars in 1988. Tanks kept rolling off the lines until the very end. What it could not afford was its people - hence the empty shelves that hastened its collapse.

Putin will always find money for his war. It is less certain whether he will find money for his own people. Unlike Mikhail Gorbachev, he shows no reluctance to use violence to maintain control. Will he do so when - not if - the shelves start to empty?

The Moscow Times

People’s war principle drives PLA development

THIS year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War. The year also marks the final phase of the journey toward achieving the centenary goals of the People’s Liberation Army in 2027, making it necessary to stay on track, harness the core strengths of a "people’s war" and mobilize the people for just causes.

Marxism holds that what is called history is nothing but the creation of man by human labor. In other words, people are the decisive force behind progress. The theory of people’s war is rooted in this principle, and emphasizes that people, not weapons, ultimately determine the outcome of war.

The legacy of people’s war has been evolving over the past 80 years. In today’s era of multi-domain competition, victory depends on maintaining a strong bond with the people, adapting to technological and tactical changes, and mobilizing the people. During the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the Communist Party of China mobilized the people,

established base areas behind enemy lines, and gained support from a cross-section of society. By organizing guerrilla forces and militias, the Party developed a combat system integrating trained troops, armed civilians and local forces to counter the enemy.

The Party-led people’s war is the foundation of the PLA’s combat effectiveness and its key strategic advantage. At its core lies the truth that people are the real source of military strength. Guided by this principle, the people’s armed forces have, from their modest beginnings, transformed into a major military force. As Chairman Mao Zedong emphasized in On Protracted War, mobilizing the people compensates for inferior equipment and brings victory despite adverse conditions. On the open plains of North China, where natural cover was limited, the Party-led troops and civilians built hidden tunnels, planted landmines, and used "sparrow warfare" (hit-and-run) tactics to immobilize the Japanese forces, thwarting the enemy’s "mopping-up" operations. The campaign demonstrated the creativity and decisive role of the people in the war.

Adhering to the philosophy of people’s war, the Party developed a complete system of strategies and tactics based on actual conditions. From the guerrilla warfare of the Red Army and immobilizing of the Japanese forces to the strategic adjustments during the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53) and the post-1949 military reforms, the PLA has been learning from its experiences. By advancing the concept of people’s war in line with the evolving times, the PLA has made remarkable achievements, including defeating stronger enemies in war and safeguarding national interests during peacetime.

Today, technological advancement in fields such as information networks, artificial intelligence, and multi-domain battlefields has transformed the nature of warfare, with joint operations becoming the core of modern combat and creating new opportunities for people’s participation in national defense. Yet victory in warfare still stems from the people. To ensure the PLA achieves its centenary goals and becomes a world-class defense force, China must combine the principle of people’s war and

advanced technologies to work out its future defense strategy. People’s expertise in information and communications technology, data and innovation is a vital strategic resource and a decisive advantage in modern warfare. As such, China needs to leverage digital tools such as big data, AI and cloud computing to enhance cyber intelligence and improve communication mechanisms that help build public consensus on national defense.

Therefore, it is necessary to reinforce unity between the PLA, the government and the people, and promote a strong social ethos to boost national defense. History tells us that the people are the foundation of military success. In the pursuit of its centenary goals despite facing new technological challenges, the PLA should continue to rely on the people, leveraging their combined strength and protecting their interests. By adhering to the people’s war principle, developing new strategies, and integrating advanced technologies into its military modernization plan, China can strengthen its armed forces and ensure they deter aggression, prevent conflict, and maintain peace.

The China Daily

Epstein scandal won’t break Trump

THE Epstein files have become the latest obsession of the liberal political and media classes. And with them, the Democrats are convinced they have finally found the scandal that will break Donald Trump.

On the face of it, one can see why. Polls show that voters disapprove of how the president has handled the Epstein files, with a recent Washington Post poll showing that only 16 per cent of adults approve of the president’s approach. A majority believe the files should be released in full. Half of voters do not think Trump is being straight with what he knows. Other polling indicates that a miniscule 3 per cent of US adults are satisfied with the amount of information released about Epstein so far. There are two things, though, that these numbers obscure.

First, just because someone thinks something, it doesn’t mean they care about it enough for it to influence their vote. In a recent survey, just one respondent said Epstein was the top problem facing the US. Immigration, the economy, healthcare, abortion, and crime all rated more highly.

Second, it is a mistake to view these polls in isolation from what we know about the modern Republican coalition. GOP voters have baked in Trump’s moral baggage. They know that he has lived a scandal-filled life: just look at the Stormy Daniels case back in 2023. But they care more about something else - that he fights for them. Whether on Ukraine, strikes on Iran, or government spending, the Maga base takes Trump’s lead because of this loyalty. When voters have looked that fealty in, an absolute earthquake is needed to shift them. The Epstein scandal is not it: a recent JL Partners poll shows that only one in 20 (5 per cent) of

Republican voters strongly disapprove of Trump’s handling of the files and only one in 10 (11 per cent) disapprove overall. The same poll also shows his approval rating is up to 91 per cent with Republican voters, a six-point increase on June. These facts mean this issue fails to pass the test I use to judge whether a political issue is truly damaging. For something to really cut through, it must meet four conditions.

It has to tell voters something new that confirms their worst instincts about a politician. It has to have high salience: so top of mind that it is impossible to ignore. It has to have a personal, emotional resonance. And it has to break away the most loyal of a politician’s voters. Let us apply the tests to another scandal on the other side of the pond: Partygate in the UK. Boris Johnson was widely seen as chaotic and unserious, but not cruel. Then Partygate happened. Revelations of Downing Street parties while the country was locked down during the Covid pandemic confirmed voters’ worst suspicions: that the Tories simply did not care. Test one achieved.

Test two: it was completely inescapable, with blanket coverage for months. Members of Parliament broke ranks and turned on the prime minister. With people enjoying freedom from lockdown, and with the worst of inflation yet to bite, it dominated the agenda. Test three: it was personal. People couldn’t visit dying loved ones; in No 10 they were cracking open the wine. Test four: it turned lifelong conservatives, those who had stuck with the Tories through thick and thin, against the party. Compare that to the Epstein situation. Does it tell

us something new about Trump? No: we have known for decades that he was once associated with Epstein. If "grab ‘em by the p---" did not kill Trump in 2016, this is not going to. It is not high salience. It does not touch everyday voters’ lives. And the key voters that underpin Trump’s support are still firmly in his camp. The issue fails all four tests. There is a deeper danger for Democrats. Focusing on Epstein doesn’t only fail to wound Trump, it also risks self-harm. With Bill Clinton’s links to Epstein well-documented, it invites scrutiny of Democrats’ own skeletons. Any serious campaign on the issue would provoke a "whataboutism" war the Left will not win. More importantly, though, it is a distraction from the issues that do cut through.

Democrats won the 2018 midterms by pounding healthcare and exposing Republican threats to protections for pre-existing conditions. They made a dry policy issue salient, emotional, and personal. In 2026, the Democrats face a similar opportunity. The Republicans’ Big Beautiful Bill includes Medicaid cuts. If Democrats want to win, they need to make that the battleground. Time, money, and attention are finite. Every minute Democrats spend talking about Epstein is a minute they’re not talking about Medicaid, inflation, or abortion. Every minute of ad time on Epstein is a minute not talking about healthcare. And it is a minute they lose with voters who just want someone to talk about their lives, not re-litigate a sex trafficking scandal whose political potency peaked in 2020. The Epstein scandal won’t take down Trump. If Democrats aren’t careful, it might just take down their own midterms campaign instead.

The Telegraph



Hyundai Pakistan celebrates a historic milestone

Assembles 50,000 units locally



F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Hyundai Nishat Motor (Private) Limited proudly marks a major milestone with the line-off of its 50,000th locally assembled unit, a symbol of progress, trust, and ambition.

The event was held at the Hyundai assembly plant in Faisalabad, where the landmark vehicle rolled off the line amid cheers. In attendance were Mr. Hassan Mansha, Chairman; Mr. Yamada Masaki, CEO; Mr. Sohail Nawaz, COO; Mr. Aqib

Zulfikar, CFO; and all General Managers of Hyundai Nishat Motor (Private) Limited.

This achievement underscores Hyundai's growing footprint in Pakistan and its commitment to developing a self-reliant automotive ecosystem powered by local expertise and world-class standards. Since entering the Pakistani market, Hyundai has continued to raise the bar with smart design, innovative technology, and superior performance.

From hybrid sedans to

premium SUVs, each vehicle reflects the brand's philosophy: "Progress for Humanity."

"This is more than a production milestone; it's a powerful affirmation of our shared belief in resilience, purpose-driven progress, and the unstoppable spirit that drives us forward together," said Mr. Hassan Mansha.

"Today, we celebrate the success of local innovation and the power of belief. Fifty thousand units assembled locally is not just a number, it's proof of Pakistan's growing capa-

bilities in the global mobility landscape," added Mr. Yamada Masaki.

The ceremony reinforced Hyundai's long-term vision to keep investing in Pakistan's mobility future, building vehicles with heart, purpose, and innovation.

About Pakistan

Hyundai is committed to driving progress that empowers communities. Guided by 'Progress for Humanity,' we continue to redefine mobility with purpose.



ISLAMABAD: Alisher Tukhtaev, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, called on Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan.

Apple's tariff-fueled iPhone sales surge raises doubts about sustainability

NEW YORK (Reuters): Apple's best revenue growth in three years failed to impress, with shares down about 1% in volatile trading on Friday, as investors questioned whether a tariff-driven surge in iPhone sales would last.

A rush to buy iPhones ahead of potential U.S. tariff-driven price increases, along with China subsidies and upbeat demand for the budget 16e model launched in February, fueled a 13.5% jump in the quarterly sales of the device, crushing expectations.

That pushed up total revenue by a better-than-expected 10% in the April-June period, and Apple issued an above-estimate sales forecast for the current quarter ending in September.

The results came at a precarious time for the company long seen as Big Tech's safest bet. Beyond the tariff threats facing its manufacturing hubs China and India, Apple has been slow to move on artificial intelligence technology that its software and devices rivals have embraced as their next big growth driver.

Analysts said the sales rebound in China, where local rivals have moved faster than Apple on AI features, was a positive. The company benefited in the world's largest smartphone market from a state subsidy program meant to prop up device sales.

