

Gohar thanks Army, govt
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been severely affected by the recent floods, with many areas still facing hardships, and expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Army and the government for their assistance. Speaking to media, Barrister Gohar acknowledged the efforts of the Army, provincial and federal governments in supporting flood victims.



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BUNER: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif distributing relief cheques among victims of the recent torrential rains and floods.

Islamabad, Beijing and Kabul vow to fight terror

KABUL (APP): Pakistan, China and Afghanistan on Wednesday expressed their commitment to strengthen joint efforts against terrorism. The Sixth Trilateral Foreign Ministers Dialogue was held in Kabul between Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi, and Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, focusing on political, economic and security cooperation, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

They also reaffirmed their commitment to deepening collaboration in trade, transit, regional development, health, education, culture, and combating drug trafficking, as well as, extension of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Pakistan and Afghanistan have expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory in their bilateral relations, while underlining the need to intensify cooperation in the field of security, particularly counter-terrorism.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi on the sidelines of the 6th Trilateral Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan in Kabul on Wednesday. Both leaders welcomed the

recent elevation of diplomatic representation from Chargé d'Affaires to Ambassadorial level, a step that had been agreed upon during the Trilateral Meeting in Beijing on May 21 this year.

Reflecting on recent engagements, including Mr. Dar's visits to Kabul on April 19 and July 17, as well as the Beijing meeting on May 21, they acknowledged that most of the decisions from these interactions have either been implemented or are nearing completion.

The ministers appreciated that these measures have strengthened Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, especially in the fields of trade and transit. Mr. Dar recognized the encouraging progress in political and commercial ties but emphasized that advancements in the security domain continue to lag behind.

Pointing to a surge in terrorist incidents inside Pakistan, the Deputy Prime Minister underscored that the attacks were carried out by groups operating from Afghan territory. He urged Kabul to take verifiable action against entities such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Balochistan Liberation Army Majeed Brigade. Mr. Muttaqi reaffirmed Afghanistan's pledge that its soil would not be used by any terrorist group against Pakistan or other nations. Concluding the meeting, Mr. Dar thanked the Afghan authorities for their warm hospitality and congratulated them on successfully hosting the 6th Trilateral Dialogue.

Imran posted as DG Info and PR



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has posted Muhammad Imran of Information Department as Director General Information and Public Relation, on Wednesday.

In this regard a notification has been issued stated that the order has been made in pursuance of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Services Tribunal Order dated 31st July 2025. Meanwhile, Muhammad Ansar has been posted as Press Registrar after relinquished from Director General Information and Public Relation.

Chinese FM arrives

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived here Wednesday on three-day official visit to Pakistan, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and participating in high-level diplomatic engagements.

He was warmly received at Noor Khan Airbase by Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar. Senior officials from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as top diplomats from the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad were also present to welcome the distinguished guest, a DPM's Office news release said.

PAF launches flood relief operation in GB

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force has launched a large-scale flood relief operation in Gilgit-Baltistan. Demonstrating unwavering resolve amidst difficult weather conditions and rugged mountainous terrain, PAF C-130 aircraft airlifted 7 tons of dry rations, daily use eatables and life-saving medicines from PAF Base Nur Khan to Gilgit.

The consignment will be distributed in remote flood-affected valleys in coordination with National Disaster Management Authority, ensuring that essential supplies reach distressed families cut off due to damaged communication lines. In a simultaneous humanitarian effort, 75 stranded individuals were also evacuated by PAF relief team from the disaster-hit areas.

This swift and coordi-

nated action forms part of the nationwide emergency relief campaign, underscoring Pakistan Armed Forces' continued commitment to safeguarding lives during natural calamities. Over the coming days, PAF aircraft and ground teams will remain engaged in sustained relief operations, delivering food, medicines, shelter and medical aid to vulnerable communities.

KP cabinet directs special cleanliness drive in flood-affected areas

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 37th meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cabinet was held here on Wednesday, with Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. Cabinet members, Additional Chief Secretaries, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Administrative Secretaries and Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attended the meeting.

The meeting began with *fateha* for the martyrs of the recent floods. The Cabinet received a comprehensive briefing on the human and material losses caused by the disaster and on the relief and rehabilitation measures already underway. The Cabinet was informed that first phase of the rescue operation has been successfully completed, while the search for missing persons continues.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur paid glowing tribute to the district administration, Rescue 1122, and all concerned departments and institutions for their timely, courageous, and effective response. He stated that their tireless efforts in saving precious lives during the floods were commendable and deserved the highest appreciation.

He assured the families of martyrs and the injured that compensation payments are being disbursed and reaffirmed his government's strong commitment that no victim will be left behind, and every affected person will



receive due support. He directed the immediate restoration of health centers in affected areas with full availability of essential medicines and the deployment of mobile hospitals. He further stressed proactive measures to prevent possible outbreaks of epidemics, provision of fodder for livestock, and necessary steps to protect animals from diseases.

The Chief Minister also ordered the launch of a special cleanliness campaign in all flood-affected areas, the urgent restoration of drinking water schemes such as tube wells, and the speedy rehabilitation of road connectivity. He stated that data on property damages is being collected, and the provincial government will ensure that those whose houses have been destroyed will be provided with new homes. He further announced that compensation would also cover livestock losses, while business owners who suffered damages would be supported with a comprehensive package.

To accelerate relief and rehabilita-

tion work, the Chief Minister directed the deployment of additional officers in the affected districts. He assured the people that the provincial government is determined and fully capable of helping its citizens rebuild their lives and stand on their feet again. Ali Amin Gandapur also acknowledged the generosity of people who are approaching the government to support the victims. For this purpose, he announced the opening of a special account to ensure that all public donations are delivered to the rightful beneficiaries with complete transparency.

The Chief Minister said that, in addition to the already allocated Rs. 3 billion, another Rs. 2 billion has been released to strengthen ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-affected areas. Briefing the Additional Chief Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs, Abid Majid, said that rescue operations in flood affected districts were in progress and senior government officers were present on the spots. He updated the cabinet about the death toll,

restoration of damaged infrastructure and assistance being provided to the flood affectees.

While sharing the data of each affected district Abid Majid informed data pertaining to death toll, missing persons, damaged infrastructure, shops, houses, crops and cattle is being collected adding that once the losses in Bajaur, Dir, Buner, Batagram, Mansehra, Swabi, Shangla and Abbottabad are assessed, will be tabled before the cabinet. He informed that concerned departments have been directed to expedite data collection so that affectees could be compensated swiftly.

He also apprised the cabinet that PESCO and other departments engaged in flood affected areas were also using provincial government's machinery. Urging the cellular companies to ensure maximum coverage in the flood affected areas, Abid Majid informed that 65% coverage has been restored in the area however, the dwellers need hundred percent restoration so that they can get connected with their nears and dears. Abid Majid briefed the cabinet about food and non-food supplies being distributed amongst the flood affectees, adding that aerial survey for damages assessment was also in progress. Abid Majid on the occasion informed that planning and development department has come up with an application through which all kind of data in the affected

PM, COAS gets briefing on relief, rescue operations

Shehbaz assures all possible measures to accelerate recovery efforts in flood-hit areas

F.P. Report

BUNER: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday visited the flood-affected districts of Swat, Buner, Shangla, and Swabi, where he emphasized that every available national resource will be mobilized to accelerate recovery efforts and restore normalcy in the affected areas.

The prime minister was accompanied by the federal ministers and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, a press statement issued by the PM Office said. The prime minister and COAS received a comprehensive briefing on the ongoing rescue and relief operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During their interaction with flood victims, the prime minister assured them of the Federal Government's and Pakistan Army's unwavering commitment to extending maximum support in this critical hour. The prime minister, while appreciating the tireless dedication of the Armed Forces and civil administration, reaffirmed solidarity with the flood-affected population and assured them of all possible assistance.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also drew attention towards the illegal encroachments, timber mafia and mining / crushing activities, especially in waterways which contribute greatly towards loss of lives and damages. He directed that Pakistan must act as a hard state where no one is above law and necessary actions be taken against defaulters without distinction.

The COAS also interacted with troops, police and civil administration personnel involved in rescue efforts, lauding their selfless commitment in assisting victims of floods and torrential rains. COAS directed ground formations to approach this responsibility with utmost devotion and to spare no effort in alleviating the hardships of flood-stricken families. He underscored that the safety and relief of fellow citizens remain the foremost priority, commending the forces and civil administration for their untiring service.

Earlier, the prime minister and participants also offered Fateha for those who lost their lives in this catastrophe. Later, the prime minister disbursed relief cheques among the victims of the recent torrential rains and floods. Addressing the participants, the prime minister expressed deep sorrow over the destruction caused by recent cloudbursts and heavy rains in various parts of the country, and said that these natural calamities had resulted in loss of many lives and properties.

The prime minister mentioned that incidents of cloudbursts occurred in Swat, Buner, Shangla, and Swabi. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) alone, around 350 people were martyred and hundreds of others sustained injuries, he said, adding that overall more than 700 people lost their lives due to rains and floods across the country. Recalling the 2022 floods, he noted that hundreds of thousands of acres of crops were destroyed and countless homes were washed away in Sindh. At that time, the federal government announced Rs 100 billion in aid to support the victims and rebuild the affected areas.

He emphasized that today, with the support of all stakeholders, the government was fully committed to facing this new challenge. He said that he had issued clear instructions that roads and infrastructure must be repaired regardless of whether they fall under provincial or federal jurisdiction. The prime minister said that the federal ministers were currently

engaged in relief activities in KP. Additionally, the prime minister announced seven days of free electricity for those affected and directed immediate repairs of damaged road infrastructure.

Highlighting the root causes of such destruction, the prime minister pointed out that hotels and houses were often constructed on natural waterways, which worsened the impact of floods. He stressed the urgent need to discourage such construction and called for the development of policies and laws to prevent building on illegal land, especially along water channels, to avoid future disasters.

He stated that while the government was already engaged in the fight against terrorists and Khawarij in KP, this natural disaster had added another layer of challenge. However, he emphasized that all stakeholders, including the government, armed forces, and civil society were working together to aid in the relief and recovery efforts.

He reiterated that Pakistan is one home with four units and there should be no politics in times of such national crisis. He appreciated the efforts of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin, and the armed forces who were working diligently to assist in relief operations. He also acknowledged the support of Field Marshal Asim Munir, under whose cooperation the government was striving to stabilize the country's economy. The prime minister said that Pakistan was among the 10 worst-affected countries by the impacts of climate change. He pointed out that deforestation also contributes to cloudbursts and emphasized the importance of preserving forests to mitigate the impact of future natural disasters.

Rescuer dead while deaths reached to 291 in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: One rescuer of Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) serving as driver dead in road mishap during relief operations in Buner, on Wednesday. The death toll rised to 291 on the 6th day, out of them 231 dually crossed verified by the concerned authorities for payment of the announced compensation cheques.

The relief flood operations are speedily continued at the worst affected tehsel Gadezai Daggar and Chaghorzai. TMA katlang district Mardon deceased identified as Ayaz (driver on daily wage basis) S/O Sher Bahadur embraced martyrdom due to front loader accident on Pir Baba road in tehsel Gadezai Buner on Wednesday.

The dead body was shifted immediately to THQ hospital Pacha Kalay,TMO Gadezai confirmed.After fulfilling the medicolegal process the dead body transported to his native village

patorak Katlang Mardan for burial under the supervision of TMO katlang and TMO Gadezai.

Its, pertinent, to mention here that the flood hit families have claimed their numbers of members are still missing. As per information received late evening a male dead body recovered at Gunbat area of Chaghorzai tehsel.

The rescue operations are underway and large numbers of state and donors agencies are actively involved in the rescue activities. Food non food items are being supplied by state and donors besides individuals.Heavy amounts are also distributed among affected families daily by donors and individuals while CM KPK and PM announced compensation cheques are also handing over them. The numbers of damaged houses markets shops schools roads bridges alarming while losses to standing crops and fertility of agricultural land beyond estimate.There is need of international donors in the rehabilitation, public

demanded.

Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Zia-ur-Rehman and District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Ayaz visited Shamlai to review the ongoing search and rescue operation in Mohallah Cheena, Dheri Haleem, situated on the border of Battagram and Mansehra districts.

According to officials, the operation is being carried out under the supervision of the District Administration Battagram and is led by Additional Assistant Commissioner Habibullah and Tehsildar Saeed Ahmed. Teams from the revenue department, Rescue 1122, police, forest department, TMA Battagram, and local volunteers are actively participating. Rescue teams recovered another body on Wednesday morning, bringing the death toll to 18. The officials on-site praised the tireless efforts of the district administration, police, revenue staff, TMA, and other rescue teams who have been engaged in the operation since Friday morning.

KP CM launches monsoon tree plantation campaign

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, formally launched the National Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2025 in the province on Wednesday by planting a sapling at the lawn of the Civil Secretariat, Peshawar. The coordinated nationwide plantation drive will continue from August to October, with weekly themes designed to promote maximum participation. As part of this campaign, extensive plantation activities have also been scheduled across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last week of August.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister emphasized that tree plantation is not only a national obligation but also the dire need of the hour. He said the provincial government is undertaking integrated measures for forest conservation and expansion in line with the vision of Imran Khan. Highlighting the remarkable success of the Billion Tree Project, he noted that the incumbent provincial government is now carrying forward this legacy through the Billion Tree Plus Project, under which large-scale plantation is being carried out across the province.

areas can be accessed by anyone anytime.

Responding to the urgent needs of various departments and the pressing requirement for rehabilitation of infrastructure damaged by the recent floods, the Provincial Cabinet approved a supplementary grant of Rs. 20 billion. The funds will be utilized for fast-moving and near-completion projects across the province to ensure fast completion. The Cabinet also granted approval for intra-sectoral re-appropriation of funds

to facilitate smooth financial management and efficient utilization of resources.

The Cabinet sanctioned financial assistance for victims of the recent floods, approving Rs. 2.00 million for each deceased and Rs. 0.50 million for each injured. Furthermore, the Cabinet approved the release of Rs. 1.00 billion (initially) to PDMA for the launch of a "Food Stamp" initiative under which Rs. 15,000 will be provided to each flood-affected family.

VICE CHANCELLOR

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PESHAWAR: Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Mr. Habibullah Arif, and Executive Director ETEA, Mr. Adil Saeed Safi exchanging files after signing MoU.

14 shops sealed in Small Industrial Estate

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An operation was carried out with the cooperation of the local administration to stop the activities going on contrary to industrial activities in Small Industries Estate Peshawar.

In the operation, not only 14 shops were sealed, but it was also decided to impose a heavy fine on the factory owner for opening shops against the rules and

regulations.

On the instructions of Managing Director Abdul Hameed Khan, the SIDB administration, under the local administration AC Haroon Sahoo conducted an operation against these shops in the Industrial Estate Peshawar that were established illegally and sealed them.

SIDB Joint Director Syed Ghalib Shah, State Incharge Muhammad Amjad and Officer

Muhammad Riaz were also involved in this operation. According to the Joint Director, they have issued notices to the factory owners several times in this regard to stop opening and renting out shops against the law.

These shops consist of general stores, plastic slippers and tandoors, which are affecting industrial activities, but their notices have been continuously ignored.

Director KPRA, Tariq Roghani passes away

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) Tariq Jamal Roghani breathed his last on Wednesday. His funeral prayer was offered on Wednesday in his native town Talash, Lower Dir, followed by burial in the ancestral graveyard.

The late Tariq Jamal was the son of educationist Haji Gul Jamal Roghani and cousin of renowned Islamic scholar Dr. Muhammad Ismail. At the time of his demise, he was serving as Director Inquiry & Investigation at KPRA.

Tariq Jamal was widely admired as a competent and dedicated officer, known for his gentle and compassionate nature. Colleagues recall his friendly demeanor, treating junior officers and staff like his own family.

In remembrance, KPRA officers and employees organized Quran recitation and offered special prayers for the departed soul. Director General KPRA, Fauzia Iqbal, expressed deep sorrow over his passing and prayed for eternal peace and forgiveness for the deceased.

Semester examinations begins

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: According to Chief Executive Officer Dr. Rahman Afridi, the semester examinations under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faculty of Paramedical & Allied Health Sciences have officially begun today across various technologies. This time, all 49 examination halls have been established in government schools located in safe zones to ensure a secure environment for students.

A total of 37,626 male and female students are appearing in the exams, covering 23 different technologies from the first to the fourth semester.

Dr. Rahman further shared that the examinations will continue for nine days, followed by viva exams.

All question papers have been printed under strict secrecy protocols and delivered to nearby branches of the Bank of Khyber for secure distribution to examination halls.

The duty staff has been fully trained, and one invigilator has been assigned for every 40 students.

Dr. Rahman urged relevant health staff to conduct surprise visits to examination halls and report any irregularities to the Faculty immediately.

FIR registered over fake land transfers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Anti-Corruption Establishment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa received a complaint regarding the transfer of the same land in district Kohat to three different individuals.

Acting on the complaint, a formal inquiry was initiated. During the course of the inquiry, the allegations were proven to be correct, leading to the registration of FIR against Computer Operator Muhammad Yasir, Computer Operator Falak Zeb, Sub-Registrar Muhammad Ashfaq, Patwari Fareed Gul, and a citizen named Wazir Khan.

Ongoing relief, rehab efforts for flood victims Qasim wants everyone to wholeheartedly support govt

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Social Welfare, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, has urged officials of the Social Welfare Department, philanthropists, and civil society organizations to contribute wholeheartedly in supporting the provincial government's ongoing efforts for the assistance and rehabilitation of recent flood victims. He said this will help ensure better support for all affected families, restore their daily lives, and compensate, to some extent, for their losses.

He expressed these views while presiding over an emergency meeting at the Directorate of Social Welfare, Peshawar, regarding the rehabilitation of flood victims. The meeting was attended by District Social Welfare Officer Peshawar Noor Muhammad Mehsud, Deputy Director Administration Qayyum

Khan, and representatives of various civil society organizations. The sole agenda of the meeting was to take measures for the immediate relief and rehabilitation of families affected by the floods.

The Minister briefed participants about the situation in the affected areas of District Buner and urged officials and civil society representatives to develop a joint plan and immediately launch relief activities. On the occasion, NGO representatives briefed the Minister about the relief measures taken so far.

The Minister for Social Welfare instructed that free medical camps be set up immediately in affected areas, food supplies and basic necessities of life be provided to victims, temporary schools be established to prevent disruption in children's education, and wheelchairs and accessible wash-rooms be made available for persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, he directed that effective monitoring of relief activities be ensured through close coordination between the Social Welfare Department and NGOs.

The Department of Social Welfare assured that coordination of relief efforts will be ensured through district and field offices. Civil society will be provided full support in listing and surveying needy families. The specific needs of women, children, and persons with disabilities will be given top priority, while regular updates will be provided to the media and public to keep them informed.

Minister for Social Welfare, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, stated that in this difficult time, standing with the affected families is a shared responsibility of the government and social institutions.

He reaffirmed that the Department of Social Welfare will play a vital role in turning this mission into reality.

PHC grants bail to two brothers in domestic dispute case

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted bail to two brothers, Sami Ullah and Muhammad Zaman, who were accused of attacking a Frontier Corps (FC) official with an axe in Kuram Sada over domestic

dispute, on Wednesday.

According to the prosecution, the incident occurred on June 25, 2025, in the jurisdiction of the Sada police station. The complainant, a FC official named Sadiq, alleged that the accused brothers attacked him with an axe, causing injuries. The

motive behind the incident is reportedly a dispute between the parties involving women.

The counsel Daniyal Khan Chamkani advocate argued that although the petitioners were accused of attacking the complainant with an axe, the medical report did not conclusively

prove that the injuries were caused by an axe. He emphasized the need for further investigation in the case and requested the court to grant bail to the accused brothers.

PHC Justice Ijaz Sabi granted bail to the accused brothers, accepting their lawyer's request.

One-day seminar on Human Rights organized

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Directorate of Law and Human Rights, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized a one-day seminar on the theme of Human Rights at a local hotel in Peshawar. The purpose of the seminar was to promote cooperation and coordination among various departments working on human rights in the province.

Senior officials and representatives from different

departments including RTS, RTI, and the Child Protection Unit participated in the seminar and briefed the audience on their respective departments' efforts towards upholding human rights.

Representatives of the Human Rights Commission stated on the occasion that Pakistan has a very strong human rights law, with offices established at the provincial and district levels. They further emphasized that in order to make this law more effective and to provide more affordable and prompt justice to the pub-

lic, all institutions must work together.

Officials from the Directorate of Law and Human Rights highlighted that all institutions are working towards the same goal and must take integrated measures to achieve the desired objectives.

Participants were also informed that in every district, the Additional Deputy Commissioner serves as the in-charge of human rights, and district administrations are actively working on related matters. Special attention was given in the seminar to ensuring women's rights

and addressing issues such as harassment, with an emphasis on the importance of inter-institutional cooperation and linkages in resolving these challenges.

The aim of the seminar was not only to strengthen institutional connections but also to raise public awareness about human rights and involve them in the process of delivering justice. Participants of the event expressed hope that this seminar would prove to be an important step towards the protection and promotion of human rights in the province.

MoU signed between Tourism Authority and ETEA

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority and the Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency (ETEA) have signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Under this MoU, all future

recruitments in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Authority will be carried out through ETEA's testing system.

The MoU was signed following a meeting held yesterday in the conference room of the Tourism Authority, attended by

Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Mr. Habibullah Arif, and Executive Director ETEA, Mr. Adil Saeed Safi.

According to the MoU, ETEA will conduct tests for the future appointments in the Tourism Authority over the next

three years. Speaking on the occasion, Director General Tourism Authority, Mr. Habibullah Arif, stated that the purpose of this MoU is to ensure transparency and fairness in the recruitment process by adopting a merit-based and standardized mechanism.

From access to opportunity: The role of libraries in literacy

Sheikh M. Arshad

WHEN education in Pakistan is discussed, the focus usually falls on schools, teachers, and curriculum. Yet one institution that rarely receives the attention it deserves is the library. In a country as diverse as ours, where students come from different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, libraries can serve as powerful equalizers. They offer spaces where learning is not limited by class, disability, or geography, but is open to all.

An inclusive education system ensures that every child regardless of ability, gender, or background has the same chance to learn and grow. Libraries, if strengthened and used effectively, can help realize this vision. In many developed countries, public and school libraries are equipped with resources for children with special needs, such as audiobooks, Braille materials, and assistive technologies. Pakistan has only a few such examples, but they prove what is possible. Some libraries in Pakistan have set up a section for visually impaired readers with digital resources and screen readers. It is a promising step, though much more needs to



be done.

Libraries can also help bridge the gap between urban and rural education. While many village schools lack proper facilities, a community library can become a shared resource center.

The Room to Read program in South Asia has shown how small rural libraries can support literacy, especially among girls who often lack access to books at home. If replicated on a larger scale in Pakistan, such models could bring meaningful change.

Technology has created new opportunities as well. Digital libraries and online resources allow students in remote areas to access the same material as those in major cities. The Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Digital Library is a good example, giving uni-

versity students access to international journals and e-books. Expanding such initiatives to the school level could make learning far more inclusive.

Still, access alone is not enough. Libraries must also feel welcoming to all. A child with a disability, a girl from a conservative family, or a student from a low-income household should each feel equally at home. This requires trained librarians who can support diverse users, inclusive design in library spaces, and policies that actively encourage participation from everyone.

If Pakistan is serious about inclusive education, libraries cannot remain on the sidelines. Every school should have a functional library, every district should invest in community libraries, and every library should adapt to the needs of its users.

Libraries are not just buildings filled with books. They are gateways to opportunity, especially for those left behind by the traditional system.

By reimagining and strengthening them, Pakistan can take a major step toward building an education system that leaves no child behind.

Writer is Director General, Department of Libraries, Islamabad.

Natural disasters: Punishment or a test?

Sajjad Mohammad Khan

WHENEVER earthquakes, floods, or storms strike, a bitter question arises in our minds: why is it that the poor always suffer the most? Mud houses collapse, fields are washed away, villages are uprooted—while wealthier nations and bigger cities remain relatively safe.

Islamic teachings remind us that it is not always correct to declare every natural disaster as divine punishment. At times, they are trials; at times, warnings; and often, they are simply the outcomes of natural laws. When the earth's plates shift, earthquakes occur. Low-lying areas are naturally prone to flooding. Poorly built structures collapse in the face of storms or tremors. Nature's laws are universal—they do not distinguish between rich and poor.

The real difference lies in preparedness and planning. Japan is a striking example. There, an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale causes only minimal damage, while in South Asia, the same intensity claims thousands of lives. The reason is simple: Japan enforces strict building codes, has advanced disaster management systems, and earthquake-resistant infrastructure.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, more than 300 people recently lost their lives due to natural calamities—a tragedy of immense scale. While some link such events to people's sins or religious failings, the reality is that most disasters are worsened by human negligence. We relentlessly cut down trees, strip the land of greenery, set fire to graveyards, fields, and open spaces, overuse plastic and polluting materials, block natural waterways, and fail to plant new trees. These reckless practices accelerate environmental destruction and climate change, making floods and other disasters even more devastating.

As someone hailing from the mountainous region of Lower Dir, I have witnessed firsthand how local communities often build barriers in streams to divert water. But when heavy rains swell these streams into floods, the water forcefully breaks through, reclaiming its original path and sweeping away everything in its way. The result: nearby homes and farmland suffer heavy losses. The lesson is clear—human settlements and agriculture should avoid natural water channels to ensure safety of lives and property.

If we fail to change our attitudes and learn to respect nature, preventing such disasters will be impossible. The solution lies in planting trees, reducing the use of plastics and water misuse, and working collectively to conserve natural resources. This is the only path that guarantees a safer environment for future generations.

The true punishment is not merely the loss of lives and property, but the moral and spiritual decline of society. When honesty, compassion, and human values vanish, societies may appear strong from the outside, but within they begin to crumble.

Natural disasters are not blind punishments—they are messages. They remind us of human weakness and the need for wisdom, planning, and faith for survival. Islam teaches us to adopt practical measures while also turning to God with humility and prayer.

In the end, only those nations survive that combine reason and planning with faith. "Natural calamities may pass with time, but their results leave an everlasting imprint."





In brief

No budget for medicine: DHO F.P. Report

WANA: A startling report presented at the 6th DHO Conference in Lower South Waziristan has exposed several hidden aspects of the district's health department, raising serious questions about its performance and accountability. According to the report, outpatient department (OPD) performance showed a remarkable surge, reaching 80 percent compared to the previous month — the highest result recorded so far. Similarly, an 11 percent improvement in medical equipment and a 50 percent rise in doctors' attendance were highlighted as notable achievements. However, the most shocking revelation came when District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Adnan disclosed to the media that no budget had been allocated for medicines in the Wazir Belt for the current year, describing the move as "an open mockery of the public." Dr. Adnan further revealed deep flaws within the Lady Health Worker (LHW) program. Out of 126 registered LHWs in the district, only 26 were found to be properly trained, while the rest existed only on paper and were absent from duty. He confirmed that nearly 100 of these ghost employees would be terminated as part of corrective measures. The DHO emphasized that all government health centres across Lower Waziristan will be made fully functional and warned that there would be zero tolerance for employees neglecting their duties.

Rain spreads havoc in Karak F.P. Report

KARAK: The shock of the recent rains has been felt in Kasbanda, protective embankments have been erected. The recent summer rains have wreaked havoc everywhere. The people are given news of Bajaur, Swat and Buner through the media, but here in Kasbanda Tehsil Takht Nusrati, the poor people, with their own help and to protect their homes and to avoid damage from flood water, protective embankments, embankments and sloping pavements were built at various places, which the recent torrential rains did not spare them either. They were also erected along with them. Now the residents of the local population have demanded from the elected representatives of the government of the day to provide emergency assistance to us to avoid this sudden disaster so that we, the poor, can remain safe because if once our homes are hit by the torrential rains, then these will be our last days because we cannot afford to resettle again. Now we inform the authorities in time so that our cry is heard.