But they also warned the "pull-in" boost was expected to be temporary, raising doubts about demand for the rest of the year.

"Pull-forward, remember, is not a U.S. issue. It's also a China issue. There, Apple's Pro model iPhones were too expensive to qualify for Chinese government subsidies that were being offered ... so they cut prices to qualify, leaning into the volume opportunity. It worked," MoffettNathanson analysts said.

"But as with the U.S., what does that mean for the rest of the year?"

So far this year, Apple stock has underperformed all its "Magnificent Seven" peers barring Tesla (TSLA.O), opens new tab, with a decline of more than 17%.

Commerce Minister meets Dutch envoy

Discusses trade, logistics, investment ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan met with outgoing Dutch Ambassador Henny Fokel de Vries for a comprehensive farewell meeting that focused on strengthening bilateral trade, investment, logistics cooperation and cultural understanding between Pakistan and the Netherlands.

The discussion centered on advancing the trade ties and unlocking potential in sectors such as agriculture, green energy, and digital services, said a release issued here on Friday.

The minister highlighted Pakistan's strategic location near Africa, Central Asia, and the Gulf, offering connectivity and market access advantages.

He also shared the government's progress toward finalizing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the GCC, which would give Pakistani businesses entry into 12 key markets.

Ambassador Vries acknowledged growing Dutch corporate interest in Pakistan despite past challenges.

She noted that Dutch firms such as FrieslandCampina remain committed to long-term operations in Pakistan.

In response, Minister Jam Kamal reaffirmed the government's focus on improving the ease of doing business, building investor confidence, and facilitating faster policy support for foreign companies.

He emphasized that Pakistan values companies contributing to employment, innovation, and export diversification.

The two sides also discussed Pakistan's logistics modernization efforts and opportunities for Dutch expertise in port infrastructure, supply chain efficiency, and agriculture-based industrial innovation.

Minister Kamal further proposed launching a trade roadshow across the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium to attract European investment and expand market presence.

The growing role of Dutch-Pakistani entrepreneurs in connecting both economies was also appreciated.

With Ambassador Vries noting that second- and third-generation diaspora members are increasingly engaged in bilateral business ventures. She praised Pakistan's youthful entrepreneurial energy and suggested more consistent branding of the country's potential to European audiences.

The meeting concluded with warm sentiments and a symbolic gesture from the Minister. As a parting gift, he presented Ambassador Vries with a handmade mud pot crafted by local artisans, highlighting Pakistan's rich cultural heritage.

The Ambassador, moved by the thoughtful gift, admired its extraordinary lightness and artistry, calling it a reminder of Pakistan's deep-rooted traditions and elegant simplicity.

Both sides expressed optimism about the future of Pakistan-Netherlands relations and agreed on the importance of continuous engagement through diplomacy, business, and people-to-people connections.

Kitchen items' prices fall by 0.35 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.35 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on July 31, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 327.94 points as compared to 329.09 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 1.98 per cent.

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

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed a decrease of 0.42 per cent by declining from to 316.01 from last week's 317.34 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733 to 22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, decreased by 0.42 percent, 0.37 percent, 0.37 percent and 0.33 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 11 (21.57%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) items decreased and 28 (54.90%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (17.26%), chicken (4.76%), bananas (2.97%), pulse moong (1.55%), LPG (1.39%), potatoes (0.73%), pulse mash (0.61%), wheat flour (0.59%) and pulse gram (0.58%).

The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included eggs (1.80%), firewood (1.11%), cooked beef (1.08%), powdered milk (0.49%), energy saver (0.25%), garlic (0.24%), cigarettes and mutton (0.13%) each, beef (0.10%), gur (0.04%) and onions (0.02%).

Year-on-year basis, the

commodities that witnessed decrease in prices included onions (49.32%), tomatoes (42.31%), garlic (23.78%), wheat flour (22.90%), pulse mash (21.40%), tea packet (17.93%), potatoes (15.95%), chicken (11.71%), electricity charges for Q1 (10.02%) and LPG (0.86%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included ladies sandal (55.62%), gas charges for Q1 (29.85%), sugar (21.66%), pulse moong (14.27%), beef (14.16%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (12.33%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (11.95%), firewood (11.75%), gur (11.23%), eggs (10.94%), cooked beef (9.31%) and lawn printed (7.32%).

Lucky Core Industries reports robust FY25 results

Declares 310% final cash dividend

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Lucky Core Industries Limited (LCI), one of Pakistan's leading manufacturing and trading companies, announced its financial results for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, following a meeting of its Board of Directors. The Company posted strong financial performance despite economic challenges and declared a final cash dividend of 310% (PKR 6.20 per share of PKR 2 each), reflecting its commitment to delivering value to shareholders.

This final dividend is in addition to the interim cash dividend of 340% (PKR 34 per share of PKR 10 each) paid earlier in the year, bringing the total cash payout to shareholders to an impressive level for FY25.

Financial Highlights (Consolidated Basis):

"Net Turnover stood at

PKR 119.94 billion, reflecting a modest 1% decline compared to the same period last year.

"Operating Result increased by 5% to reach PKR 18.03 billion.

"Profit After Tax (PAT) grew by 5% to PKR 11.76 billion, while Earnings Per Share (EPS) rose to PKR 25.46.

"On a standalone basis, PAT was reported at PKR 11.64 billion, with EPS of PKR 25.20, both reflecting a 4% increase from last year.

Note: EPS figures have been restated following a stock split, which changed the face value of each share from PKR 10 to PKR 2. The stock split was finalized on July 19, 2025.

CEO's Remarks

Commenting on the performance, Mr. Asif Jooma, Chief Executive of LCI, stated:

"In a year marked by

economic transition and evolving industry dynamics, macro indicators showed early signs of stability. However, the operating environment remained challenging, particularly in the second half, with subdued demand impacting key sectors. Against this backdrop, Lucky Core Industries delivered a resilient performance, reflecting the strength of its diversified portfolio, cost discipline, and operational excellence. As we look ahead, we remain guided by our shared purpose to enrich lives - anchored in collaboration, resilience, and the strength of working together."

About Lucky Core Industries

Lucky Core Industries Limited is a prominent player in Pakistan's industrial sector with a diversified portfolio, including Polyester, Soda Ash,

Chemicals, Agri Sciences, Pharmaceuticals, and Animal Health. The Company manufactures and trades a wide range of products such as polyester staple fibre, soda ash, general and specialty chemicals, medicines, nutraceuticals, veterinary products, and agricultural inputs including seeds and crop protection solutions.

In the nutrition segment, LCI's associated company, NutriCo Moringa (Private) Limited, partners with Moringa Milk Industry Co. Ltd., Japan, to locally manufacture and distribute infant formula and nutritional products in Pakistan.

LCI is a part of the Yunus Brothers Group (YBG), one of Pakistan's largest and fastest-growing conglomerates with diversified interests in cement, textiles, energy, and commodity trading.

Wall St selloff sparked by Trump tariffs, Amazon results, weak payrolls

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Wall Street's main indexes declined sharply on Friday as new U.S. tariffs on dozens of trading partners and Amazon's unimpressive earnings weighed on sentiment, while a weaker payrolls report added to risk aversion.

Hours ahead of the tariff deadline, President Donald Trump signed an executive order imposing duties on U.S. imports from countries including Canada, Brazil, India and Taiwan.

Data showed U.S. job growth slowed more than expected in July while the prior month's data was revised sharply lower, pointing to a sharp moderation in the labor market.

"This was a pretty disappointing report ... markets are getting a little bit more worried about the state of the labor market in the aftermath of today's report," said BeiChen Lin, senior investment strategist at Russell Investments.

Following the data, traders have raised their bets for a September interest rate cut to 81.9%, according to CME's FedWatch tool.

At 9:52 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJ), opens new tab fell 633.77 points, or 1.44%, to 43,491.55, the S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab lost 107.59 points, or 1.70%, to 6,231.80 and the Nasdaq Composite (IXIC), opens new tab lost 483.70 points, or 2.29%, to 20,638.74.

The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq fell to a more than two-month low each, while the Dow slipped to an over one-month low.

The CBOE Volatility index (VIX), opens new tab, also known as Wall Street's fear gauge, jumped to a near six-week high and was last up 20.66 points.

Eight of the 11 S&P 500 sector indexes declined, led by consumer discretionary (SPLRCD), opens new tab, which was down 3.4% as Amazon (AMZN.O), opens new

tab slid 6.7%. The company's growth in its cloud computing unit failed to impress investors, in contrast to robust gains reported by AI-focused rivals Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab and Microsoft (MSFT.O), opens new tab.

Technology (SPLRCT), opens new tab and communication services (SPLRCL), opens new tab indexes fell 1.9% and 1.5%, respectively.

Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab posted its current-quarter revenue forecast well above Wall Street estimates, but CEO Tim Cook warned U.S. tariffs would add \$1.1 billion in costs over the period. The stock edged 0.2% lower.

Most major megacap stocks fell, with Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab down 3.1%, Tesla (TSLA.O), opens new tab falling 2.6%. Meta Platforms (META.O), opens new tab down 2.5%, and Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab losing

1.4%.

Financials (SPSY), opens new tab fell 2.2%, with Coinbase Global (COIN.O), opens new tab falling 16.2% after the crypto exchange reported a drop in adjusted profit for the second quarter.

Industrial tools supplier WW Grainger (GWW.N), opens new tab dropped 9.2% after slashing its forecast for annual profit.

Trump said on Friday the Federal Reserve's board should assume control if the central bank's chair, Jerome Powell, continues to refuse to lower interest rates.

Powell, despite pressure from Trump to cut rates, has indicated the central bank was in no rush to do so. The day's sharp losses put the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq on track for weekly losses, offsetting the week's earlier gains on signs of economic resilience, AI boost, and key U.S. trade agreements with top partners such as the European Union and South Korea.

US job growth slows sharply, unemployment rate rises

WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. employment growth slowed more than expected in July while the nonfarm payrolls count for the prior two months was revised down by a massive 258,000 jobs, pointing to a deterioration in labor market conditions that puts a September interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve back on the table.

The Labor Department's closely watched employment report on Friday also showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.2% last month amid a decline in the volatile household employment segment. People also continued to leave the labor force, though the pace slowed from the prior months.