Justice for slain JUI leader sought F.P. Report

CHAGHI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) staged a protest rally in Chaghi on Wednesday, demanding justice for their slain district leader, Molvi Kaleemullah Nurzai. The demonstrators, starting from Abu Hurera Madrasa in Taftan, marched through the streets and converged at Taftan's main intersection. Speakers at the protest criticized the district administration's alleged negligence, claiming it led to the scholar's death. They asserted that the authorities could quickly apprehend the culprits if they chose to. The JUI-F issued a one-week ultimatum to the Chagai administration to arrest those responsible, threatening further action if their demands weren't met.



HYDERABAD: A vehicle passing through rainwater accumulated at Divisional Headquarter Shahbaz Building after heavy rain.

Fed govt expedited relief operations in Malakand

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) provincial general secretary and former deputy speaker of the National Assembly Murtaza Javed Abbasi visited flood-affected areas of Lower Dir to express solidarity with the victims.

Speaking to media at Chakdara, Abbasi said the federal government equally shared the grief of Malakand division's people, adding that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif was personally monitoring the situation and would soon visit the affected districts of Malakand. He said federal minister Amir Muqam had already been present in the region for several days, assessing public hardships.

Earlier the PML-N leaders, including Engineer Faizullah Khan, Barrister Attaullah Khan, Barrister Zaidullah Khan, Malik Nauman Khan, Javed Iqbal, Yusuf Khan, and others, received the former deputy speaker and apprised him of the local issues.

Abbasi said the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) had expedited relief operations on the directives of the federal government, which was also providing compensa-

tion packages for the families of victims as well as funds for rehabilitation. He said focus was being laid on recovery of bodies, restoration of roads and rehabilitation of the displaced population. The flood victims submitted applications to Abbasi, seeking financial support and preventive measures against erosion caused by the River Swat. He remarked that despite clear warnings of climate change and cloudbursts since 2022, the provincial government had failed to take precautionary steps, resulting in huge losses.

"Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change. We have even sought international assistance to deal with challenges like cloudbursts, as unchecked climate change can severely affect our tourism sector," he said. Mr. Abbasi accused the KP government of adopting a hostile attitude towards the Centre, claiming that despite being in power for 13 years, the ruling party had failed to provide basic medical facilities, such as syringes and cotton, in hospitals for disaster-hit people. He added that several foreign governments had also contacted Islamabad to provide assistance for the victims.

Jl women wing launched relief activities: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI)

women's wing in Malakand division has launched relief activities in flood-affected districts, setting up a women's relief centre for rehabilitation of families who lost their loved ones. Talking to reporters here, provincial chief of JI women's wing and former MNA Ayesha Syed said that immediately after the recent cloudburst in Buner, Shangla and Swat, women volunteers of the party became active in rescue and relief work. She said the volunteers arranged funeral rites for women and girls who lost their lives in the disaster, while also helping to rescue hundreds of women from the affected areas.

She said the women's wing was also distributing food, clothing and other essential items among the affected families. A relief centre had been established under the supervision of Zahida Karam at the divisional level to coordinate aid and provide all possible assistance to female victims, she added.

Ms Syed said that medical teams comprising female doctors were also engaged in providing treatment to women suffering from various illnesses. She vowed that the JI women's wing would continue its efforts and would not leave the flood-affected women alone in this hour of trial.

Two killed in Nowshera Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Almost two individuals lost their lives, and several others were injured, including a teacher and multiple students, when the roof of a girls' madrasa collapsed in Nowshera. The Rescue 1122 teams responded promptly, taking the deceased bodies for post-mortem examinations and transporting the injured to hospitals for medical treatment.

In the Jahangira area of Nowshera, a young man named Hayaan, took his own life by firing a shot at himself due to unknown reasons. The police have registered a case and initiated an investigation into the matter.

In the Pabbi area, unknown individuals opened fire on a citizen named Abid, causing serious injuries to him and another person named Asad. Although the police have not officially registered a case yet, the incident is reportedly linked to a property dispute. In the Ganderi area of Nowshera, the roof of a girls' madrasa collapsed due to recent rains, injuring several students and their teacher. The injured included the wife of Ishaq, the daughter of Umar Sher, and Mahak. Rescue 1122 teams worked diligently to rescue the students trapped under the debris and provided them with medical care.

JUI demands end to Bajaur operation F.P. Report

KHAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Bajaur demanded to stop ongoing operation in the area immediately. In a press conference at the Bajaur Press Club, the party's district leader and former senator, Maulana Abdul Rashid, along with other party leaders, called on the government to end the operation within three days and facilitate the safe return of displaced families to their homes, on Wednesday.

The JUI leaders highlighted serious allegations of mismanagement in the provision of food and other relief supplies to the affected people. They urged the provincial government to take immediate notice and conduct investigation, followed by action against those responsible.

Maulana Abdul Rashid pointed out that hundreds of displaced people are taking shelter not only in government schools but also in local homes and hujras.

Police deny rumors regarding explosive recovery

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: The police officials claimed that a search operation was conducted in the Sheikh Maltoon Town area with a heavy police presence. Suspicious vehicles were checked, and several suspicious individuals were taken into custody.

However, a press release issued by the Public Relation Officer of police stated that the news circulating on social media about a suicide attack at Mardan Medical Complex and the recovery of explosives from a vehicle was completely baseless and fabricated.

The law and order situation in Mardan fully under control, and no untoward incident has occurred. The public is requested not to believe in rumors and to trust only the information released through verified sources, the police said. On the other hand, the rumors regarding a suicide attack at MMC hospital and recovery of some explosives had created fear and panic among residents of Mardan when news related to it spread like a forest-fire, on social media.

PTB requested to communicate policy for surplus tobacco: The Pakistan Tobacco Company has demanded of the relevant high-ups of Pakistan Tobacco Board to announce its policy regarding surplus tobacco at the earliest to provide clarity for farmers, who are growing increasingly anxious due to delays.

In this regard, a one-day workshop was organized by officials of Pakistan Tobacco Company in the Auditorium hall of Mardan Press Club here on Wednesday. A detailed discussion and question, answer session regarding the problems and hurdles being faced by tobacco growers as well as other relevant issues was held between the PTC officials and journalists.

Muhammad Hamza Aamir Khan, Regulatory Engagement Manager of Pakistan Tobacco Company flanked by other PTC officials, talked to media-persons in the one-day workshop. On the occasion, the officials said that the PTC emphasized its commitment to support

farmers, ensure transparency in the tobacco leaf procurement process, and strengthen efforts against illicit trade.

The PTC representatives highlighted that the company was purchasing tobacco from farmers at the pre-agreed demand and officially notified prices, in strict compliance with the regulatory framework overseen by the Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB). The industry operates under the PTB Ordinance of 1968. Under Martial Law Order (MLO) 487, PTB annually allocates procurement quotas to manufacturers based on their declared requirements, which are publicly notified for transparency.

This year, the collective demand of all tobacco companies stood at around 81.5 million kilograms, with PTC's share at 25 percent. However, total tobacco production is expected to exceed 100 million kilograms. In such cases of surplus, PTB ensures proportional distribution among companies to safeguard farmers' interests. Companies are bound to purchase surplus tobacco at or above the Minimum Indicative Price (MIP).

During the briefing, PTC representatives informed that the company maintains direct contracts with over 10,000 farmers and provides technical training and agricultural support through nearly 150 experts from seed sowing to harvest. Recently, PTC extended financial support exceeding one billion rupees to tobacco growers in the region.

They also expressed concern that some companies were exploiting farmers by purchasing tobacco at significantly lower rates—up to Rs. 200 per kilogram less than the notified price??. While PTC ensures timely payments within 30 days, other companies delay payments by three to six months, causing severe financial distress for farmers. In many cases, small buyers even disappear, leaving farmers at a loss. PTC urged the Pakistan Tobacco Board to take notice of these exploitative practices and protect farmers from unfair buyers who not only undervalue their hard work but also delay payments.

Admn on high alert amid recent heavy rains

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In view of the recent heavy rains and the potential threat of flooding in the rivers, the District Administration Kurram has directed all concerned departments to remain on high alert and ensure immediate preventive measures.

A meeting of the Tehsil Council Central Kurram to this effect was held under the chairmanship of Assistant Commissioner Central Kurram, Sahibzada Aqeel Javed, and Additional Assistant Commissioner, Ibrahim Khan.

During the meeting, the Assistant Commissioner instructed the Village Council Chairmen to stay vigilant at the local level and to take prompt action along the banks of Kharmana and Sark rivers to minimize possible damages. He further emphasized that in case of any emergency situation or losses due to rains, the district administration must be contacted immediately so that rescue and relief activities can be initiated without delay. It was also directed that no unnecessary activities should be allowed near water channels and strict compliance with the advisory issued by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) must be ensured.

Subsequently, Additional Assistant Commissioner Ibrahim Khan, Tehsildar Abdul Sami and Tehsildar Wrekhamin Badshah visited the surrounding areas of Kharmana River. On this occasion, the concerned officers of the Irrigation Department and other relevant bodies were instructed to remain on red alert and to complete all precautionary arrangements in advance to effectively deal with any possible emergency.

District Vigilance Committee meeting held: A meeting of the District Vigilance Committee was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kohat, Rahimullah Mehsud in his office today. The meeting

beside others, was also attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief) along with officials from the district administration, police, labour department and other concerned institutions.

The meeting reviewed in detail the measures being taken to curb child labour and human trafficking in the district. It was unanimously decided that the dis-

tribut administration, police, and labour department will conduct joint operations to identify those involved in such illegal activities and strict legal action will be taken against them. It was further decided that besides field-level raids, a comprehensive awareness campaign will also be launched to educate parents and the general public about children's rights and the relevant laws.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that child labour is a grave crime which requires coordinated efforts by all institutions to eradicate. He stressed that providing education and a safe environment to the children is the joint responsibility of the state and the society and depriving any child of their fundamental rights is unacceptable. He assured that strict action will be taken against all violators without discrimination.

The public has been requested to immediately report any information related to child labour or human trafficking to the Control Room of the Deputy Commissioner's Office on the following numbers: 0922920268 and 0922920032, so that timely action can be taken.

ing to the SSP Kashmore at Kandhkot Muhammad Murad Ghanghro, who was supervising the operation.

Meanwhile, the district commandos of the Range Police participated in the operation. According to details, drones were used in a joint targeted operation against the Korkani,

Nandwani and Choliyani gangs in the area of Jamal Shah Police Station in Kandhkot yesterday by the Range Police and Pakistan Rangers. Officials from different Range Police Stations, commandos, and APC China vehicles also participated in this joint operation.

Police & Rangers conducts joint operation against robbers

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Police and Pakistan Rangers conducted a joint targeted operation against the Nandani and Choliyani gangs of Kandhkot. Three robbers' houses were destroyed by drone strikes, while 4 robbers were injured, accord-

ing to the SSP Kashmore at Kandhkot Muhammad Murad Ghanghro, who was supervising the operation.

Meanwhile, the district commandos of the Range Police participated in the operation. According to details, drones were used in a joint targeted operation against the Korkani,

northern Pakistan's land connectivity. In Bajaur, a deadly cloudburst flood in 2025 caused both loss of life and destruction of roads and bridges. In Mansehra, repeated cloudbursts led to sudden flooding and landslides, while in Gilgit-Baltistan, forest cover has dropped to below 4%, making the region extremely vulnerable to forest fires and glacial lake outburst floods.

The forests regulate rainfall, recharge groundwater, and stabilize slopes. When forests disappear, barren mountains become 5 to 8 degrees warmer than forested areas. This causes monsoon winds to rise rapidly, leading to sudden cloudbursts instead of steady rain. Without roots, soil lacks support, mak-

ing landslides and mudslides common, while the risk of glacial lake outbursts also increases.

The environmental destruction is directly affecting people. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, nearly one-third of households depend on livestock, but due to overgrazing and mismanagement, pasture productivity has dropped to just 20% to 30%. Families that previously relied on forests for fodder and fuel are now forced to resort to unsustainable practices. The afforestation drives alone cannot resolve this crisis unless there is strict action against the timber mafia and accountability of the officials involved.

The writer is research scholar at University of Peshawar.

Climate change placed nation at critical turning point

Rais Khan

THE entire country had reached a highly critical environmental turning point. Deforestation, the destruction of grazing lands, forest fires, and climate change-related threats are directly causing devastating floods, landslides, and cloudbursts. Since 1992, forest area has decreased by 18%, while grazing lands are producing only 20% to 30% of their potential biomass. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa being the most affected. The devastating floods of 1992, 2010, and 2025 have proven that the destruction of forests and pastures has turned the upper watershed areas into "flood factories."

The forests in Pakistan are not just trees—they are the first line of defense for the environment, economy, and national security. Forests absorb rainwater, prevent flash floods, recharge groundwater, protect agricultural land from erosion, and maintain the fertility of water and soil essential for the economy. Forests regulate the climate, reduce temperatures, and store carbon, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. They provide fodder, fuel, fruits, medicines, and tourism opportunities to rural communities and protect biodiversity. Forests also shield the country from floods, landslides, and droughts.

The conclusion is that without immediate restoration and strong measures, Pakistan will

face major environmental and economic risks. However, effective policy and implementation can safeguard the country's future. In Pakistan, forest area has decreased from 3.78 million hectares in 1992 to 3.09 million hectares in 2025—a decline of 18%. While the annual rate of deforestation dropped from around 40,000 hectares in 1992 to 11,000 hectares in 2025 due to government intervention and restrictions, the situation remains alarming.