The U.S. central bank on Wednesday left its benchmark interest rate in the 4.25%-4.50% range. Fed Chair Jerome Powell's comments after the decision undercut confidence the central bank would resume policy easing in September as had been widely anticipated by financial markets and some economists.

Job growth has slowed amid uncertainty over where President Donald Trump's tariff levels will eventually settle. Trump on Thursday slapped dozens of trading partners with steep tariffs ahead of a Friday trade deal deadline, including a 35% duty on many goods from Canada. The labor market is weakening at a time when tariffs are starting to boost inflation.

"The door to a Fed rate cut in September just got opened a crack wider," said Christopher Rupkey, chief economist at FWD-BONDS. "The labor market is not rolling over, but it is badly wounded and may yet bring about a reversal in the U.S. economy's fortunes."

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 73,000 jobs last month after rising by a downwardly revised 14,000 in June, the fewest in nearly five years, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls would increase by 110,000 jobs after rising by a previously reported 147,000 in June. Estimates ranged from no jobs added to an increase of 176,000 positions.

Payrolls for May were slashed by 125,000 to only a gain of 19,000 jobs. The BLS described the revisions to May and June payrolls data as "larger than normal."

It gave no reason for the revised data but noted that "monthly revisions result from additional reports received from businesses and government agencies since the last published estimates and from the recalculation of seasonal factors."

Job gains in July continued to be concentrated in the healthcare sector, which added 55,000 positions. Social assistance employment increased by 18,000 jobs. But federal government employment dropped by another 12,000 positions and is down 84,000 since peaking in January. More job losses are likely after the Supreme Court gave the White House the green light for mass firings as Trump seeks to slash spending and headcount. But the administration has also said several agencies were not planning to proceed with layoffs.

The decline in the unemployment rate to 4.1% in June was in part due to people dropping out of the labor force.

The increase in July still left the jobless rate in the narrow 4.0%-4.2% range that has prevailed since May 2024.

The case for a September rate cut could be reinforced by the BLS' preliminary payrolls benchmark revision next month, which is expected to project a sharp drop in the employment level from April 2024 through March this year.

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data, derived from reports by employers to the state unemployment insurance programs, has indicated a much slower pace of job growth between April 2024 and December 2024 than payrolls have suggested.



In brief

Shaheens seek victory in last match

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan Shaheens are set to face the South Asian Cricket Academy & MCC Young Cricketers in their last match of their England tour. The three-day contest begins Sunday at the Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, Canterbury. This final fixture follows a 2-1 one-day series win for the Shaheens and a drawn three-day game against the Professional County Club Select XI. The previous three-day match, held at the first Central County Ground in Hove, showcased a strong performance from Azan Awais. The left-handed batsman reached a century (103 runs), which included a 98-run first innings. Bowlers Mir Hamza, Mushtaq Ahmed, and Mehran Muntaz also contributed, taking three, two, and two wickets respectively. Mir Hamza, speaking to PCB Digital, highlighted the tour's value as a learning opportunity, emphasizing the difference in playing environments. He stressed the importance of such contests for player development. Hamza explained his successful bowling approach, focusing on fuller lengths to exploit the English conditions. He praised the team's skill and domestic achievements, highlighting the need for international experience to enhance their abilities. Hamza believes the players have adapted to the pitches and expects improved performance in the upcoming game. He also commended Azan Awais's adaptability, patience, and ability to read the game in challenging conditions.

Junior Padel players Vie for WC spots

KARACHI (PPI): Eighty-six young padel players from across Pakistan are competing in the Naveena Steel National Junior Padel Championship 2025 in Karachi, vying for a chance to represent the nation at the World Junior Padel Cup in Spain. The tournament, which kicked off at the KMC Maidan, is divided into Under-14, Under-16, and Under-18 categories. Organized by the Pakistan Padel Federation (PPF) in conjunction with Maidan and the Sindh Padel Federation, the competition adheres to international regulations set by Padel Asia and the International Padel Federation. The opening ceremony, held at the KMC Sports Complex, was attended by PPF CEO Mudassar Arain, Maidan owner Mr. Usman, and PPF President Muhammad Mateen. Mr. Mateen confirmed the tournament's role as a qualifying event for the World Cup. A patriotic display saw participants and officials honor the heroes of Operation Bunyan ul Marsoos and commemorate Pakistan's independence with a flag ceremony. Matches are being played on various courts at KMC Maidan, culminating in the finals on Sunday, August 4th. Early results include victories for Sindh TTF over KPK and Islamabad Plus in the Under-18 group. Sindh Pro defeated both Punjab Thunderbolts and Sindh Legends, while Punjab Thunderbolts also triumphed over Sindh Padel Goats, and Sindh Legends beat Sindh Green. In the Under-16 category, Sindh Lions and Sindh Kings recorded initial wins against KPK Boys and Sindh Boys respectively, but KPK Boys later bested Sindh Kings, and Sindh Boys defeated Sindh Lions. Sindh NAM X beat Sindh Babaloms but lost to Sindh Acer.



LAUDERHILL: Saim Ayub scored a quick half-century.

Santner takes four as NZ beat Zimbabwe by nine wickets

ZIMBABWE (AFP/APP): New Zealand captain Mitch Santner said a "great collective performance" enabled the Black Caps to beat Zimbabwe by nine wickets on the third day of the first Test at Queens Sports Club on Friday.

But while the bowlers had excelled, he said the batting could have been better. Led by fast bowler Matt Henry, New Zealand bowled out Zimbabwe for 149 and 165 and needed only eight runs to win after taking a first innings lead of 158.

Henry was named player of the match, taking nine wickets for 90 runs across the two innings. "There was more in it (the pitch) than we thought. We held our lengths and lines," said Santner, who captained New Zealand for the first time in a Test in the absence of Tom Latham with a shoulder injury.

It was New Zealand's first Test match of the year and Henry's performance came immediately after a triangular Twenty20 series won by New Zealand in Harare, where Henry was player of the tournament.

"With the chop and change in formats, you've got to trust the work you've put in," said Henry. "When you have assistance (from conditions), it was great we were able to exploit it."

New Zealand were bowled out for 307 in their first innings, with the only major contributions coming from Devon Conway (88) and Daryl Mitchell (80). "We could have batted a bit better," said Santner. "We had good intent. We talked about getting partnerships together but didn't have many significant ones."

Santner said there was concern about the condition of seamer Nathan Smith, who took three for 20 in the first innings of just his third Test but could not take the field in the second innings because of an abdominal injury. "I feel for him. He bowled so well in the first innings but it doesn't look good for him," said Santner. "Grind it out!"

Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine said his batsmen had shown more application than they did in two recent Tests against South Africa in Bulawayo. "There was a fair

bit in the wicket but the guys tried to grind it out," he said.

Ervine said a key passage of play was on the first evening when Conway and Will Young put on 92 without loss for the first wicket despite Zimbabwe bowling well. "I haven't seen as much lateral movement as there was here for a while. We could have easily picked up two or three (wickets)."

Santner took four for 27 in the second innings, while Henry and Will O'Rourke picked up three wickets each. Veteran left-handers Sean Williams (49) and Craig Ervine (22) shared a fifth wicket stand of 57, while wicketkeeper Tafadzwa Tsiga (27) and fast bowler Blessing Muzarabani (19) put on 36 for the ninth wicket to make New Zealand bat again.

New Zealand were hampered by the absence of Smith and O'Rourke, who was feeling stiffness after his morning spell. The teams meet again in the second Test at the same venue from Thursday. The two-match series is not part of the World Test Championship.

Usama wins Silver at World Mas-Wrestling C'ship in Mongolia



MULTAN (APP): The Pakistan Mas-Wrestling Federation celebrated a historic milestone as Usama Butt clinched the silver medal at the ongoing World Mas-Wrestling Championship in Mongolia — the country's first-ever medal at the prestigious global event.

Under the expert mentorship of Muhammad Ibrahim Baig, Usama Butt demonstrated exceptional strength and technique throughout the tournament. He began his campaign with an impressive victory over a local Mongolian athlete, followed by a second-round triumph against Kazakhstan, securing his spot in the final.

Although he narrowly missed the gold, Usama's silver medal marks a landmark achievement for Pakistan in the global Mas-Wrestling circuit.

"Usama Butt's victories over athletes from Mongolia and Kazakhstan not only highlight his talent but also signify Pakistan's emergence on the world Mas-Wrestling stage," said Nawab Furqan Khan, President of the Pakistan Mas-Wrestling Federation.

He further added, "Usama has proven that Pakistani athletes can stand shoulder to shoulder with the best in the world. This achievement is just the beginning of a promising journey for traditional sports in our country."

The Federation expressed sincere gratitude to the government and people of Mongolia for their warm hospitality and the successful organization of the championship.

Nawaz's three-wicket over leads Pakistan to a 14-run win over West Indies

LAUDERHILL (AP) : Mohammad Nawaz took three wickets in an over to propel Pakistan to a 14-run win over West Indies in the series-opening Twenty20 cricket international Thursday in Florida.

Pakistan was sent in to bat and posted 178 for six, led by Saim Ayub's 57 from 38 deliveries.

Debate about that being above or below a par target at this venue was partially answered when West Indies opener Johnson Charles and 18-year-old Jewel Andrew, making his T20 international debut, scored at just over six an over to the halfway point in reply.

After conceding 20 runs in his first three overs, left-arm spinner Nawaz dramatically shifted the contest. He started the 12th over with a breakthrough to dismiss Andrew for 35 and end a 72-run opening stand, and he added the wickets of

Charles (35) and Gudakesh Motie (0) on the fourth and fifth balls as the West Indies slumped to 75-3.

Skipper Shai Hope (2) scooped a full delivery from Ayub into the deep in the next over as West Indies lost four wickets for five runs. Ayub, who was voted player of the match for his half-century and bowling return of 2-20, said the pitch was challenging to play on so it was important to building partnerships and not panic.

Some lofty tail-end hitting from Jason Holder, who struck four sixes in his unbeaten, 12-ball 30, and Shamar Joseph, who hit 21 from 12, helped West Indies to 164-7 and made the final margin more respectable.

That lopsided contest ended any chance of the West Indies starting the series against Pakistan on a better footing after comprehensive test and T20

series losses to Australia. The Australians wrapped up a historic 8-0 sweep in the Caribbean earlier in the week. Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha said his team "started strong and finished even better."

A total of closer than 200 was in range for Pakistan early when Ayub and Fakhar Zaman (28) shared an 81-run second-wicket stand to get the score up to 107 in the 12th over.

But Holder trapped Ayub lbw for 57, ending a 38-ball innings that contained five boundaries and two sixes to get the vital breakthrough. Recalled fast bowler Shamar Joseph kept the pressure on Pakistan's batting lineup and returned 3-30 from his four overs.

The second and third T20s will be held in Lauderhill on Saturday and Sunday before an ODI series in the Caribbean.

Pakistan secure 5th place at World Jr Squash Team C'ships



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan finished fifth at the World Junior Squash Team Championships 2025 after edging out Korea 2-1 in a thrilling final placement match in Egyptian capital Cairo on Friday.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Squash Federation, in the opening clash, Abdullah Nawaz went down to

Korea's Joo Young Na in four games, 12-10, 4-11, 3-11, 3-11, putting Pakistan on the back foot.

However, Anas Ali Shah leveled the tie with a gritty five-game win over Jeong Uk Ryu, 11-6, 7-11, 11-3, 5-11, 11-3.

The deciding match saw Muhammad Umair Arif hold his nerve in a nail-biting contest against Jonghyeok Lee, eventually

prevailing 13-11, 5-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-8 to clinch victory for Pakistan.

Earlier in the tournament, Pakistan reached the quarterfinals before bowing out to England in a 2-0 defeat. Despite missing out on a semifinal berth, the team's overall performance was commendable, underlining the promise and potential of the country's rising squash talent.

UAE, Pakistan, Afghanistan lock horns in T20 Tri-Series

KARACHI (PPI): Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are set to clash in a thrilling Twenty20 International (T20I) tri-series, commencing August 29th in Sharjah.

This competition serves as crucial preparation for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, scheduled for next year in India and Sri Lanka. The tournament precedes the Asia Cup in September, providing subcontinental squads with vital game time ahead of the global event.

The inaugural match pits Pakistan against

Afghanistan, who reached the semi-finals of the previous T20 World Cup.

Each nation will play the others twice in a round-robin format. The top two teams will progress to the final on September 7th. Sharjah Cricket Stadium has witnessed five T20I encounters between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with Pakistan triumphant on three occasions.

Pakistan recently concluded a T20I series against the West Indies, following a 2-1 series defeat to Bangladesh. Afghanistan's last T20I outing resulted in a 2-1

series victory over Zimbabwe in December. The UAE also enters the tri-series with momentum, having secured a T20I series win against Bangladesh in May.

Tri-Series Schedule (All Matches in Sharjah)
29 August – Afghanistan v Pakistan
30 August – UAE v Pakistan
1 September – UAE v Afghanistan
2 September – Pakistan v Afghanistan
4 September – Pakistan v UAE
5 September – Afghanistan v UAE.

Gauff rallies to reach WTA Montreal fourth round

MONTREAL (AFP/APP): World number two Coco Gauff battled through another tough three-setter Thursday, rallying from a set and a break down to beat Veronika Kudermetova and reach the fourth round of the WTA Canadian Open.

The top-seeded American, who won her second Grand Slam title at Roland Garros, again struggled with her serve but held her nerve for a 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 victory over former world number nine Kudermetova.

"The goal of the game is to survive and advance," Gauff said. "It's not my best, but it was good enough for today and that's all I can ask for." Gauff arrived in Montreal having lost her tournament openers at Wimbledon and Berlin in the wake of her French Open triumph.

She struggled mightily

in her first match in Montreal but came up with a win over Danielle Collins despite 23 double faults.

The numbers weren't quite as ugly against Kudermetova, but 14 double faults were damaging enough. Seven of them came in the first set, as Gauff let a 4-1 lead get away.

She had three more double faults in the opening game of the second set to hand Kudermetova a service break. Gauff broke back to level the set at 3-3 and broke Kudermetova to force a third where she seized a 2-0 lead and powered home. "I'm sure everybody could read my body language," said Gauff, who admitted she "got a little bit upset" with herself.

"But mentally I'm very proud of myself. The fact that I'm winning these matches not feeling my best

is definitely something to be proud of." Her struggles on serve are especially frustrating, Gauff said, because she skipped last week's tournament in Washington to work on it and felt she had made progress.

"I just would like for it to transfer to the match," said Gauff, who next faces 18-year-old Canadian wild card Victoria Mboko, a 1-6, 6-3, 6-0 winner over Czech Marie Bouzkova.

"She's definitely playing like one of the top players in the world right now," Gauff said of Mboko, who took the American to three sets in Rome earlier this year. Mboko kept her cool after dropping the first set to Bouzkova and was in position to take advantage when a thigh injury that required treatment clearly hindered the Czech later in the match.

Newcastle reject Liverpool bid for Isak: reports

LONDON (AFP): Newcastle have rejected Liverpool's opening bid to sign unsettled Sweden striker Alexander Isak, according to reports on Friday.

Isak has been training at his old club Real Sociedad this week after reportedly telling Newcastle he wants to leave St James' Park.

The 25-year-old has been linked with Liverpool since the end of last season and the Premier League champions are now believed to have formalised their interest with an offer of around £110 million (\$159 million) plus potential add-ons. But Newcastle, who reportedly value Isak at £150 million, remain keen to hold onto their prize asset and have rebuffed Liverpool's initial bid.

Isak, who joined Newcastle in a £60 million move from Real Sociedad

in 2022, scored 23 Premier League goals last season to help Newcastle qualify for the Champions League.

He has three years left on his Newcastle contract, but did not travel to Asia for the Magpies' ongoing pre-season tour, with the club saying he had a minor thigh injury. On Thursday, Real Sociedad confirmed he was at their Zubietta facility with his own trainers.

It was reported on Friday that Newcastle had told Isak he could agree a new deal containing a get-out clause for next year, but he responded by insisting he wants to move now.

Liverpool manager Arne Slot has already bolstered his attacking options by signing Eintracht Frankfurt striker Hugo Ekitike and Bayer Leverkusen playmaker Florian Wirtz during

the current transfer window. But the Reds are keen to make their forward line even more formidable by adding Isak as they look to win back to back English titles for the first time since the 1980s.

Newcastle boss Eddie Howe struck a defiant note earlier this week when he said: "He is still our player. He's contracted to us."

"We, to a degree, control what is next for him. I would love to believe all possibilities are still available to us. My wish is that he stays, but that's not in my full control."

Liverpool have spent over £250 million so far in the summer window, with Milos Kerkez, Jeremie Frimpong and Giorgi Mamardashvili joining Wirtz and Ekitike at Anfield.

CHAMBERY (Agencies): Maeva Squiban produced another stunning performance to make Tour de Femmes history with back-to-back stage wins as Kim le Court retained the yellow jersey.

A day after becoming only the second French rider to win a stage, 23-year-old Squiban powered away from the chasing group with about 20km remaining as she approached the summit of the Col du Granier.

She crossed the line 51 seconds clear of compatriot Cedrine Kerbaol, becoming the first French rider to win two stages on the tour.

"It's incredible. This morning I said I will attack kilometre zero, in the beginning it didn't work but finally I did it. It's an amazing day," said UAE Team, ADQ rider Squiban.

Le Court, who became the first African rider to win a stage in the Tour on Wednesday, caught up to



the chasing group on the final descent into Chambéry to finish sixth and retain the yellow jersey.

"I wasn't feeling so good since the start of the stage, the last few days I've been going through some stuff," said the 29-year-old from Mauritius. "On the last climb it was

difficult, my body just shut off. Then I had to do the best downhill of my life."

France's Pauline Ferrand-Prevot remains second in the general classification, with defending champion Katarzyna Niewiadoma-Phinney third and 2023 winner Demi Vollering just behind.

The top five in the general classification are separated by 35 seconds with two stages remaining.

On Saturday the riders will tackle a 111.9km mountainous stage between Chambéry and Saint Francois Longchamp-Col de la Madeleine.



In brief

Man & son arrested for ‘torturing’ sister

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Waris Khan Police on Friday arrested a man and his son for allegedly torturing and threatening to kill his sister. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, the victim lodged a complaint with the Waris Khan Police that her brother and nephew had tortured her and also hurled threats to kill her. The police immediately registered a case on her request and took the two accused into custody. Taking notice of the incident, Superintendent of Police Rawal Muhammad Haseeb Raja directed the Waris Khan Police to present a challan against the accused in the court with solid evidence so that they should not escape from punishment. He said violence or harassment against women and children was intolerable.

IRSA releases 426,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 426,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 473,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1539.00 feet which was 137.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 288,100 cusecs and 260,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1201.20 feet, which was 151.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 25,200 cusecs and 7,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 301,500, 310,900, 330,300 and 310,800 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 33,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 99,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

11 law breakers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Friday arrested 11 law breakers in actions liquor suppliers, illegal arm owners and Tenancy Act violators. According to the police spokesman, six accused were detained on the recovery of 36 litres of liquor, and arms and ammunition during operations in the areas of Sadiqabad, Westridge, Kallar Syedan, Dhamial, Gujar Khan and Ratta Amral police stations. Similarly, the Pirwahai Police took six persons into custody for violating the Tenancy Act.

DC directs disciplinary actions against officials

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi, Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema, has decided to take strict action against government officials found negligent in the ongoing anti-dengue campaign. He directed that absent officials or those found guilty of negligence will be given one warning only, after which action will be initiated against them under the PEEDA Act. He issued these directives while presiding over the daily meeting on anti-dengue measures at his office. During the meeting, he also ordered the issuance of show-cause notices to certain DDHOs for negligence in sweeping operations in their respective areas. Dr Sajjad Ahmad, Coordinator of the District Emergency Response Committee, briefed the meeting on the ongoing anti-dengue activities across the district. Reviewing the progress in detail, the DC emphasized the need for continuous sweeping.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Hussain Magsi met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi - discussions focused on political stability and security in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Addressing problems of legal fraternity top priority: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday emphasized that politics of bars should be limited to the bars so that the judiciary and the institution of lawyers maintain their impartiality. The long-standing issue of court fees has been resolved on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, he said, adding that E-libraries and solarization projects are underway with the cooperation of the Punjab government and the Punjab Law Minister.