The deforestation continues at a rate of 11,000 hectares per year. Grazing land area has declined from 60% to 58%, and their biomass productivity has dropped from 100% of potential to only 20%. The official documents, more than 3,700 hectares

of forests were lost in Chitral between 1992 and 2009. Expert warn of a further 23% decline by 2030. In Kalam, Swat, large-scale logging during the 1980s and 1990s severely damaged the Swat River catchment area, exacerbating the floods of 1992 and 2010.

Deforestation continues to weaken slopes and increases the risks of flash floods. This destruction is not limited to a few districts. In Buner, a cloudburst in August 2025 triggered a sudden flood that destroyed homes, fields, and infrastructure. Deforested mountains were unable to retain the rainwater. In Battagram, fragile land structures and deforestation triggered landslides that blocked the Karakoram Highway and cut off



YEREVAN: Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan exchanging views with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian in Armenia.

Kim's sister says NK will never see South as a diplomatic partner

SEOUL (AP): The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said her country will never see South Korea as a partner for diplomacy, state media reported Wednesday in her latest taunt of Seoul's new efforts to mend ties.

Kim Yo Jong, who is one of her brother's top foreign policy officials, denounced the ongoing South Korea-US military drills as a "reckless" invasion rehearsal and claimed Seoul's peace gestures conceal a "sinister intention" to blame Pyongyang for strained relations. Her comments came during a meeting with Foreign Ministry officials about her brother's diplomatic strategies, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said. She urged the Foreign Ministry to pursue "proper countermeasures" against South Korea, which she labeled the "most hostile state," as well as Seoul's allies.

Kim Jong Un condemned the South Korean-US military drills and vowed a rapid expansion of his nuclear forces as he inspected his most advanced warship being fitted with nuclear-capable systems. KCNA said Kim Yo Jong condemned the South as the "top-class faithful dog" of the United States and that the repatriation of inter-Korean relations desired by Seoul "will never" happen. The siblings' back-to-back statements followed the latest outreach by South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, who said last week that Seoul would seek to restore a 2018 inter-Korean

military agreement aimed at reducing border tensions, while urging Pyongyang to reciprocate by rebuilding trust and resuming dialogue.

In response to Kim Yo Jong's latest comments, South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said Lee's government will continue to take "proactive steps for peace" and called for mutual respect between the countries. Since taking office in June, Lee has moved to repair relations that worsened under his conservative predecessor's hard-line policies, including removing front-line speakers that broadcast anti-North Korean propaganda and K-pop.

In a nationally televised speech Friday, Lee said his government respects North Korea's current system and that the wealthier South "will not pursue any form of unification by absorption and has no intention of engaging in hostile acts." But he also stressed that the South remains committed to an international push to denuclearize the North and urged Pyongyang to resume dialogue with Washington and Seoul. Angered by expanding South Korean-US military drills, Kim Jong Un last year declared that North Korea was abandoning long-standing goals of a peaceful unification with South Korea and rewrote the North's constitution to mark the South as a permanent enemy. Kim Yo Jong has repeatedly dismissed calls to revive negotiations aimed at winding down the North's



nuclear and missile programs, which derailed in 2019 following her brother's collapsed summit with US President Donald Trump during his first term.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kim Jong Un has made Moscow the priority of his foreign policy, sending it troops and weapons while using the Russia-Ukraine war as a distraction to accelerate his military nuclear program. In her meeting, Kim Yo Jong suggested that Pyongyang seeks to compete with Seoul diplomatically, claiming the South "will not even have a subordinate role in the regional diplomatic arena," which she claimed will be centered on the North.

Trump's presidency was marked by diplomatic breakthroughs

Saqib Mushtaq

FORMER US President Donald Trump's tenure, often defined by controversy and unconventional politics, also produced achievements that supporters and some global observer credit as significant.

Trump's foreign policy record includes the Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. In August 2025, he hosted talks in Washington to ease the Ukraine-Russia war, drawing praise from European leaders. His administration also engaged in mediation efforts in disputes from South Asia to the Caucasus and Africa.

At home, Trump signed the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, delivering sweeping reductions for individuals and corporations. Before the COVID-



19 pandemic, the US economy saw unemployment fall to its lowest in five decades while millions of jobs were created. He appointed three Supreme Court justices and more than 200 federal judges, reshaping the

American judiciary for decades.

Trump also signed the bipartisan First Step Act in 2018, which reformed sentencing laws and expanded inmate rehabilitation opportunities. On energy and the environment, he pursued US energy independence while expanding protections for parks and natural resources.

In health care, Trump launched Operation Warp Speed, accelerating COVID-19 vaccine development and distribution in record time. His direct communication style — often through social media — redefined modern political messaging, allowing him to bypass traditional outlets and connect directly with supporters.

While critics argue his presidency was polarizing, backers point to these achievements as evidence of lasting impact on US domestic and global policy.

Mexico's President denies knowledge of US drug initiative

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has denied reports that her government is teaming up with the United States for a "major new initiative" to combat drug-trafficking cartels. In her news conference, Sheinbaum addressed the initiative, dubbed "Project Portero", which was touted in the US as an effort to "strengthen collaboration between the United States and Mexico".

The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) had unveiled the initiative only one day prior. "I want to clarify something. The DEA put out a statement yesterday saying that there is an agreement with the Mexican government for an operation called Portero," Sheinbaum said. "There is no agreement with the DEA. The DEA puts out this statement, based on what we don't know. We have not reached any agreement; none of the security institutions [has] with the DEA." Sheinbaum emphasised that only her administration, not individual government agencies, would be announcing such an agreement on behalf of Mexico. She also said that the DEA needed to follow established protocols for making joint announcements. Project Portero is part of an ongoing push under US President Donald Trump to stamp out cross-border drug trafficking and aggressively pursue the cartels and criminal networks that profit from such trade.

In its statement, the DEA called Project Portero its "flagship operation", aimed at shutting down drug-smuggling corridors along the border. It described its partnership with Mexico as "a multi-week training and collaboration program" that would bring Mexican investigators together with US enforcement officials at an intelligence site on the southwest border. Part of their task, the statement said, was to "identify joint targets" for the two countries to pursue. "Project Portero and this new training program show how we will fight - by planning and operating side by side with our Mexican partners," DEA administrator Terrance Cole said in the statement. "This is a bold first step in a new era of cross-border enforcement." But Sheinbaum said that no such bilateral action was planned, though she speculated that the DEA might be referring to a small training exercise involving four Mexican police officers.

"The only thing we have is a group of police officers from the Secretariat of Citizen Security who were conducting a workshop in Texas," she explained. She did, however, point out that her government was actively working with the Trump administration to cement a border security agreement, based on mutual acknowledgements of sovereignty and respectful coordination. Since taking office for a second term in January, Trump has repeatedly pressured the

Sheinbaum government to stem the flow of immigrants and drugs across their countries' shared border. That includes through the threat of tariffs, a kind of tax imposed on imports. In late July, Trump announced he would keep tariffs on Mexican products at their current rate for 90 days. Previously, he had threatened to hike the tariff rate to 30 percent on the basis that the drug fentanyl was still reaching US soil.

"Mexico still has not stopped the Cartels who are trying to turn all of North America into a Narco-Trafficking Playground," Trump wrote in a letter to Sheinbaum earlier that month. Even with the 90-day pause, Mexico still faces a 25-percent tax - which Trump calls a "fentanyl tariff" - on all products that do not fall under the US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement (USMCA). Still, Trump has expressed warmth towards Sheinbaum, and the Mexican leader has largely avoided public confrontations with the US since taking office in October 2024. Recently, Sheinbaum's government coordinated with Trump's to transfer 26 high-profile drug-trafficking suspects to the US for prosecution. In February, she made a similar deal, sending 29 alleged cartel leaders from Mexican prisons to the US, shortly before Trump threatened to impose tariffs on her country's imports. It was Mexico's largest prisoner transfer to the US in years. — Aljazeera

China to stage massive military parade

BEIJING (Reuters): China will stage a massive military parade next month involving tens of thousands of people in the heart of Beijing to commemorate 80 years since the end of World War Two following the surrender of Japan. Hundreds of aircraft including fighter jets and bombers as well as ground equipment, some of which have never been seen in public before, will be featured in the parade, military officials said at a press conference.

The September 3 parade, the second such procession since 2015 to observe the formal surrender of Japanese forces in 1945, will be a show of China's military strength as some of its neighbours and Western nations look on with concern over the projection of power by the People's Liberation Army in recent years. From trucks fitted with devices to take out drones, new tanks and early warning aircraft to protect China's aircraft carriers, military attaches and security analysts say they are expecting China to display a host of new weapons and equipment at the parade. Additions to its expanding suite of missiles, particularly anti-ship versions and weapons with hypersonic capabilities, will be particularly closely watched as the US and its allies prepare to counter China in any future regional conflict. The 70-minute-long "Victory Day" parade, comprising 45 contingents of troops will be surveyed by President Xi Jinping at Tiananmen Square alongside a number of foreign leaders and dignitaries including Russian President Vladimir Putin, who also attended the 2015 parade. Authorities have stepped up security in downtown Beijing since early August when the first large-scale parade rehearsal was held, setting up checkpoints, diverting road traffic and shutting shopping malls and office buildings.

The land corridor, dubbed the "Trump Route for International Peace and

Armenia reassures Masoud it will control Azerbaijan corridor

YEREVAN: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has told Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian that a planned corridor linking Azerbaijan with its exclave would be under Armenian control, days after Iran said it would block the project included in a United States-brokered peace accord that puts a potential Washington presence on its doorstep. "Roads passing through Armenia will be under the exclusive jurisdiction of Armenia, and security will be provided by Armenia, not by any third country," Pashinyan said at a meeting with Pezeshkian in the Armenian capital Yerevan. He added that the corridor would open new economic perspectives between the two countries, and could offer a rail route from Iran to the Black Sea coast through Armenia.

The land corridor, dubbed the "Trump Route for International Peace and

Prosperity" (TRIPP), is part of a deal signed this month in Washington between former foes Armenia and Azerbaijan. Under the agreement, the US will hold development rights for the proposed route, which would connect Azerbaijan to its Nakhchivan exclave bordering Iran and Turkey. "Governance in the Caucasus region must remain Caucasian - outsourcing the resolution of Caucasus issues to extra-regional forces will complicate it," Pezeshkian said during his visit. "Iran's position has always been to reject any changes to international borders in the Caucasus region." Iran has long opposed the planned transit route, also known as the Zangezur corridor, fearing it would cut the country off from Armenia and the rest of the Caucasus while bringing potentially hostile foreign forces close to its borders. Since the deal was signed on August 8, Iranian

officials have stepped up warnings to Armenia, saying the project could be part of a US ploy "to pursue hegemonic goals in the Caucasus region". The proposed corridor has been hailed as beneficial by other countries in the region, including Russia, with which Iran has a strategic alliance alongside Armenia. Armenia and Azerbaijan have fought a series of wars since the late 1980s when Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in Azerbaijan that had a mostly ethnic Armenian population at the time, broke away from Azerbaijan with support from Armenia. Azerbaijan Baku took control of the territory in a military operation in 2023, leading to an exodus of the ethnic Armenian population. Armenia last year agreed to return several villages to Azerbaijan in what Baku described as a "long-awaited historic event". — Aljazeera

Israel has killed 19,000 children in Gaza war

GAZA: At least 18,885 children are among the more than 62,000 Palestinians killed by Israel since the start of its genocidal war in Gaza nearly two years ago, Gaza's Government Media Office has said. The staggering, grim toll comes as the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said that no place is safe for children in the enclave, where Israeli-induced starvation is rife due to Israel's blockading of desperately-needed aid and medical supplies.

UN-run schools have become shelters for "hundreds of thousands of people" in Gaza amid constant Israeli bombardments that have levelled homes, UNRWA said. Palestinians have "sought protection under the UN flag", only for the shelters to be targeted, becoming a "place for death, including for too many children. No place is safe for children in Gaza. Ceasefire now", the agency said. Citing the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF, UNRWA noted that in the past five months of the war, since Israel unilaterally shattered a ceasefire deal and resumed attacks, "an average of over 540 children have been killed every month, per reports". Footage obtained by Al Jazeera shows the final moments of 12-year-old Amna al-Mufti, killed by Israeli forces while carrying water for her family and her father's grief.

The UN warnings come as at least 51 Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks since dawn. Among them are at least eight aid seekers who lost their lives when Israeli forces opened fire near the United States and Israeli-backed GHF aid distribution sites, a daily deadly gauntlet Palestinians have suffered, leading to nearly 2,000 deaths since late May. Hospitals in Gaza said at least eight people were killed in attacks on tents sheltering displaced people in Khan Younis, and four more were killed in a strike on a tent in Deir el-Balah, in central Gaza. Israeli forces are also stepping up an assault on Gaza City, despite global warnings urging Israel to cease expanding operations there. An air raid in Gaza City's Zeitoun neighbourhood killed at least four people and wounded others, health officials said. In southern Gaza City, Israeli forces blew up houses, while heavy fire was reported in the Tuffah neighbourhood in eastern Gaza City. Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from Deir-el-Balah, said Israeli forces have been launching "a deadly barrage of air strikes on densely populated areas" in Gaza City. "In addition to destroying over 450 residential blocks in Gaza City's Zeitoun neighbourhood, Israel's operations have now expanded to the nearby Sabra area. These areas lead to the main heart of Gaza City," Abu Azzoum said. Meanwhile, key mediator Qatar has confirmed that Hamas responded positively to a Gaza ceasefire proposal, including a 60-day truce and partial captives-for-prisoners exchange.

Two Israeli officials said Israel is studying Hamas's response to the proposal, without providing more details. But Israeli media reported that the far-right Israeli government wants all the captives held in Gaza, alive and dead, returned all at once. Efforts to pause the fighting gained new

momentum over the past week. Mediators Qatar and Egypt have been pushing to restart indirect talks between the sides on a US-backed ceasefire plan. The proposal includes the release of 200 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel and an unspecified number of imprisoned women and minors, in return for 10 living captives and the bodies of 18 dead from Gaza, according to a Hamas official. Two Egyptian security sources confirmed the details and added that Hamas has requested the release of hundreds of detainees from Gaza as well.

Israel says a total of 50 captives remain in Gaza, 20 of them still alive. Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said the 60-day truce deal would include "a pathway to a comprehensive agreement to end the war". The proposal includes a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces, which presently occupy 75 percent of Gaza, and the entry of more humanitarian aid into the enclave, where a population of 2.2 million people is increasingly facing an Israeli-induced famine. Israel's government has not officially responded, but Israeli media, citing senior officials, suggest the government is dissatisfied with a limited prisoner-captive exchange and may insist on the release of all 50 Israeli captives as part of any deal. Al Jazeera's senior political analyst, Marwan Bishara, said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has calculated that it is no longer in his "interest" to agree to a partial ceasefire. "I think for him [Netanyahu] he is winning the war; for him, Hamas is on the way to defeat; for him, there's a green light from Washington; and I just don't think, except in a very, very exceptional circumstance, that he will agree", to a deal, Bishara said. Israeli tanks completed taking control of the Zeitoun suburb in Gaza City and continued to pound the nearby area of Sabra. Local health authorities said dozens of people had been trapped in their houses because of the shelling.

Among them is Suha Maqat, a once-celebrated para-athlete trapped in Gaza City, alone and blind in one eye. Like other Palestinians with disabilities, her situation means it is impossible to follow Israel's forced displacement orders, which have already forced thousands to flee over the past few days. The spokesperson for the Palestinian Civil Defence, Mahmoud Basal, said the situation was "very dangerous and unbearable" in the Zeitoun and Sabra neighbourhoods, where he said "artillery shelling continues intermittently". Sabra resident Hussein al-Dairi, 44, said that "tanks are firing shells and mortars, and drones, are firing bullets and missiles" in the neighbourhood. "We heard on the news that Hamas had agreed to a truce, but the occupation is escalating the war against us, the civilians," he added. More Palestinians have also died from malnutrition and starvation, including three reported in the past 24 hours, Gaza's Ministry of Health said. It said that 154 adults have died of malnutrition since late June, when it began counting such deaths, and 112 children have died of hunger since the war began. — Aljazeera

Venezuela says 66 children 'kidnapped' by United States

CARACAS (AFP): The Venezuelan government claimed that 66 Venezuelan children are being illegally held in the United States after being separated from their parents during deportation, as the White House cracks down on immigration. Caracas is demanding the children be handed over to Venezuelan authorities so they can be repatriated.

"We have 66 children kidnapped in the United States. It's a number that grows each day... a cruel and inhumane policy," said Camila Fabri, president of the government's Return to the Homeland program that advocates for the voluntary return of people who left the country. She

spoke at a gathering at which women read out letters to US First Lady Melania Trump asking her to intercede on behalf of the children, who they said had been placed in foster care. More than 7.7 million Venezuelans have left the country since 2014, the largest population exodus in Latin America's recent history, according to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

It blamed "rampant violence, inflation, gang-warfare, soaring crime rates as well as shortages of food, medicine and essential services." In recent years Venezuelans in the United States had been granted temporary protected immigration status, allowing them to live

and work there for a designated time period. But President Donald Trump's administration revoked that protection as part of his aggressive campaign to deport millions of undocumented migrants from the United States. The US Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to AFP requests for comment on the claim by Caracas. To date, 21 stranded children have been returned to Venezuela, including a daughter of one of the 252 Venezuelans detained in Trump's immigration crackdown in March, who was accused without evidence of gang activity and deported to El Salvador's notorious CECOT prison.

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The uncertain fallout of the Putin-Trump summit meeting

THE much-hyped summit meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and United States President Donald Trump in Alaska on Saturday was not exactly a damp squib it seems to be because it has not changed the ground reality of the Ukrainian war. The war continues.

Of course, there was no prospect of a ceasefire which Trump had hoped to achieve. It is, to give it a positive spin, an ice-breaker. And it was also the first time that Putin broke off his isolation from the Western world ever since he had ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022. He had visited North Korea and China.

It is now a question of debate and discussion as to what came of it. It seems that something did come out of it. Putin had indicated his terms of agreement to end the war, an unequal division of territory. Russia would yield about 600 sq.km to Ukraine in return for 6,000 sq. km. Will it be acceptable to Ukraine? On the face of it, it does not.

What Putin asks is legitimization of Russian acquisition of the Crimean peninsula in 2014. Trump met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Washington on Monday. Trump is likely to persuade Zelensky to accept the Putin proposals in their entirety, but in principle – that is accepting Russian acquisition of territory – and which would put Zelensky in an unenviable tight spot.

It is an unacceptable proposition for the Ukrainians. But it is also a difficult position to maintain. Ukraine is feeling the stress and strain of war. Americans and Europeans may help it with arms, but the war has to be fought by the Ukrainians. The price is enormous despite the bravery of the Ukrainians. The losses in men and materials are unsustainable over a long period. Russia can wage a war for a long time. Ukraine cannot survive a long war.

Zelensky and the European leaders like French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, European Union President Ursula von der Leyen, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte will firmly oppose the Putin plan.

So, is Trump compromising the democratic forces of Europe by talking to Putin, the uncontested ruler of Russia, who has been in power for 25 years now, second only to Joseph Stalin who was the top Russian leader for 30 years? Trump, whatever his drawbacks, and there are too many, is also a pragmatist like any businessman. He is keen to end the war and he believes that compromises are inevitable.

Ukraine and Europe are not willing to compromise. They think any compromise with Putin would mean strengthening the anti-democratic forces on the continent. There are already some countries from eastern Europe, which formed the communist bloc before 1989, who are not averse to making compromises with Russia.

It would be useful to recognize that EU and NATO are not identical. NATO sees Russia as a military threat. EU is indifferent, and its members had no hesitation in dealing with Putin's Russia in trade matters. EU is, of course, committed to the notion of liberal democracy. And it wants to defend Ukraine's right to be a democracy.

It is of course the case that there have been pro-Moscow, pro-West political factions in Ukrainian politics, and Western Europeans and Americans played their own hand in supporting the pro-West faction in Ukraine.

The last three years of war have shown that Ukrainians are with Zelensky and they believe in the idea of a sovereign Ukraine. Putin through his actions will recognize an independent Ukraine. The West will seek a guarantee from Russia that it would not make any further encroachments in Ukraine. Of course, there is always the nagging doubt whether Russia and Putin would honour such a commitment.

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Field Marshal: A beacon of hope and trust for the business community

Abdul Basit Alvi

FIELD Marshal Munir's efforts have proven particularly impactful in sectors traditionally fraught with significant uncertainty, such as complex mineral extraction, vital energy infrastructure, foundational agriculture, and dynamic information technology. In these areas, investors had previously been consistently deterred by lingering security concerns, pervasive regulatory ambiguity, and frustrating policy inconsistency.

His decisive leadership has directly contributed to securing strategic mineral-rich zones in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan by meticulously ensuring the safety of mining operations through robust military protection and actively encouraging international partnerships with reputable foreign firms, thereby opening highly lucrative avenues for both investment and industrial expansion.

This clear and deliberate alignment of robust security objectives with crucial economic goals has significantly reduced perceived risks and meticulously crafted an environment where businesses now feel genuinely assured that their valuable assets and vital operations are comprehensively safeguarded.

The business community has also profoundly benefited from his decisive and impactful crack-down on illicit trade, rampant smuggling, and widespread power theft—detrimental activities that have historically distorted markets, artificially inflated costs, and severely undermined legitimate enterprise. Under his direct instruction, meticulously coordinated operations involving military and civil agencies have successfully dismantled insidious black-market networks dealing in currency, essential petroleum, and other critical commodities, leading to demonstrably greater market stability, significantly improved supply chains, and considerably reduced inflationary pressures.

These concerted efforts have robustly reassured legitimate businesses that the playing field is rapidly becoming more level and that illegal actors can no longer undermine fair competition or unfairly burden the formal economy.

Furthermore, Field Marshal Asim Munir's strategic approach to economic diplomacy has undeniably bolstered investor trust by showcasing Pakistan as a viable, attractive, and genuinely promising destination for capital investment and lucrative joint ventures.

His high-profile visits to key Gulf states and influential Western countries have been instrumental in securing multi-billion-dollar investment pledges and forging critical partnerships specifically aimed at accelerating infrastructure development, advancing vital energy projects, and fostering technological innovation.

By personally engaging with global business leaders and dynamic diaspora entrepreneurs, he has effectively reinforced a compelling narrative of Pakistan as a nation firmly on the path to comprehensive reform, enduring stability, and robust growth, thereby catalyzing renewed interest and unwavering commitment from crucial stakeholders.

The military's proactive involvement in large-scale infrastructure projects under his meticulous supervision, particularly in the critical sectors of agriculture and logistics, has further cemented the private sector's trust. This has been achieved by demonstrably showcasing an unparalleled ability to execute complex projects with remarkable efficiency and absolute transparency, effectively filling crucial gaps that had long frustrated both domestic and international investors and businesses alike.

Field Marshal Munir's unwavering emphasis on digitization, transparency, and stringent accountability within public sector economic institutions has been enthusiastically welcomed by the discerning business community. They view these profound reforms as absolutely vital to significantly reducing rampant corruption, expediting sluggish processes, and cultivating a truly predictable environment for enterprise. His firm insistence on merit-based appointments, rigorous performance evaluations, and streamlined regulatory frameworks has tangibly translated into discernible improvements in the delivery of essential services such as licensing, tax administration, customs clearance, and efficient dispute resolution.

This transformative shift in governance has markedly reduced uncertainty and significantly improved the ease with which businesses can operate, invest, and meticulously plan for a prosperous future. Perhaps one of the most profound and significant aspects of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's transformative relationship with the business community is the palpable restoration of hope and burgeoning optimism in a context

where economic narratives had long been overwhelmingly dominated by relentless crisis, debilitating instability, and ceaseless political wrangling. His consistent, supportive messaging for private enterprise, synergistically coupled with visible, decisive actions against malpractices and an unwavering commitment to national economic priorities, has profoundly reinvigorated entrepreneurship and investor sentiment across the board.

By strategically bridging long-standing gaps between military authority and civilian economic actors, he has meticulously forged a new, essential social contract grounded in profound mutual trust, shared overarching objectives, and a collective commitment to national progress. In a recent, pivotal meeting with a delegation of leading businessmen at the General Headquarters (GHQ), Field Marshal Asim Munir unequivocally pledged his full and unwavering support to the business community in its tireless efforts to comprehensively revive and substantially strengthen Pakistan's economy.

The distinguished delegation, led by Gohar Ijaz and including Atif Ikram Sheikh, the esteemed President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), alongside influential representatives from the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), presented a detailed and insightful overview of the pressing challenges confronting the industrial sector. Their focus particularly highlighted the expanded powers of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and controversial provisions under Sections 37A and 37B of the Sales Tax Act 1990, which critically allow for the arrest and detention of prominent business figures.

The FPCCI president expressed profound gratitude to the army chief for his decisive directive to put the enforcement of these contentious provisions on hold and earnestly emphasized the crucial need for a constructive and collaborative dialogue between the FBR and the broader business community to swiftly resolve ongoing disputes.

The delegation also extended commendation for the government's and the Special Investment Facilitation Council's (SIFC) diligent efforts in successfully stabilizing the economy. Additionally, the FPCCI chief passionately called for interest rates to be judiciously reduced in alignment with prevailing

inflation to robustly support business growth and for the prompt notification of vital amendments to the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS), especially concerning the judicious exclusion of cotton, yarn, and greige fabric from the scheme, as well as the fair imposition of an 18% sales tax on their crucial imports.

The delegation further raised legitimate concerns about the persistently high electricity prices, which regrettably continue to significantly burden manufacturers and exporters alike. The FPCCI explicitly acknowledged Field Marshal Munir's commendable efforts to secure more competitive electricity tariffs specifically for the industrial and export sectors. APTMA, in an official statement, profusely lauded the Field Marshal's exemplary commitment to deeply engaging with the business community and industry, demonstrably showcasing both profound patience and genuine concern for the economic issues being squarely faced by businesses and the people of Pakistan.

The pivotal meeting, which impressively spanned almost four hours, was expertly managed and facilitated by the esteemed Interior Minister. The delegation collectively expressed unwavering confidence that under the visionary leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakistan would decisively unlock its immense economic potential, comprehensively restore investor confidence, and ultimately achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The business community, in an unprecedented show of unity, unequivocally expressed its full and absolute confidence in Field Marshal Munir.

Ultimately, Field Marshal Asim Munir stands not merely as a distinguished military leader but as an astute economic statesman who possesses an intrinsic understanding that the enduring prosperity of Pakistan is inextricably and profoundly linked to the unwavering confidence, robust capability, and inherent creativity of its vibrant business community.

His remarkable contributions as a luminous beacon of hope and an unwavering pillar of trust have fundamentally reshaped the nation's business landscape by meticulously creating an environment where commerce can truly thrive, investments can vigorously grow, and the economy can steadfastly achieve sustainable and inclusive development for the unequivocal benefit of all Pakistanis.

Netanyahu is now the problem — for the region and the world

Osama Al-Sharif

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had always seen himself as a man on a historic mission: to bury Palestinian ambitions of a state of their own and extend Israel's boundaries beyond historical Palestine. His rise to the helm in the late 1990s came in the wake of the Oslo Accords, which he considered a betrayal of ultra-nationalist Zionism as preached by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the Russian-born Zionist activist and poet.

As a firebrand politician, Netanyahu galvanized both ultra-nationalist and ultra-religious Israelis, who until then played a minor role in Israeli politics. But he was able to charm the right and far right because of his ability to convince all that his maximalist designs, seen then as improbable, were possible.

His ability to paint his radical policies as mainstream won him the unofficial title of "King of Israel," and eventually made him the longest-serving premier in the country's history. Until Oct. 7, 2023, Netanyahu rarely presented himself as a religious as well as a political leader. But since the notorious Hamas attack, Bibi, as he is often called, referred to the Torah several times to portray Israel's Palestinian enemies and the Hebrew state's modern wars. The purpose was always to whip up support among the extremists.