The law minister stated

this during a meeting with the delegations of bar associations of southern Punjab, including the Multan High Court Bar Association. In the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the welfare of lawyers, problems faced by bar associations and their effective solutions.

The President of the Multan High Court Bar thanked the Law Minister for the government steps taken for the legal community and said that the role of the Law Ministry is commendable. Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the law ministry placed the welfare of lawyers at the top of its pri-

orities and will provide all possible support to resolve their legitimate issues.

The presidents and representatives of the Shujaabad, Jahanian, Lodhran, Duniyapur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Kot Addo, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh, Alipur, Jatoi, Jalalpur, Kabirwala and Borewala Bar Associations also attended the meeting and apprised the Law Minister about the issues faced by lawyers in their respective areas. Tarar assured all bar representatives that their issues would be resolved on a priority basis and communication with the bars would be further strengthened.

Women’s talent honoured at art exhibition

RAWALPINDI (APP): A vibrant exhibition of paintings was held at the Punjab Arts Council, Rawalpindi, showcasing the creative talents of students, particularly from Rawalpindi Women University. Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan was the chief guest while Shazia Rizwan, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture, Punjab was also present at the exhibition.

Both the dignitaries toured the exhibition, appreciating the artwork on display. Addressing the gathering, Shazia Rizwan lauded CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s efforts to preserve and promote Punjabi culture through concrete initiatives. She appreciated the enthusiasm of female students in the exhibition, emphasizing that empowering women is a key priority for the Chief Minister.

“Such exhibitions play a vital role in bringing talent to the forefront,” she added. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, in his address highlighted the role of artists in reflecting societal culture through their work.

He commended the students for portraying society’s essence with creativity and stressed the Punjab Arts Council’s pivotal role in promoting cultural heritage.

Director Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi, Muhammad Shakoor, said that in line with CM’s vision, cultural events are being organized to mark Independence Day. He announced that a series of programs themed around the struggle for justice will continue throughout August.

Governor KP urges NADRA, OGDCL to expand services in remote areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with Chairman NADRA, Lieutenant General (R) Muhammad Munir Afsar, here on Friday to discuss the provision of identification documents and civic services in the province.

During the meeting, the Governor expressed concern over the lack of NADRA facilities in remote and underdeveloped areas of KP, particularly highlighting the need for service expansion in large villages of Paharpur Tehsil, Dera Ismail Khan. He emphasized the importance of ensuring doorstep access to NADRA services for the local population.

Chairman NADRA assured the Governor that the authority would soon increase the number of mobile registration vans in these areas and initiate con-

sultations with local administrations to establish permanent offices. He also announced the creation of separate facilitation desks for women, elderly citizens, and persons with disabilities to streamline the registration process.

Key issues discussed included CNIC issuance, child registration (B-Form), family record updates, and inheritance documentation.

Governor Kundi praised NADRA’s ongoing digitalization drive and cybersecurity initiatives, saying that the adoption of modern technology would enhance the efficiency and transparency of the institution.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi held a meeting with the Managing Director of Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Ahmed Hayat to discuss gas supply issues and expansion projects

in the southern districts of the province. During the meeting, the Governor stressed the need to improve the gas distribution system and called for immediate action to meet the growing energy demands of the public.

He directed OGDCL officials to prioritize ongoing gas supply projects in the southern districts and ensure their timely completion, particularly ahead of the winter season.

The discussion also covered proposed expansion projects in Daraban and surrounding areas, including the laying of new gas pipelines, upgrading existing infrastructure, and exploring new gas reserves.

Governor Kundi emphasized that these initiatives would not only provide much-needed relief to the local population but also contribute significantly to regional economic development.

Pakistan to continue supporting Kashmiris’ right to self-determination: Noon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister and Chairman of the Kashmir Committee, Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan’s steadfast support for the Kashmiri people’s legitimate struggle to achieve their right to self-determination.

Addressing a seminar “Unheard Voices of IIOJK: Six Years After Article 370”, organized by Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here, he condemned India’s illegal actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), adding that the Kashmir issue has never been a bilateral, internal or regional issue but it is an international issue.

The chairman expressed strong condemnation of the Modi government’s actions, particularly the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019. “The Modi government’s tendency for false flag operations and subsequent aggression has become all too familiar,” he added. He condemned the Pulwama incident, Indian aggression and demographic changes in IIOJ&K and highlighted a troubling pattern of cultur-

al, civilizational and religious aggression, alongside grave human rights violations carried out by Indian forces in Kashmir.

He said if the Kashmir conflict was not resolved, there would be no peace and stability in South Asia. He condemned the widespread atrocities committed by the Indian military, which includes the continued detention of Hurriyat leadership. Among those imprisoned, he mentioned leaders like Syed Shabir Shah, Yasin Malik, Musarrat Alam Bhat, and Dr Qasim Faktoo, urging the international community to intervene for their immediate release.

The Chairman said, Pakistan gave a befitting response to the Indian aggression and the arrogance of the Modi government was deflated. Since the events of May 10th, the Kashmir issue has once again come to the forefront at global stage, demanding urgent and comprehensive resolution.

“We salute Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Pakistan armed forces for inflicting a crushing defeat on Indian,” he added. “Our armed forces, alongside its diplomatic front, delivered

a crushing blow to India’s arrogance, changing the balance of power in South Asia in a mere 16 hours,” he said.

He said that ceasefire was never a permanent solution, adding that resolution of the Kashmir issue was a permanent solution for which a meaningful and comprehensive dialogue was imperative.

He also highlighted the critical issue of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), calling on the international community to hold India accountable for its unilateral actions that jeopardize regional water security. Furthermore, he voiced concerns over Indian-backed terrorism in Balochistan, added that Indian was involved in destroying peace in Balochistan.

Qasim said Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is a highly militarized zone in the world and added that Pakistan will continue political, diplomatic, and moral support for the Kashmiri people. He urged the United Nations and the international human rights organizations to take notice of the atrocities committed by Indian troops in Kashmir valley.

ANF recovers over 76 kg of drugs in 9 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting 9 operations across the country, recovered as many as 76.283 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 7.56 million and arrested 7 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday.

He informed that 773 grams of ice were recovered from the bag of a passenger going to Qatar at Bacha Khan International Airport. Similarly, 2.2 kg of ice was recovered from a parcel sent to Australia from a courier office located in Lahore.

In another operation,

210 grams of opium were recovered from a parcel sent to the United States from the cargo shed of Allama Iqbal International Airport. As many as 36 kg of hashish hidden in machinery spare parts were recovered from a cargo sent from Peshawar to Karachi near Jamshoro Toll Plaza.

6 kg of opium and 24 kg of hashish were recovered from a vehicle near Sheikhpura Motorway Toll Plaza, and 2 suspects were arrested. As much as 2.4 kgs of ice were recovered from a vehicle near RC Road Hub, and a suspect was arrested.

During another opera-

tion, 3 kg of hashish and 400 grams of ice were recovered from the possession of an accused near Shalimar Garden in Lahore.

As much as 1.2 kgs of hashish were recovered from the possession of a passenger travelling on a bus near the Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza.

Near Karakoram Road, Gilgit, 100 grams of hashish were recovered from a motorcyclist.

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

CDA Chief orders acceleration of development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, has directed authorities to expedite development work across several key sectors of the capital, while ensuring strict adherence to quality and construction standards.

The directive came during a high-level meeting held at CDA Headquarters, attended by senior officials, including CDA Member Administration and Estate Talat Mahmood, Member Finance Tahir Naem, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza, Member Planning Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Environment Esfandyar Baloch, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, and other senior officials.

The meeting reviewed ongoing development efforts in Sectors C-14, C-15, C-16, E-12, I-12, Park Enclave, Shaheen Chowk,

Faizabad Interchange, and Kashmir Chowk. Chairman Randhawa emphasized the importance of speeding up construction work, while maintaining transparency and high standards.

“There must be no compromise on the quality of construction. Development must move faster and be visible to the public,” Randhawa stated.

He instructed that CDA directorates, particularly the Directorate of the DC CDA, establish camp offices in sectors where development is ongoing. These offices are expected to address residents’ complaints at their doorstep and ensure timely, lawful resolutions.

Highlighting the need for improved aesthetics and urban planning, the chairman called for modern lighting systems and upgraded road infrastructure in all new sectors. He also ordered the widening of major roads and the removal of encroachments and ille-

gal structures in accordance with legal procedures.

In Park Enclave, he specifically directed that the pace of development and installation of street lights be intensified. Addressing bureaucratic hurdles, Randhawa stressed that all bottlenecks delaying CDA sector projects be removed on a priority basis.

The chairman also acknowledged the recent success of CDA’s commercial property initiatives. “The performance of the relevant wings in the auction of plots and shops has been commendable,” he said, instructing the Finance Wing to allocate adequate funds to sustain momentum in development.

Looking ahead, Randhawa issued clear instructions for the upgradation of the Diplomatic Enclave to international standards, indicating a broader vision for infrastructural enhancement across the capital.

Postmaster gets 29 years imprisonment

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Special Central Court in Rawalpindi has sentenced former Postmaster, Hamid Jalil to 29 years of imprisonment for corruption and embezzlement, marking a significant step in the fight against financial misconduct.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 2.01 million on the convict and ordered him to pay Rs 21.5 million in restitution to the Postal Department.

The postmaster was found guilty of falsifying entries in pension savings accounts, leading to the misappropriation of over Rs 252.96 million.

The case, registered in 2022 by the Anti-Corruption Circle in Islamabad, was pursued by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Assistant Director Legal Muhammad Afzal led the prosecution, supported by Sub-Inspector Shahzad Sarwar and Inspector Fahd Iqbal’s. An FIA spokesperson emphasized that there would be no tolerance for those undermining justice and underscored the agency’s commitment to upholding accountability.

Pakistan ranks 4th globally with 167 snow leopards population survey

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a groundbreaking moment for wildlife conservation, Pakistan has unveiled its first-ever scientific estimate of the snow leopard population, 167 individuals, placing the country at number four globally among snow leopard range nations. This marks a major milestone in Pakistan’s environmental research and conservation efforts.

The announcement was made during the Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards 2025, organized by the Snow Leopard Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC).

The event brought together environmental experts, diplomats, educators, students, journalists, and conservation activists to honor the unsung heroes of wildlife protection.