The war on Gaza came as a personal relief for Netanyahu. Before the Hamas attack, his coalition was facing nationwide protests against his attempt to subjugate the judiciary and remove the corruption charges against him. His government was on the verge of collapse, but then came

There is a consensus in Israel today that almost two years of war in Gaza have failed to deliver its stated objectives. Even the Israeli military is now admitting that it has run out of targets. Gaza is in ruins. Hamas' military capabilities have been destroyed. Its leadership structure was decimated. Those who fight are isolated cells that can never be completely wiped out. On the other hand, Israeli society is tired. Hostages remain in the hands of their captors. The cost of the war has been enormous even with the help of American taxpayers whose government has supplied Israel with tens of billions in munitions. And to top it all, the entire world is now against the conflict, and against Israel and its genocidal practices in Gaza. Western governments are openly denouncing Israeli violations in Gaza — the starvation, killing of children, dehumanization of Palestinians, ethnic cleansing, and multiple war crimes.

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Only one man wants the war to go on and on: Netanyahu. His survival depends on keeping the war machine running. But there is more. He now sees himself on a spiritual mission to fulfill the ambition of a "Greater Israel." His recent statements have shocked Israel's neighbors, especially those with which Israel had signed peace treaties. What does "Greater Israel" mean?

For years, Netanyahu had warned of Iran's proxies in the region as an existential threat. He warned of Tehran's nuclear ambitions and convinced US President

Donald Trump that Iran was only months away from building a nuclear bomb. He had already managed to thwart the Obama nuclear deal. Now he convinced Trump to strike Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

The 12-day war between Israel and Iran was the culmination of a series of regional blows that Israel was able to deal to its enemies: Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Assad regime in Syria, the Houthis in Yemen, and the nuclear program of Iran. No one could have imagined such geopolitical fallout in less than two years.

Netanyahu has become intoxicated with power. Why not? Oct. 7, 2023 has changed everything and made the improbable possible. Netanyahu is now the only Israeli leader whose military flies, uncontested, over Lebanon, most of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and parts of Iran. Why would he not speak of himself as a man on a historic mission with a connection to "Greater Israel"?

But such triumph did not come without a hefty price. Yes, Israel has emerged as a regional behemoth, one that wants to change the map of the region, destabilize its neighbors, and carry out nefarious projects. But its image across the globe has been tarnished beyond repair. Most of its Western allies are now denouncing its policies in Gaza and the West Bank.

Netanyahu is also breaking Israel's steadfast ties to its most important ally, the US, without which his country cannot survive. Israel has become a pariah state in the eyes of a majority of Americans from both main political parties. The dynamics of the US-Israel relationship are changing, and while the outcome may not appear soon, it will show at some

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point.

The Israeli leader will find ways to keep the genocidal war going. He will push Trump to recognize the annexation of the West Bank. His far-right partners will force him to defund the Palestinian Authority and partition what remains of the West Bank, while planning the forced displacement of Palestinians.

Netanyahu's narcissistic view of himself as a man on a mission has already damaged Israel from within. It has discredited the message of the Abraham Accords and the prospects of peace in the region. For many Israelis, Netanyahu had failed to deliver victory in Gaza because of his selfish reasons, while sacrificing the hostages. And when many influential countries announce their recognition of a Palestinian state, come September, Netanyahu will retaliate and make things worse for Israel, the Palestinians, and the entire region.

Trump is wrong to assume that the occupation of Gaza City will destroy Hamas and end the war. On Sunday, almost a million Israelis took to the streets to express their rejection of Netanyahu's latest gambit. As one European official put it: "Netanyahu himself is now the problem." This is the shared sentiment of leaders across the world as well as a majority of Israelis. Netanyahu may think of himself as a man on a mission, but that is not how the world sees him. A man who sanctioned the killing of over 60,000 Palestinians, and threatens to kill and displace even more, is a criminal who should face justice.

Trump, send your deportees to Europe not Africa

ON August 5, Rwanda announced it had agreed to accept 250 migrants under the Trump administration's expanding third-country deportation programme.

Speaking from Kigali, government spokesperson Yolande Makolo said Rwanda would retain the right to decide which deportees to admit for "resettlement". Those accepted, she added, would receive training, healthcare, and housing to help them "rebuild their lives".

The programme forms part of President Donald Trump's controversial pledge to carry out "the largest deportation operation in American history."

It also marks the third deportation agreement of its kind on the African continent.

On July 16, the US sent five convicted criminals from Vietnam, Jamaica, Laos, Cuba, and Yemen to Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland.

Described as "barbaric and violent" and rejected by their countries of origin, they are confined to isolated units at the Matsapha Correctional Complex, near the capital Mbabane, pending eventual repatriation.

Eleven days earlier, on July 5, eight men convicted of murder, sexual assault, and robbery were deported to South Sudan. Reports differ on whether any deportee was South Sudanese.

The deportations have already provoked widespread outrage – from civil society groups in Eswatini, to lawyers in South Sudan, who denounce them as illegal. South Africa's government has even lodged a formal protest with Eswatini.

Nigeria, meanwhile, has rebuffed US pressure to accept 300 Venezuelans, with Foreign Minister Yusuf Tuggar saying the country already has "enough problems" and "over 230 million people" to care for.

The US is strong-arming others at the expense of vulnerable people.

Trump's established brutality is horrifying. His family separations in 2019 left children terrified and alone, all in the name of policy.

The US is now sending people to Rwanda, Eswatini, and South

Sudan – countries already struggling to care for their own citizens.

This truth exposes Trump's Victorian view of Africa: a desolate, irredeemable continent unworthy of respect or equal partnership. His vision echoes a Western tradition, crystallised in Conrad's Heart of Darkness, where Africa is portrayed as "dark" and "primeval" – a land deemed oppressive and violent, its people cast as incapable of understanding, feeling, or compassion.

That is not who we are.

Yes, Africa has challenges.

Nonetheless, we do not turn the marginalised into pawns, nor do we disguise exile as policy. Our humanity is unshakable and beyond reproach.

Today, Uganda hosts about 1.7 million refugees, making it

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Africa's government has even lodged a formal protest with Eswatini. Nigeria, meanwhile, has rebuffed US pressure to accept 300 Venezuelans, with Foreign Minister Yusuf Tuggar saying the country already has "enough problems" and "over 230 million people" to care for. The US is strong-arming others at the expense of vulnerable people. Trump's established brutality is horrifying. His family separations in 2019 left children terrified and alone, all in the name of policy. The US is now sending people to Rwanda, Eswatini, and South Sudan – countries already struggling to care for their own citizens. This truth exposes Trump's Victorian view of Africa: a desolate, irredeemable continent unworthy of respect or equal partnership. His vision echoes a Western tradition, crystallised in Conrad's Heart of Darkness, where Africa is portrayed as "dark" and "primeval" – a land deemed oppressive and violent, its people cast as incapable of understanding, feeling, or compassion. That is not who we are. Yes, Africa has challenges. Nonetheless, we do not turn the marginalised into pawns, nor do we disguise exile as policy. Our humanity is unshakable and beyond reproach. Today, Uganda hosts about 1.7 million refugees, making it Africa's largest refugee-hosting country. This figure exceeds the combined refugee populations under UNHCR's mandate in the UK, France, and Belgium today. Europe must assume a far greater share of responsibility for asylum seekers and refugees. These third-country deportation deals are not credible policy. They are colonialism reborn. No self-respecting African leader should ever agree to participate in an organised atrocity – not when Africa still bleeds from the wounds inflicted by the West: Sudan's civil war, civic unrest in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, environmental devastation in Nigeria's Delta, and the continuing reach of French monetary imperialism through the CFA.

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Tafi Mhaka

Congo, environmental devastation in Nigeria's Delta, and the continuing reach of French monetary imperialism through the CFA.

"Uncle Sam" now plans to send both convicted criminals and desperate asylum seekers to Africa's shores, instead of the warships of old. Both groups deserve support at home in the US, with extensive rehabilitation for offenders and safe sanctuary for the vulnerable.

If not, Europe can be the only alternative.

Let the architects of empire face the heat.

Let the wealthy, politically obnoxious allies of Washington carry the burden for once.

Rwanda, Eswatini, and South Sudan are among the poorest nations in the world, with per capita incomes just a tiny fraction of their former colo-

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temic brutalities unleashed after the disastrous Berlin Conference of 1885, when European powers carved up Africa, cannot be accepted.

No matter what officials in Rwanda, South Sudan, or Eswatini claim in public, sending America's cast-offs to Africa is colonial exploitation repackaged for today. This is not a new strategy.

Beginning in the 19th century, many European colonies were reduced to offshore extraction centres and dumping grounds. France banished convicts and political exiles to territories such as present-day Gabon and Djibouti. Spain used Bioko Island in Equatorial Guinea as a penal settlement for deportees from Cuba.

The US has revived that same imperial entitlement, delivering a fresh blow to both Africa

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Belgium, and the Netherlands, for instance, boast robust welfare systems, public health networks, and prison rehabilitation programmes – magnificent structures built on centuries of colonial extraction.

They have both the means and the institutions to absorb deportees. They also have the record.

These same powers have eagerly joined the US in targeting and destabilising sovereign nations across Africa, as well as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya – in wars widely condemned as violations of international law.

Every intervention has unleashed fresh waves of refugees and asylum seekers, hapless men, women, and children fleeing the very chaos Western armies engineered: powerless people whom the West openly ignores or despises.

Africa, by contrast, plays by the rules and adheres to the UN Charter. We honour sovereignty, respect international law, and strive for peace, even while shackled by colonial debt designed to keep us dependent.

Europe breaks the rules, Africa abides by them – yet Africa is asked to shoulder the burden.

The hypocrisy is staggering.

We will not bankroll, legitimise, or inherit the crimes of empire.

After all, we barely control our own destinies. The IMF and World Bank dictate our economies. The UN Security Council enforces old hierarchies. The G7 protects the West's interests over us, Africans left impoverished and starving. Structural oppression allows the West to keep interfering in the lives of people across Africa and the Americas. But we will not be complicit.

We will not be silent.

Western policies and interventions drive poverty, displacement, and instability in the Global South.

If the US insists on offloading its deportees, let it send them to those who built and still profit from this system of oppression. The West must reckon with its spoils. Leave Africa out of it. Send Trump's deportees to Europe.

Israeli government has lost all trace of its humanity

Binaifer Nowrojee

5,000 children under five were admitted for outpatient treatment of malnutrition, nearly a fifth of them with severe acute malnutrition.

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification platform, two out of three famine thresholds have been reached in Gaza: plummeting food consumption and acute malnutrition. There is mounting evidence that "widespread starvation, malnutrition and disease" are driving a rise in hunger-related deaths, which is the third famine indicator, but not yet on levels where famine can be formally declared.

The Israeli government, and first and foremost Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, are denying the fact of starvation or hunger in Gaza, something that has even angered the PM's close backer, US President Donald Trump. Netanyahu does not sound convincing by first denying that there is a severe shortage of food despite mounting evidence to the contrary and then accusing Hamas of causing these shortages that he denies exist.

In reality, Israel could have prevented this acute shortage of food by flooding, so to speak, the place with food to circumvent anyone who tries to control the food market, for either racketeering or political gain, and by that deprive them of having any leverage over the Gazan population. To meet the basic needs of the 2.1 million people who live in Gaza, there is a need for 62,000 tonnes of food staples monthly.

In a decision that represents both extreme callousness and a complete lack of judgment, in the months of March and April, Israel did not allow any food to enter Gaza.

Then, under international pressure, a trickle of food was allowed in, but only about a quarter of what was required. This slowed the trajectory of Gaza's descent into starvation, but it did not stop it.

Moreover, the Israeli decision to declare war on UNRWA and other UN agencies that were best equipped to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza – thanks to their experience and the trust they enjoy with the local population – has backfired.

The failed attempt to replace these organizations with the American-backed Gaza Humanitarian Fund resulted in not enough food entering Gaza. And, to make things worse, according to the UN, at

least 1,373 Palestinians have been killed while seeking food – 859 in the vicinity of this group's sites and 514 along the food delivery routes. Supplying humanitarian aid by airdrops was mainly a PR exercise and it has delivered only a fraction of the quantities needed, and at times led to the deaths of those desperate to get food.

Those are the facts and, without an urgent, immediate and substantial increase in the supply of food and medicine, we are likely to see an exponential rise in the number of those dying from hunger – meanwhile, there is heartless political wrangling over who is to blame. As there is mounting evidence of many and various war crimes committed in Gaza, mass starvation is the one that has led the international community, at last, to voice its grave concerns and apply some pressure on Israel, albeit with limited results, to end this inhumane policy and start allowing food in.

It is simply beyond comprehension how this Israeli government could have lost all trace of its humanity and morality, not to mention its basic common sense, and sunk to a new low of withdrawing the most basic needs for subsistence from people who have already suffered immeasurable loss and pain. Nothing has united the world in its criticism of Israel, not before the war and not during it, more than its inflicting of such degrees of hunger and distress in Gaza.

If future historians should look at one single aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that gave the impetus for leading Western countries such as the UK, France and Canada, among others, to recognize the Palestinian state – or for Germany of all countries to impose a partial military embargo – it would most probably be this current Israeli government's decision that starving the people of Gaza is permissible and might serve Israeli interests. No one else shares this view.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Soviet and Russian author and dissident who was incarcerated in Stalin's gulag prison system, wrote on this experience in his book "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich": "That bowl of soup – it was dearer than freedom, dearer than life itself, past, present and future." Those who deliberately deprive people of food do so because they want their total submission, which is Israel's intention in Gaza.

To close the climate finance gap, let vulnerable nations use carbon markets

NOTHING brings home the urgency of climate change more than living 1.5 metres (5ft) above the rising seas as my country, the Maldives, does.

But to cope with climate change, developing countries – like the Maldives and others in the 74-nation Climate Vulnerable Forum – need money.

The most vulnerable nations need an estimated \$490bn a year by 2030 to fund their climate strategies, including mitigation, adaptation and the cost of loss and damage. And yet, the provision of climate finance from major emitters remains woefully inadequate.

It is an indictment of an outdated global financial architecture that turns a blind eye to those on the climate front lines. What good is a global financial system if it denies the world's most vulnerable the opportunity to build resilience against climate devastation while others pump out the carbon pollution driving rising temperatures?

In this context, carbon markets hold the potential to mobilise urgent climate finance crucial to narrowing the funding gap and advancing cli-

mate justice.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum and Vulnerable 20 Finance Ministers (CVF-V20) recognise carbon markets as one of the levers that, by 2030, could unlock an additional \$20bn annually to V20 countries. This would significantly strengthen climate resilience, reduce economic losses and enable these nations to pursue sustainable development.

Scaling carbon markets through high-integrity, standardised projects could expand nature and climate investment pipelines, halving the cost of implementing national climate plans, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and supporting other development goals. It would provide governments with increased revenue, particularly for nature-based solutions, mitigation and resilience while aligning emissions reductions with national priorities. The result could mean a sevenfold impact for the host country of carbon projects.

Many of the V20 countries possess unparalleled capacity for emissions reductions and carbon sequestration, for example through preserving and restoring tropical and temperate forests.

This makes them ideally placed to host impactful carbon-creditable projects, which help achieve both domestic and international climate goals.

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Mohamed Nasheed

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SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

IN THE COURT OF MR. LIAQAT ALI JUDGE BANKING COURT-1 PESHAWAR

Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar

Case No: 104/01 of 2025, Date of hearing 22-09-2025, Suit for the Recovery of Rs. 3254727/34 HBL Tordher Branch Mardan VS Bilal Saleem

Notice Versus: Bilal Saleem S/o Mohammad Saleem R/o Mohalla Gula Khel P.O Khas Kala Buth Tehsil Tota District Swabi. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs. 3254727/34 Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which an exparty decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today on 12-08-2025 under my signature and seal of the Court. Registrar, Banking Court, 1 Peshawar



In brief

PCB delays Women's talent hunt trials

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) delayed the Women's talent hunt trials on Wednesday amid intense rains in Karachi. The PCB had announced conducting trials for U19 and Emerging women's cricketers from August 21 to September 3. The trials, part of the board's talent hunt programme, will be held across eight cities, including Karachi and Lahore. However, intense Karachi rains have resulted in the rescheduling of the trials, scheduled in the city on August 21. "The PCB Talent Hunt trials for Women's U19 and Emerging Cricketers in Karachi have been rescheduled to take place on Tuesday, 2 September 2025 at the Hanif Mohammad High-Performance Centre," the PCB said in a statement. While the August 21 trials have been rescheduled, the remaining trials across the country will be held without any change to the date and venues. The PCB announcement came amid intense Karachi rains, which have triggered urban flooding across the city. As many as 15 have lost lives as heavy rainfall continue to devastate the metropolitan for the second day. While the monsoon rains continued to lash parts of Karachi on Wednesday, the weather is likely to improve by Thursday, August 21, 2025. As per BBC Weather, the city is expected to have a light cloud cover and a gentle breeze. While westerly winds are likely to blow at 15 to 25 mph, no significant rainfall is expected, offering a reprieve to the citizens.

Zampa reprimanded for breaching CoC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Australia player Adam Zampa has been reprimanded for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the first ODI against South Africa in Cairns on Tuesday. Zampa was found to have breached Article 2.3 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to 'use of an audible obscenity during an International Match'. In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Zampa's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period, said a press release. The incident occurred in the 37th over of South Africa's innings, when Zampa used inappropriate language after a misfield and overthrow off his bowling, which was picked up on the stump microphone and broadcast. Zampa admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Andy Pycroft of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Chris Gaffaney and Sam Nogajski, third umpire Richard Illingworth and fourth umpire Donovan Koch levelled the charge. Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

England unchanged for Women's Rugby WC opener

LONDON (AFP): England coach John Mitchell has named an unchanged team from their final warm-up game for the Women's Rugby World Cup opener against the United States in Sunderland on Friday. The starting 15 overwhelmed France 40-6 in the second of England's two warm-up fixtures earlier this month. Zoe Aldcroft continues to captain the team from blind-side flanker, with No 8 Alex Matthews.

Shaheens secure 3rd win in Top End T20 Series

ISLAMABAD (APP): Maaz Sadaqat's century powered Pakistan Shaheens to an emphatic 107-run win over Adelaide Strikers in the 23rd fixture of the Top End T20 Series at the DXC Arena in Darwin on Wednesday evening.

According to details, this was Shaheens' third victory in the event, taking their tally to six points from five matches.

After electing to bat first, the opening pair of Maaz Sadaqat and Yasir Khan provided a solid foundation with a 149-run partnership for the first wicket. Yasir was the first to return back to the pavilion after scoring 51 off 35 balls, hitting five fours and a six. This was his second half-century of the tournament.

Left-handed batter Maaz

was then joined by Abdul Samad and the pair added 32 runs for the second wicket. 20-year-old Maaz went on to register his maiden century of the tournament, striking 11 fours and two sixes in his 59-ball knock of 104.

Shaheens' total was further boosted by a quick-fire 25 off 18 balls from Abdul Samad, which included a four and a six as they scored 202 for six in 20 overs. For Strikers, Harry Manenti claimed three wickets for 31 runs in three overs.

In reply, Strikers lost wickets at regular intervals and were reduced to 49 for five in the eighth over. Opening batter Mackenzie Harvey top-scored with a 17-ball 27, laced with five boundaries.

For Shaheens, left-arm

spinners Faisal Akram and Mehran Mumtaz bagged two wickets apiece, while right-arm off-spinner Mubasir Khan was the most successful bowler, taking three wickets for 19 runs in three overs.

Pakistan Shaheens will face Nepal on Friday, August 22, at the same venue. The first ball of the match will be bowled at 7pm.

Scores in brief: Pakistan Shaheens beat Adelaide Strikers by 107 runs. Pakistan Shaheens 202-6, 20 overs (Maaz Sadaqat 104, Yasir Khan 51, Abdul Samad 25; Harry Manenti 3-31).

Adelaide Strikers 95 all out, 16.1 overs (Mackenzie Harvey 27; Mubasir Khan 3-19, Faisal Akram 2-19, Mehran Mumtaz 2-20).

Woods to head PGA Tour committee to overhaul golf

MIAMI (AFP): Tiger Woods will head a new player-led committee aimed at overseeing a radical shake-up of professional golf in North America, PGA Tour chief executive Brian Rolapp announced on Wednesday.

Speaking on the eve of the season-ending Tour Championship, Rolapp said Woods would act as chairman for a nine-member Future Competition Committee aimed at designing the "optimal competitive model" for golf.

Rolapp, who only recently took up his post with the PGA Tour after two decades with the National Football League, said the committee had been charged with leading "significant change" to the sport's existing model.

"The purpose of this committee is pretty simple," Rolapp told a press conference. "We're going to design the best professional golf competitive model in the world for the benefit of PGA Tour fans, players and their partners," he added.

"The goal is not incremental change. The goal is significant change."

Woods will be one of six players serving on the committee alongside Patrick Cantlay, Adam Scott, Camilo Villegas, Maverick McNealy and Keith Mitchell. Three business advisors on the panel include John Henry, the billionaire owner of Fenway Sports Group which owns the Boston Red Sox and English Premier League champions Liverpool.

Rolapp said the committee would be driven by guiding principles that promoted competitive parity, creating more tournaments where the top players face off against each other and designing a season that was simple to follow. "I think the focus will be to create events that really matter, and how we do that, what that number is, we'll determine," Rolapp said. "But that's certainly the goal."

"How do you actually drive a competition schedule where every event matters, that is connected to a postseason, but do it in a way where the best golfers can get together and actually perform well?" Rolapp said. "I think that's all an open question -- and those are the things we're going to look at with an open mind."

"Nothing off table" In an interview with the Wall Street Journal published on Wednesday, Woods said the committee would examine all options. Possible changes could include fewer events, smaller fields and higher stakes, the Journal reported.

"Nothing's off the table," Woods told the newspaper. "We're going to run through a lot of different scenarios and a lot of different things that could happen." Woods, 49, who has not competed this year, as he recovers from a torn Achilles, hinted that the PGA Tour was poised for momentous changes to its format.

T20 squad arrives in Dubai ahead of Asia Cup, tri-series



DUBAI (Monitoring Desk): The national T20 squad arrived in Dubai for the upcoming Asia Cup and Tri-Nation series, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Wednesday.

The tri-series against Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates, which starts on August 29, and the Asia Cup from September 9 will both take place in the UAE.

In a post on X, the PCB said the team arrived in Dubai in four groups, adding that it would participate in a pre-series training camp from August 21-27 and take part in a training session at the ICC Cricket Academy tomorrow.

The squad departed from Pakistan in four different groups "to ensure a

smooth and organised arrival of players and support staff in Dubai", state media PTV reported. While the ICC Cricket Academy will serve as the "primary training facility" for players, the team was scheduled to play a T20 practice match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, the report said.

All training sessions and practice matches will take place in Dubai according to the official schedule, PTV stated, adding, "This setup is designed to provide players with the ideal environment and facilities to prepare thoroughly ahead of the two major tournaments." The PCB announced on Sunday that Pakistan have left out

Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan from the T20 squad.

Azam and Rizwan have been star performers in the shortest format in the past, but have not played since December, which head coach Mike Hesson put down to other players performing well while addressing a press conference.

Since Hesson took over as head coach in May, Pakistan have played three T20 series — winning 3-0 at home but losing 2-1 away to Bangladesh. They then beat the West Indies 2-1 in the United States.

All-rounder Salman Agha will lead the side, which also sees the return of fast bowlers Mohammad Wasim and Salman Mirza. Pakistan squad: Salman Agha (captain), Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Sahibzada Farhan, Hasan Nawaz, Salman Mirza, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Nawaz, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hussain Talat, Sufiyan Muqeem, Abrar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah, Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Wasim.

Haroon General selected for UCI race in Europe

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) has announced that Muhammad Haroon General, a UCI-certified Road Elite National Commissaire, has been officially selected by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) to serve as a Commissaire at the Tour de l'Avenir, one of Europe's most prestigious international cycling races, to be held in France from August 23 to 29.

This landmark selection makes General the first-ever Pakistani commissaire to officiate at a UCI-sanctioned race in Europe, a significant step forward in Pakistan's participation in international cycling governance, said a press release. His selection follows a highly competitive process in which only six commissaires, three male and as many female, were chosen from across Asia, Africa, South, and Central America.

General expressed heartfelt gratitude to Dubai Islamic Bank for their generous support in making his participation possible, and acknowledged the Syed Azhar Ali Shah President Pakistan Cycling Federation for their trust and consistent encouragement. "The unwavering support from PCF and the sponsorship from Dubai

Islamic Bank laid the foundation for this milestone," he said.

Muhammad Haroon General, while serving as a cycling commissaire since 2010, has presided over all major Road and Track National Championships in Pakistan.

He has been officiated at events in Uzbekistan and the Tour of Iran-Azerbaijan 2025—both marking the first-ever international assignments for a Pakistani commissaire. His selection for the Tour de l'Avenir represents a historic breakthrough, showcasing Pakistan's growing presence in global cycling administration.

Keshav Maharaj rises to No. 1 ODI bowling rankings

CAIRNS (Agencies): South Africa left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj has displaced Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana as the No. 1 men's ODI bowler, following his five-for in the first ODI against Australia in Cairns.

Maharaj, who last held the spot in November 2023, returned to the top after gaining two places to move ahead of Theekshana (second) and India spinner Kuldeep Yadav (third). The 35-year-old picked up career-best ODI figures of 5 for 33 which gave South Africa a 98-run win and a 1-0 series lead.

Among the South

Aiden Markram moved four spots up to No. 21 and Temba Bavuma five spots to No. 23 following their respective half-centuries in the first ODI.

Following the recently concluded ODI series against Pakistan, West Indies captain Shai Hope jumped two spots to No. 9 on the batters' list. Hope finished as the top run-scorer in the series with 207 runs, helping West Indies win the series 2-1. His team-mate Jayden Seales moved 15 places up to 18th in the bowling rankings following his ten wickets in the series.

Following the T20Is

between Australia and South Africa preceding the ODIs, fast bowler Nathan Ellis entered the top ten among bowlers, moving three places up to No. 9. Ellis picked up 3 for 31 in the third T20I to help Australia seal the T20Is 2-1. Josh Hazlewood, who picked up the most wickets for Australia in the series, rose two spots to 18th.

South Africa's hard-hitting batter Dewald Brevis jumped nine spots to equal 12th on the list for T20I batters following his superb efforts in the series. Brevis scored 125 not out off 56 in the first T20I and followed it up with 53 off 26 in the second.

Adeel Afzal carries hockey dreams to Germany

ISLAMABAD (APP): From the narrow lanes of Bhagiyana Kallan near Kasur to the grand arenas of Germany, 17-year-old Adeel Afzal has scripted a story of grit and glory.

Once a boy battling daily hardships, he now stands as Pakistan's youngest player in the Bundesliga Hockey League in Germany.

Adeel's journey is not just about hockey; it is a story of resilience, dedication and faith in opportunities that once seemed impossible. When the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) announced a national hockey talent hunt in 2023, few in Bhagiyana Kallan realized it would alter a young boy's destiny. Encouraged by his coach Shafqat, a retired army man, Adeel traveled 60 kilometers to Lahore with nothing more than determination in his heart. His raw pace and natural flair stunned selectors Khawaja Junaid and Ajmal Khan Lodhi, who saw in him not just another player but a rare talent hidden in the dust. That moment marked the beginning of a journey that would soon carry him across borders.