Based on 15 years of rigorous field surveys, camera trapping, and data analysis, the Snow Leopard Foundation determined that Pakistan’s snow leopard population stands at 167 individuals. This newly released data provides a critical foundation for future conservation strategies aimed at protecting the elusive and endangered big cat in Pakistan’s high-altitude mountain regions.

During the ceremony,



seven dedicated rangers and field staff from Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir were awarded for their bravery and long-standing service in safeguarding endangered species, often at great personal risk.

Dr. Shezra Mansab Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change, lauded the field officers as “the true heroes of our wildlife,” emphasizing their vital role in strengthening Pakistan’s climate resilience and environmental security.

Wildlife Ambassador Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari echoed this sentiment, highlighting that “protecting wildlife means saving entire ecosystems and the future of coming generations.”

Awardees included Muhammad Ismail (AJK), Sher Afghan Ali, Muhammad Raza, Sakhawat Ali, Israr Ullah,

Muhammad Saleem, and Mehboob Shah, each receiving national recognition through category-specific wildlife awards.

The ceremony also featured the screening of a documentary titled “Beyond Borders – The Heartbeat of Chitral Rangers”, showcasing the harsh realities and sacrifices of those working in remote, high-altitude terrains to safeguard Pakistan’s natural heritage.

The Snow Leopard Foundation and MoCC&EC reaffirmed their commitment to advancing conservation research and expanding protection efforts for snow leopards and other endangered species across Pakistan.

Snow leopards face increasing threats from habitat degradation, shrinking prey populations, and climate change. Expanding infrastructure,

poaching, and conflict with herders continue to jeopardize their survival, making accurate population data essential for targeted conservation.

The three countries with higher populations are China, Mongolia, and India. China hosts the largest number of snow leopards, with an estimated 2,000 to 2,500 individuals, due to its vast mountainous terrain spanning several provinces. Mongolia follows with around 1,000 snow leopards, benefitting from its remote and rugged landscapes that provide ideal habitats. India ranks third, with an estimated population between 500 and 700, primarily found in the Himalayan regions. These countries play a crucial role in the global conservation of this elusive and endangered species.

Local communities, particularly those in Gilgit-Baltistan, have played a growing role in protecting snow leopards by participating in eco-tourism initiatives and reporting poaching incidents, making them vital stakeholders in long-term conservation.

Globally, the snow leopard population is estimated to be between 3,500 and 7,000 individuals, spread across 12 countries in Central and South Asia. This underlines the importance of Pakistan’s role in the survival of this iconic and vulnerable species.

3 killed, 14 injured in traffic accidents

NEILI (Pajhwok): At least three people have been killed and 14 others injured in separate traffic accidents in the central provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi, officials said on Friday. Bamyan police spokesman Mohammad Khwani Rasa told Pajhwok Afghan News that a motorbike collided with a car on the Kabul-Bamyan highway late Thursday. Both individuals on the motorbike died at the scene.

Wushu team wins 3 medals in China

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghanistan's eight-member national Wushu team has returned home from China with three valuable medals—one gold, one silver, and one bronze—after 10 days of competition in the Asian Wushu Championship. The 12th edition of the Asian Youth and Junior Wushu Championship, organized by the Asian Wushu Confederation, was held from July 23 to July 30.

Afghanistan and Turkmenistan sign deal to expand Torghundi Port



KABUL (TOLONews): In a fresh move to strengthen transport cooperation between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, a major agreement and contract were signed for the development and investment in Torghundi Port.

According to the agreement, the dry port of Torghundi in Herat province will be expanded with an initial investment of 5 million US dollars.

The project includes the construction of warehouses

es, the design, and establishment of new facilities for loading and unloading commercial goods.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works, said: "The agreement outlines the construction of new warehouses and facilities to be activated for handling goods along the Torghundi-Herat railway line."

He added that the investment will be made by Turkmenistan, but

implementation will take place within Afghan territory under national laws. Upon completion, the cost will be reimbursed to the Turkmen company through revenue generated from the facilities.

Meanwhile, some experts believe that any investment in railway infrastructure is beneficial to Afghanistan's economy and trade growth.

Mohammad Karim Azimi, an economic analyst, said: "Turkmenistan

is interested in investing in Afghanistan's rail sector, and Russia has also expressed interest in this area."

Abdul Jabbar Safi, head of the Kabul Industrialists' Association, said: "Looking back at history, Turkmenistan has always maintained good relations with Afghanistan. Now that it seeks to transit its energy through Afghanistan to South Asia, the country stands to earn substantial revenue."

Turkmenistan is considered one of Afghanistan's key economic and trade partners. In addition to importing electricity, oil, and gas, Afghanistan collaborates with Turkmenistan on major regional projects such as TAPI, fiber optic networks, and railway development.

With the implementation of this project, trade transit between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan is expected to increase, paving the way for broader regional economic integration.

UN claim on presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan 'propagandistic': Mujahid



KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid has rejected a United Nations report alleging the return of foreign terrorists to Afghanistan.

Mujahid stated that no rogue groups are present in Afghanistan and that Daesh has been suppressed in the country.

"We reject this claim. Since the Islamic Emirate came to power, no

rogue or illegal group has been allowed here, nor will they be. Foreign groups are not permitted to operate in Afghanistan and are not present. Claims made by such institutions are made in a propagandistic manner — we reject them. They are untrue and far from reality."

UN experts have submitted a new report to the United Nations Security Council, stating that Daesh

in Afghanistan is recruiting a number of extremists through online platforms.

According to these experts, Daesh poses the "most serious threat" to Europe and the United States.

A portion of the UN experts' report reads: "There were increasing concerns about foreign terrorist fighters returning to Central Asia and Afghanistan, aiming to undermine regional security."

The UN experts also stated in the report that al-Qaeda affiliates in Africa, including Al-Shabaab have expanded their areas of operation.

According to the experts, Daesh has issued warnings about potential attacks against Americans.

In the report, the experts claim that the base of Daesh is located in Afghanistan — a claim the Islamic Emirate once again considers exaggerated and propagandistic.

Earlier, Fasihuddin Fitrat, Chief of the Army Staff of the Islamic Emirate, also described Daesh as part of a psychological war against the ruling system, emphasizing that the group does not control any territory in Afghanistan.

SIGAR's report on situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLONews): The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has claimed that, in nearly four years of holding power, the caretaker government of Afghanistan has systematically stripped Afghan women and girls of their rights.

In its 68th Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress, SIGAR stated that due to restrictive policies, women and girls have been effectively

erased from public life in Afghanistan.

The report noted that the human rights situation in Afghanistan is closely linked to ongoing economic and humanitarian crises. As international aid continues to decline, women and girls are said to be "disproportionately affected."

SIGAR also cited the UN Human Rights Council, which warned that reduced aid may cause women to lose what limited access they have left to

healthcare, food, and protection services.

According to a study by UN Women, Afghanistan ranks as the second-lowest country in the world in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality, just above Yemen.

So far, the Islamic Emirate has not responded to SIGAR's latest report. However, it has repeatedly asserted in the past that the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan are protected under Islamic law.

Afghanistan, Indonesia discuss boosting fruit exports

KABUL (BNA): Senior Afghan and Indonesian officials have discussed enhancing agricultural cooperation, particularly focusing on expanding exports of Afghanistan's fresh and dried fruit to Indonesia, as Kabul seeks new economic partners and international trade opportunities.

Mawlawi Sadr Azam Usmani, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock under the Islamic Emirate, met in Kabul with Indonesia's Chargé d'Affaires, Nanda Evalist, to explore avenues for bilateral trade in agriculture, horticulture, and livestock products.

According to a statement released by Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, the meeting emphasized the potential for Afghan agricultural goods in the Indonesian market. Deputy Minister Usmani highlighted the Islamic Emirate's ongoing efforts to combat narcotics, ensure national security, support farmers, and advance strategic development projects.

He also underscored the high quality of Afghan produce — particularly fresh and dried fruits — and called on Indonesia to facilitate import access while encouraging Indonesian investors to explore opportunities in Afghanistan. "We believe favorable conditions now exist for sustainable economic activity," Usmani said.

In response, Chargé d'Affaires Evalist welcomed the Islamic Emirate's initiatives and reaffirmed Indonesia's support for Afghan farmers and herders. "We will convey the message of Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture to our government, our people, and our investors," she said.



KABUL (Amu tv): At least 357 children in Afghanistan died from measles in the first half of 2025, part of a wider health and humanitarian crisis that has left 12 million children in need of assistance, UNICEF said in a new report.

The UN children's agency documented more than 74,800 suspected measles cases between January and June, nearly 80% of them among children under 5. Other preventable illnesses also remain widespread, with

73,570 cases of acute watery diarrhea, 12 associated deaths and more than 824,000 cases of respiratory infections and pneumonia recorded in the same period. UNICEF said Afghanistan is grappling with one of the most urgent but under-addressed child nutrition crises in the world. More than 3.5 million children suffer from wasting, the most dangerous form of malnutrition, including 1.4 million at heightened risk of death. Over 85% of those are younger than 2.

From January to June,

more than 9.5 million children were screened for wasting, with nearly 275,000 admitted for outpatient care and more than 23,000 for inpatient treatment.

The report said decades of conflict, entrenched poverty, climate shocks and collapsing social services have left more than 22.9 million people — over half of Afghanistan's population — in need of humanitarian aid this year.

A surge of mass deportations from Iran has deepened the crisis. Between January and June, more than

714,000 Afghans returned, 99% of them undocumented and 70% forcibly expelled, UNICEF said. The arrivals have strained border resources and overwhelmed local communities already struggling with poverty and food insecurity.

During the May-to-October period, about 9.5 million people — one-fifth of the population — are projected to face crisis or emergency levels of hunger, according to the report.

UNICEF appealed for \$1.2 billion in 2025 to continue its work in Afghanistan, but said its humanitarian appeal is only 51% funded. The agency thanked governments and private partners for contributions but warned that critical funding gaps threaten to undermine the response.

"Throughout 2025, with both humanitarian and basic human needs at dire levels, our unwavering shared commitment to the people of Afghanistan will be crucial to alleviate acute suffering and to reduce preventable deaths, particularly among children and women," UNICEF said.

Two journalists in Taliban custody for more than a week



KABUL (Amu): Two journalists, Bashir Hatif and Shakib Ahmad Nazari, have been detained by the Taliban for more than a week, according to sources, in the latest sign of intensifying restrictions on the press.

Hatif and Nazari were taken into custody last Thursday in Kabul by Taliban's morality enforcers, sources said. Both men have worked with a range of Afghan and international media outlets. Hatif has reported for Zhwandoon TV, while

Nazari has contributed to Japan's i24 News channel. The two are now in the custody of Taliban intelligence, sources said, and are being held in connection with their ties to the Afghanistan Media Center, a local press organization. Their detention came during the same sweep in which Abu Zar Sar-e-Puli, the center's director, was arrested alongside journalists from the Tawana News Agency and the Afghan Women Journalists' Association. Taliban have accused

Sar-e-Puli of "moral corruption" and of links to foreign intelligence agencies. Taliban released a video of him apparently confessing, though the circumstances of that statement remain unclear.

The arrests are part of a broader crackdown. In recent weeks, Taliban security units — including a joint force from the intelligence service and the virtue ministry — have detained several reporters and media workers across the country.

This is not the first time Hatif has been detained. He was previously held for several hours by Taliban authorities in April 2024.

Since the Taliban returned to power in 2021, rights groups have documented more than 500 cases of arrests, threats and violent incidents against journalists. Most have involved the intelligence directorate or the virtue ministry, the agencies now holding Hatif and Nazari.

Prolonged power cuts in Kabul spark public outcry

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of Kabul residents from various districts have voiced complaints over increasing power outages.

They say that they have access to electricity for less than six hours a day and are calling for serious action from the authorities.

Aqa Shirin, a resident of Kabul's 22nd district, said: "We are not satisfied with the electricity service. The bills arrive quickly, but the power doesn't. The nights are hot—while adults can cope, children suffer greatly from the heat and mosquitoes."

Abdul Qadir, from the 8th district, said: "Power problems are serious. I

work during the day, and when I come home at night, electricity is only available for part of the night."

Other residents of the capital are urging the national power company, Breshna, to address this issue in a fundamental way.

Elyas, from the 3rd district, said: "Our demand is to have electricity supplied in line with our needs and at acceptable quality. If 24-hour power isn't possible, at least 12 hours would help solve our problems."

Imranullah, from the 5th district, said: "Power problems are severe, and

our lives depend entirely on electricity. Without it, there's no water in the house, and household appliances can't be used. We ask the government to ensure electricity is supplied."

Meanwhile, the former head of Breshna says resolving power outages in Kabul requires both short-term and long-term investments.

Amanullah Ghalib, the former CEO of Breshna, said: "One of the challenges is the limited capacity of the power line that passes through Salang, which cannot carry more than 300 to 340 megawatts. This can

be resolved by constructing a 500-kilovolt line. However, a more fundamental issue in Kabul is the lack of capacity to absorb electricity, which requires the installation of substations. Two substation projects are already planned, but their completion will take one to two years."

Despite repeated attempts, we were unable to obtain Breshna's response. However, the company's CEO had previously stated that last year alone, contracts for the production of over 600 megawatts of domestic electricity worth nearly \$600 million were signed.

Family fears for elderly UK couple held by Taliban



LONDON (AFP): The family of elderly British couple Peter and Barbie Reynolds, detained for six months without charge in Afghanistan, fears the worst as their health declines.

"I don't know if they're still alive," said their son, Jonathan Reynolds, who has not spoken to his parents since their last phone call on June 15.

"How would I know if they were no longer alive? Who's going to call me? The Taliban's never called me. Who's going to call? I don't know," asked Reynolds, one of the couple's four children.

Peter Reynolds, 80, and his 76-year-old wife were arrested in February along with Chinese-American friend, Faye Hall, who was released in March, and an Afghan translator.

The couple were married in Kabul in 1970, and have spent almost two decades living in Afghanistan running educational programs after moving there. They also became official Afghan citizens.

Taliban officials have refused to detail why the couple was arrested in February as they were returning to their home in central Bamiyan province.

"They were told by the judge that they were not guilty of any crimes," said their son.

"So many times we've been told two to three days and then you'll be

released ... But it's six months on Saturday," he added.

The couple were first held in a maximum security facility, "then in underground cells, without daylight, before being transferred" to the intelligence services in Kabul, according to UN experts.

In late July, the independent UN human rights experts called for the Taliban to free the pair warning of the "rapid deterioration" of their physical and mental health, stating that they "risk irreparable harm or even death."

UN experts shared a voice message from the couple with their son, but he has not been reassured.

"You have to remember their age," Reynolds, 45, told AFP during a video call from his home in Chicago.

"Are they in danger? Yeah, they're an elderly couple who are unjustly held ... in captivity. They are not free," he said.

"Their bodies are not used to being put through this, they're being trapped, they're sleeping on a little mattress on the floor," he said.

The couple's children have set up a website called Free Peter and Barbie to campaign for their release, which counts down the number of days they have been held.

Since being detained, Peter Reynolds has suffered two eye infec-

tions and intermittent tremors in his head and left arm, according to the UN experts.

"My dad has had heart attacks ... he has a stent in his heart. He has had skin cancer," Jonathan Reynolds said.

"So he needs an ECG (electrocardiogram), blood test, EEG (electroencephalogram), CT scans. He needs all of that," he added.

His mother suffers from malnourishment and anaemia after months of being "fed once a day in prison," her son added.

She is "weak and fragile," the experts said.

The Taliban government's top diplomat Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said the couple had been receiving medical care.

"Their human rights are being respected," he told a press conference in Kabul.

"They are being provided with medical care. They are in occasional contact with their families."

"Their case isn't anything serious," the Taliban interior ministry said in April, adding they hoped it would be "resolved soon."

The couple run an organization in Afghanistan called Rebuild, which provides educational programs for women and children.

"My parents have never thought about their security and safety," Reynolds said, it was "no way to treat an elderly couple who've given the last two decades of their life for the good of Afghanistan."

When the Taliban returned to power in 2021, the couple remained in Afghanistan against the advice of the British embassy.

Their son recalled the embassy asking them: "Why are you staying? You're on your own."

His parents had replied: "How could we leave these people in their darkest hour? We came here because we love these people, and that's what we'll give the rest of our lives to, even if it means we die."

KP CM directs provision of clean drinking water for all

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting regarding rehabilitation of dysfunctional water supply schemes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held here on Friday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. In line with the vision of "Clean Drinking Water for All," it was decided that dormant water supply schemes across the province would be made operational on an emergency basis.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan, Minister for Public Health Engineering Pakhtoon Yar Khan, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah,



administrative secretaries of relevant departments, and other senior officials.

The Chief Minister directed for the immediate completion and activation of 572 ongoing drinking water supply schemes in the first phase and emphasized that all required resources for this purpose would be provided on a priority basis. He made it clear that these schemes must be made fully functional within the current fiscal year.

In addition, the Chief Minister directed that a non-ADP summary be submitted immediately for the activation of another 942 dormant water supply schemes. He said that work on rehabilitating these schemes would begin across all regions of the province. To ensure efficient execution, he directed the preparation of a comprehensive implementation plan outlining clear targets, scope of work, and timelines. The Chief Minister also stressed that the progress on these schemes would be closely monitored and warned that there would be zero tolerance for any irregularities or delays.

He stated that the government is making substantial investments in clean water projects, and the outcomes must reflect that level of commitment. There will be no compromise on transparency or quality in the

implementation of these schemes, he said, adding that all relevant departments will be held accountable for timely and quality completion of their respective schemes of tubewells.

Ali Amin Gandapur further directed that the online system for real-time monitoring of water supply schemes be completed at the earliest. He emphasized the need to ensure accountability and responsibility among the officials assigned to these schemes. He also instructed the establishment of a permanent and transparent mechanism for the timely maintenance of functional water supply systems in the province.

Providing clean drinking water to the public remains a top priority of the government, the Chief Minister

ism in Pakistan is undeniable, particularly highlighting India's network of over a hundred consulates in Afghanistan - which, according to him, were never meant for diplomacy or trade but served as operational hubs to orchestrate terrorism within Pakistan. He vowed to expose India's role in fueling instability, especially in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying: "I will go there personally and tell the whole world what India has done. I will reveal how deeply your government is involved in terrorism in Pakistan. Our entire party, led by Imran Khan, and the Pakistani nation, are united in defending our country."

Referring to a recent cross-border attacks, the Chief Minister said: "You attacked us under the cover of darkness and were defeated. Imran Khan, our nation, and our armed forces proved that we are not only prepared - we are capable of responding decisively."

He further said that India orchestrated attacks on Chinese nationals, strategic infrastructure, and other assets in Pakistan, saying that all such incidents are ultimately linked to Indian interests. He reminded the historic role played by Pashtuns in the liberation of Kashmir and expressed confidence that they would once again rise to liberate the remaining parts of the disputed territory.

Directly addressing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the chief minister said: "We are not cowards who strike in the dark. We confront our enemies face to face. We believe that truth and justice always prevail." He emphasized that the people of Pakistan and its security forces have made unparalleled sacrifices in combating terrorism sponsored by India, and affirmed that all state institutions, political forces, and the public remain united in defending the country.

He said that the Indian government is manipulating his statement to falsely implicate Pakistan before the FATF and stated that India, not Pakistan, belongs on the grey list. "I will personally go and prove to the world that India fully qualifies to be placed on FATF's grey list". And God willing, I will make that happen." Concluding his remarks, the Chief Minister quoted a famous quote by Imran Khan about Prime Minister Modi: "Today, I am reminded of what Imran Khan once said about you - 'A small man in a big office.'"



PESHAWAR: Police officials fired tear gas to repel protesters during rally of All Government Employees Grand Alliance (AGEGA) in front of KP Assembly building.

Kulbhushan a clear evidence against India, says Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stated that India's dream of getting Pakistan back on the FATF grey list by distorting the Chief Minister's statement will never be realized. He said that Kulbhushan Jadhav is clear evidence of India's criminal activities in Pakistan. The long list of crimes committed by Kulbhushan Jadhav paves the way for India to be included in the FATF grey list.

In a statement issued from his office, Barrister Dr. Saif said that there is concrete evidence of Indian-backed terrorist activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. All such evidence proving India's involvement in terrorism will be presented to FATF authorities. He added that after facing defeat on the battlefield, India has resorted to underhanded tactics.

Barrister Dr. Saif said that having been defeated by the Pakistan Army, India now dreams of putting Pakistan back on the FATF grey list—an ambition that will never be fulfilled. He emphasized that the recent uptick in terrorist incidents in Pakistan is a direct consequence of Indian interference and support for terrorist elements.

He further said that India is actively backing terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and that undeniable evidence of this support exists. Cowardly enemies are targeting innocent civilians. In the wake of recent tensions, Pakistan's armed forces have dealt a crushing blow to India, shattering its arrogance, which is why India is now orchestrating terrorist activities within Pakistan.

PHC stops by-elections in NA-1

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has halted the by-elections in NA-1 Chitral constituency following the disqualification of PTT's Member National Assembly, Abdul Latif. The court also issued notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan and the Election Commission in this regard, on Friday.

PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal heard the writ while Abdul the counsel Moazzam Butt advocate, appeared in court and stated that the petitioner was elected as a member of the National Assembly from NA-1 Chitral.

The lawyer argued that the Speaker of the National Assembly sent a reference to the Election Commission without issuing any notice, seeking Abdul Latif's disqualification based on a 10-year sentence awarded by an Anti-Terrorism Court. The Election Commission disqualified Abdul Latif without providing him with a notice or hearing.

The lawyer further stated that according to the law, the Election Commission is required to make decision on a reference within 90 days. However, in this case, the Anti-Terrorism Court delivered its verdict in Abdul Latif's absence, and an appeal against the sentence has been filed.

2.1m houses being constructed in Sindh

F.P. Report

NAWABSHAH: First Lady and Member of the National Assembly, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, said that today is a day of pride for all of us. The house ownership entitlement is not just a piece of paper but a guarantee of your future security.

Addressing the distribution ceremony of ownership rights under the Sindh People's Housing for Flood-Affected Project in Nawabshah, Shaheed Benazirabad, she said that 2.1 million houses are being constructed under the SPFH project by the Sindh government. The most important aspect, she emphasized, is that the land for each house is being registered in the name of the woman of the household.

Bibi Aseefa Bhutto said that this is not just a house, but a symbol of dignity, authority, and security, not only for you, but also for your children. She described this project as the result of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's hard work, vision, and commitment to public welfare, stating that no other province or political party has taken such a significant and people-friendly initiative to date.

Referring to the promise of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Bibi Aseefa said that he had pledged to provide every citizen with land, shelter, and dignity. Today, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is fulfilling that promise. She said that, God willing, you will be safe, and your future generations will live with respect and dignity.

Meanwhile, First Lady of Pakistan, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, today urged the nation to bolster assistance for all mothers, emphasizing the importance of supporting diverse feeding choices.



In a message on the eve of World Breastfeeding Week 2025, she advocated for backing mothers who breastfeed, those who use supplements due to medical reasons, and those who opt for a combination of both.

Ms. Bhutto Zardari underscored breastfeeding's significance as a natural method to safeguard children's well-being. Exclusive breastfeeding for six months, followed by continued breastfeeding alongside complementary foods up to two years, offers numerous advantages, including stronger immunity, improved cognitive growth, and lasting health benefits for both mother and child. She also noted the reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancers for women who breastfeed.

However, the First Lady emphasized that mothers unable to breastfeed exclusively should not face judgment. She highlighted the need for compassionate care, clear guidance on safe supplementation, and equal respect for mothers facing health challenges that hinder breastfeeding.

Ms. Bhutto Zardari acknowledged the hurdles many mothers face, including inadequate maternity leave, a shortage of private spaces at workplaces, and aggressive formula promotion. She also recognized the difficulties mothers

relying on infant formula experience in accessing reliable information about safe preparation and nutrition. She stressed the importance of a system that empowers mothers, provides expert guidance, and ensures access to suitable feeding options.

The First Lady called on policymakers to enforce regulations on breast-milk substitute marketing, ensuring mothers receive impartial, scientific advice. She also urged employers to offer paid maternity leave, flexible work arrangements, and dedicated lactation spaces. Furthermore, she encouraged healthcare professionals to provide empathetic, evidence-based guidance on breastfeeding techniques and safe supplement usage, tailored to each family's needs.

With undernutrition contributing to nearly half of child deaths and diet-related illnesses like diabetes on the rise in Pakistan, Ms. Bhutto Zardari highlighted the urgency of the situation. She concluded by emphasizing that supporting breastfeeding and providing respectful, medically sound alternatives safeguards children's health and empowers families. She envisions a Pakistan where all families feel supported, informed, and cared for, irrespective of their infant feeding choices.

CJP seeks to strengthen Bar-LJCP collaboration

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi led a significant conference in Peshawar on Friday to address the critical need for better collaboration between Bar Associations and the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) to enhance the justice system.

The gathering aimed to improve the administration of justice and ensure the legal community's participation in legal and policy changes. Justice S.M. Attique Shah, Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court; Tahir Warraich, Vice Chairman, Pakistan Bar Council; and other prominent figures from the legal community, government, and judiciary attended the meeting.

Justice Afridi shared observations from his visits to remote districts across all provinces, noting that despite development funding, lack of inter-agency coordination has hindered effective implementation. He stressed the inclusion of Bar Associations in judicial development programs, particularly those related to judicial complexes.

To address this, the LJCP will deploy senior representatives to each province, stationed at High Courts, to act as liaisons with district bar associations. These representatives will promote awareness of justice sector programs, pinpoint local needs, and oversee local reforms.

Bar Associations will be asked to submit development proposals to District Development Committees led by District & Sessions Judges. Federal and provincial officials will participate to expedite execution and avoid resource duplication.

The CJP urged bar representatives to actively involve their members in these reforms and directed that government support to Bar Associations be streamlined for maximum impact and cost-effectiveness. He urged provincial departments to work with designated officers for timely project implementation.

Acknowledging issues like poor infrastructure, unreliable electricity, and limited digital access in remote districts, he emphasized the need for focused interventions.

US envoy visits distribution site in Gaza

GAZA STRIP (AFP): US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff visited southern Gaza on Friday amid international outrage over starvation, shortages and deadly chaos near aid distribution sites.

With food scarce and parcels being airdropped, Witkoff and US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee toured one of Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's distribution sites in Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city. Chapin Fay, the group's spokesperson, said the visit reflected Trump's understanding of the stakes and that "feeding civilians, not Hamas, must be the priority." All four of the group's sites are in zones controlled by the Israeli military and have become flashpoints of desperation during their months of operation, with starving people scrambling for scarce aid. Hundreds have been killed by either gunfire or trampling.

The Israeli military says it has only fired warning shots at people who approach its forces, and

GHF says its armed contractors have only used pepper spray or fired warning shots to prevent deadly crowding. Witkoff's visit comes a week after US officials walked away from ceasefire talks in Qatar, blaming Hamas and pledging to seek other ways to rescue Israeli hostages and make Gaza safe.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Thursday that Witkoff was sent to craft a plan to boost food and aid deliveries, while Trump wrote on social media that the fastest way to end the crisis would be for Hamas to surrender and release hostages. Officials at Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza said they have received the bodies of 25 people, including 13 who were killed while trying to get aid, including near the site that US officials visited. GHF denied anyone was killed at their sites on Friday and said most recent incidents had taken place near United Nations aid convoys.

The remaining 12 were killed in airstrikes, the officials said. Israel's military

did not immediately comment. International organizations have said Gaza has been on the brink of famine for the past two years. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the leading international authority on food crises, said recent developments, including a complete blockade on aid for 2 1/2 months, mean the "worst-case scenario of famine is currently playing out in Gaza."

Though the flow of aid has resumed, including via airdrops, the amount getting into Gaza remains far lower than what aid organizations say is needed. A security breakdown in the territory has made it nearly impossible to safely deliver food to starving Palestinians, much of the limited aid entering is hoarded and later sold at exorbitant prices. At a Friday press conference in Gaza City, representatives of the territory's influential tribes accused Israel of empowering factions that loot aid sites and implored Witkoff to stay several hours in Gaza to witness life firsthand.

Refugee, migrant crossings to UK hit record high

LONDON: More than 25,000 people have crossed the English Channel into the United Kingdom so far this year, marking the fastest pace of arrivals since records began in 2018 and piling pressure on the UK's Labour government as anti-immigration sentiment is stoked by the political right wing.

Figures released that nearly 900 refugees and migrants made the crossing in 13 small boats on Wednesday alone, bringing the total number of arrivals in 2025 to 25,436. It's a perilous journey that has resulted in dozens of deaths over the years. The milestone is likely to intensify political scrutiny over Prime Minister Keir Starmer's handling of undocumented migration. His government has pledged tougher action on smuggling networks, with Starmer vowing to "smash the gangs" responsible for transporting people across the Channel.

Opposition politicians have seized on the latest numbers to criticise Labour's approach. "Almost 900 people crossed the Channel yesterday, meaning 25,000 people, mainly young men, have

crossed the Channel this year. [And] 2025 is the worst year on record so far, and the Labour Government are doing nothing to stop the crossings," said Conservative Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp.

He added: "Their 17 in, one out deal with France will not even make a dent - it would take 10 years for [Home Secretary] Yvette Cooper to deport the illegal immigrants that have arrived since the start of this year alone under her so-called deal, which still hasn't started." Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron announced "one in, one out" returns of asylum seekers earlier this month. The pilot programme sets out that for every person returned, a different individual would be allowed "to come here via a safe route: controlled and legal, subject to strict security checks and only open to those who have not tried to enter the UK illegally", Starmer said at the time.

Philp also reiterated his party's proposal to immediately detain and deport new arrivals, warning that continued legal challenges under

the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) could force a Conservative government to consider withdrawing from it, a threat they have often made in and around the Brexit years when the party was in government. Radical right Reform UK leader Nigel Farage echoed those criticisms, writing on social media: "898 illegals crossed the English Channel yesterday. This means more hotels, more costs and more people who should not be here. The public have had ENOUGH!"

A series of violent far-right demonstrations have been held recently outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in Epping, north of London. Meanwhile, United States President Donald Trump, who campaigned on a headline anti-immigration platform and has been executing it during his second term with raids and deportations of immigrants, recently praised the UK government's efforts, saying it was "doing a fantastic thing" by addressing the issue, though he admitted knowing "nothing about the boats". — Aljazeera