Behind this breakthrough stood visionaries like Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, Chairman PMYP, and Chaudhry Pervaiz Sandhella, a Netherlands-based Pakistani, whose tireless efforts helped revive international hockey in Pakistan after a gap of 21 years. Their work brought foreign teams back to the country, giving an entire generation of play-

ers, deprived of global exposure for decades, a chance to showcase their talent. Adeel emerged as one of the brightest stars of this revival.

His rise also reflects the vision of Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif to promote talented youth and empower underprivileged families.

Adeel's path was never easy. Selected for the PMYP Hockey League, he shone brightly and helped his team lift the title. This victory earned him a place at the Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy in Lahore, supported by the Akhuwat Foundation. Yet the struggle continued. Each day he traveled from Kasur to Lahore for training, often returning home to an empty kitchen. On nights when hunger weighed heavier than exhaustion, he would sleep at the Data Darbar shrine, saving travel money just to afford food. His coach only discovered this secret when he spotted him at the shrine during morning prayers. These quiet sacrifices, hidden even from his family, became the fuel for his relentless pursuit of success.

Adeel's turning point came when the Pakistan Hockey Federation Development Squad played against visiting German clubs. His dazzling performance caught the eye of coaches from the Wiesbadener Tennis- und Hockey Club (WTHC), who offered him a place in their league team. For Adeel, the opportunity was beyond imagination.

"Playing for a German hockey club is a dream come true. I feel immense pride representing Pakistan on this global stage, and I'm honoured to showcase our talent abroad," he told APP on phone, reflecting on his new chapter in Europe.

From there, his rise became unstoppable. He represented Pakistan's U21 side against Germany and in July 2025, captained the U18 team at the Asia Cup in China. Pakistan won silver, and Adeel was declared the tournament's emerging player.

Speaking about his future, his voice carries the same mix of humility and determination that has brought him this far. "The opportunity to play in Germany fills me with gratitude. It's an honour to represent my country and inspire the next generation of Pakistani hockey players," he added, highlighting his excitement about joining WTHC, a renowned club known for its competitive teams and youth development programme.

Adeel stands as the youngest-ever Pakistani to play in Germany's Bundesliga Hockey League. For a boy who once slept hungry on the cold floor of a shrine, wearing a German club's jersey is nothing short of extraordinary. His journey is more than a personal triumph; it is a reminder that Pakistan's youth hold extraordinary potential, waiting only to be discovered.



LONDON (Agencies): Brentford have turned down Newcastle's improved bid of £40m for striker Yoane Wissa.

The Magpies were proposing a £35m initial fee plus a further £5m in add-ons. Newcastle reopened talks with Brentford on Wednesday but sources told BBC Sport that the latest bid fell below the Bees' valuation of Wissa.

It is understood Wissa held talks with Brentford's owner Matthew Benham

on Tuesday, a development that prompted the discussions. The Magpies' previous bid for the 28-year-old was worth up to £30m.

Earlier this week, Wissa removed all association with Brentford from his Instagram account, external as his future took a fresh twist.

The DR Congo forward wants to join Newcastle but so far Brentford have refused to sanction his exit. He scored 19 goals in

the Premier League last season.

BBC Sport were first to reveal that Wissa had flown home early from their pre-season camp in Portugal in July after which he threatened not to play or train for the club again if they did not sanction his protracted move to St James' Park.

Since then there had been a slight thawing of relations resulting in Wissa returning to first-team training while continuing to make absolutely clear he wanted to join Newcastle.

Wissa believed that Brentford would sanction his transfer north once they signed his replacement.

Indeed, Wissa has been expecting Brentford to agree his move to Tyneside this week after the west London side completed the signing of Dango Ouattara from Bournemouth.

Brentford have already lost fellow forward Bryan Mbeumo this summer to Manchester United.



In brief

Students join 'Friends of Police' program

RAWALPINDI (APP): As part of the Punjab Police's community policing drive, students from various universities and colleges visited the City Traffic Police Headquarters in Rawalpindi under the "Friends of Police" initiative. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Farhan Aslam, addressing the students, said they were now ambassadors of the City Traffic Police. He urged them not only to follow traffic laws themselves but also to encourage their families and peers to act as responsible citizens. During the visit, the City Traffic Police Education Wing briefed participants on the modern licensing system, online learner's platform, and other digital facilities introduced under the directives of the Inspector General of Punjab Police and the DIG Traffic. The students also attended a presentation on road safety programs and key initiatives of the City Traffic Police. The delegation toured different branches of the Traffic Headquarters to observe their day-to-day operations. They also participated in live transmissions of FM 88.6, where they shared their views on traffic safety and the program. Students praised the monitoring systems, licensing services, and office procedures, while also suggesting areas for improvement. In their concluding remarks, they lauded the efforts of Punjab Police leadership, terming the "Friends of Police" program a constructive initiative to enhance public-police engagement and bridge communication gaps. According to the spokesperson, the City Traffic Police Rawalpindi will continue such activities to strengthen community participation in promoting road safety and discipline.

SSP security reviews arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Security Captain (R) Syed Zeshan Haider on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review security measures being made for the foreign guest. The meeting was attended by heads of various law enforcement agencies. An official told APP that matters related to the overall security plan, including arrangements for the accommodation and transportation of the foreign guest, were discussed during the meeting. On the occasion, SSP Security said the designated route would be monitored through security cameras, while quick response teams would remain on high alert to ensure complete coordination among all law enforcement agencies. He added that alternate routes would be provided to maintain smooth traffic flow and travel convenience for citizens. He further said Safe City smart cars would be deployed in the convoy for real-time monitoring, while a team of police commandos equipped with modern gear would perform squad duty. The SSP informed that Islamabad Police, along with officials from other law enforcement agencies, would be deployed on route duty, supported by aerial surveillance with advanced cameras. Islamabad Police is utilizing all available resources to ensure the security of both foreign and local guests, while the protection of citizens' lives and property remains among its top priorities.

PFA discards 2,000 liters

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) in Rawalpindi discarded 2,000 liters of water-mixed milk early on Wednesday morning. According to the PFA spokesman, the teams checked 20 vehicles carrying milk at Thallian, Fateh Jang Road, and the Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza.



ISLAMABAD: Danyal Chaudhry, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting presenting a souvenir to Ms. Jane Marriott. —APP Photo

Naqvi orders major operation against illegal constructions in Saidpur

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directives of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, a large-scale operation has been launched against illegal constructions and encroachments in Saidpur Model Village, Islamabad.

So far, authorities have demolished more than 200 illegal structures and reclaimed 191 kanals of land belonging to the National Park from land grabbers. Several buildings, occupied for years without rent payment, were also vacated. The operation is being carried out indiscriminately against all unauthorized constructions raised on 360 kanals of land after 2005.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi himself visited Saidpur Model Village to review the anti-encroachment drive, as well as the ongoing upgradation and beautification works in the area. He directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and District Municipal Administration (DMA) officials to ensure strict action against all illegal structures without discrimination and emphasized that the vacated properties must be auctioned in a transparent manner.

Naqvi praised CDA's performance in the operation and highlighted that eliminating illegal constructions around Saidpur is a top priority. He announced that well-known restaurants from Karachi and Lahore would soon be introduced in Saidpur

Village to enhance its charm. "The revival of Saidpur will add to the beauty of Islamabad and provide citizens with a new recreational destination," he said.

The minister stressed that all resources would be utilized to develop Saidpur into an international-standard tourist and commercial hub, offering modern facilities to visitors. He also instructed CDA and DMA officials to ensure cleanliness in and around the village. During the briefing, CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa informed the minister that satellite imagery was being used to identify constructions built illegally after 2005. He added that the green core area of Saidpur Village is also being restored. Senior CDA members, the Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG), SSP Operations, and other relevant officials were present during the visit.

Mohsin Naqvi pays tribute to PAF hero Rashid Minhas: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday paid rich tribute to Pakistan Air Force's national hero and Nishan-e-Haider recipient Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas, calling him an eternal symbol of courage, patriotism, and sacrifice. "Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas is a timeless example of bravery, fearlessness, and love for Pakistan. By rendering an unforget-

table sacrifice, he thwarted the nefarious designs of the enemy," Naqvi said in his message.

He recalled how Minhas foiled a hijacking attempt by a traitor without caring for his own life, proving to the world that Pakistan's skies would never fall prey to hostile plots. "The light of his patriotism continues to illuminate our hearts even today," the minister remarked. Naqvi added that Rashid Minhas's sacrifice proved that true heroism lies in putting one's life at risk to safeguard the honor of the motherland. "He is a living example of that spirit," he said.

The minister also praised the Pakistan Air Force for its continued professionalism and valor, noting that in the recent conflict, PAF falcons inflicted a humiliating defeat on the enemy by shooting down six of their fighter jets. "Through brilliant strategy and unmatched skill, the Air Force maintained its aerial supremacy — something the world has also recognized," he observed. Naqvi stressed that every PAF officer is inspired by the extraordinary courage of Shaheed Rashid Minhas. "We are proud of our fearless falcons who, like Rashid Minhas, remain ever ready to defend Pakistan," he said, adding that Minhas's sacrifice was a "shining lamp" and a "beacon of inspiration for generations to come."

Aurangzeb vows full support to NA Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's centuries-old cultural legacy.

He was speaking during a meeting with the Chairperson of the National Assembly Standing Committee on National Heritage and Culture, Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar, held in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Welcoming Ms. Iftikhar to her new role, the Minister praised her dedication and assured that the Ministry would extend complete cooperation to the Committee. "Our culture and heritage span centuries, and their preservation and promotion remain my foremost priority," he said.

During the meeting, both sides discussed strategies for strengthening cultural institutions, many of which were devolved to provinces after the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

Mr. Khichi underlined that the Ministry's attached departments were not profit-oriented but existed to promote heritage, preserve historical legacy, and create public awareness. He stressed that institutions associated with Qaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal are vital to the country's national identity and will never be abolished.

Chairperson Nosheen Iftikhar highlighted the importance of further improving institutional performance and expressed her resolve to work in close collaboration with the Ministry. "It is an honor to work alongside you and to learn in a positive environment. I have assumed this responsibility on the Prime Minister's wish, as he attaches special importance to this sector," she remarked.

The meeting concluded with an agreement that all subsidiary organizations of the Ministry would provide detailed briefings to the Chairperson. Secretary National Heritage and Culture Asad Rehman Gillani also attended the meeting.

Access to clean water every citizen's right: Gilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said access to clean drinking water is a fundamental right of every citizen and essential for public health, education, and economic growth.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of Murree Sparklets RO Plant and Water Line Unit-2 in Hattar. The ceremony was attended by Senators, MNA Isphanyar M. Bhindara, the management of Murree Sparklets, and a large number of dignitaries.

Gilani congratulated the

management on completing the project, calling it a milestone in providing safe drinking water and protecting people from waterborne diseases. He stressed that underprivileged and remote communities deserve special attention so they too can benefit from such essential facilities.

"The Senate of Pakistan fully supports all initiatives that prioritise public welfare," he said, adding that the private sector plays a vital role in national development by creating jobs and driving growth.

He termed projects like the RO Plant an investment

in health, education, and the dignity of citizens.

Later, Gilani visited the ACM Group of Industries, where he was briefed on the company's operations and planted a sapling in the factory lawn. He lauded the use of modern, eco-friendly technology and praised ACM for leading in exports and delivering quality products globally.

Calling the industrial sector the backbone of the national economy, the Chairman Senate assured his full support for measures that further strengthen industry and promote sustainable development.

NHA will stay active until complete road restoration in GB: Aleem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan met Governor Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Syed Mehdi Shah on Wednesday and discussed the post-flood situation, road rehabilitation and relief efforts in the region.

Governor Mehdi Shah praised the swift response and relief operations carried out by the National Highway Authority (NHA) and the Communications Ministry, noting that timely deployment of heavy machinery in such difficult circumstances was commendable and had played a vital role in the opening of the road network in GB, said a press release.

Both leaders expressed

grief over the loss of precious lives and public property in various districts due to rains but noted that joint efforts of the federal and provincial governments have accelerated the process of reopening transport routes. Governor GB also thanked Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan for personally visiting Gilgit-Baltistan.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that this natural calamity was indeed a major challenge; however, NHA, FWO and other institutions immediately responded and began emergency work from day one with additional machinery and workforce deployed from Punjab and Sindh. He added that he was personally in Gilgit-Baltistan to

oversee the restoration of the affected highways.

They also talked about Naltar Expressway, Babusar Road, Ghizer Expressway and other key routes and noted that progress is being reviewed on a daily basis. Abdul Aleem Khan told that heavy machinery and the dedicated workforce of the National Highway Authority working diligently at the affected sites and that NHA will remain fully engaged until complete restoration of the roads.

Abdul Aleem Khan further stated that the restoration process has accelerated due to strong coordination between the concerned agencies and opening of highways is being materialized.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, awards a medal to a position holder student at 25th Convocation of NUML. —APP Photo

Health authority confirms 46 dengue cases

RAWALPINDI (APP): Dr. Ehsan Ghani, Chief Executive Officer of the District Health Authority (DHA),

announced that 46 dengue cases have been reported in the city during the current year. He said that no clustering of cases has been observed, with a decline in cases reported in Pothohar's union councils.

During a press conference on Wednesday, the health chief said that the DHA has taken strict actions by registering 2762 FIRs, sealing 1361 premises, issuing 3798 challans and imposing fines totaling Rs.62,71,500 in the first eight months of 2025 for violations of dengue prevention protocols. Dr. Ehsan Ghani informed the media that 20 union councils remain highly sensitive due to water storage practices contributing to the spread of dengue.

Responding to media queries he highlighted ongoing collaboration with local and parliamentary leaders serving as focal points. He stressed that public awareness campaigns are underway, urging households to cover water containers to curb mosquito breeding. Dr. Ghani also confirmed that institutions managing graveyards and drains are ensuring timely cleanliness to control the vector.

Dr. Ghani rejected any report of presenting wrong data which could mislead the authority. "We are very diligently rendering our responsibilities with transparent data presentation and in right direction", he

said to rebut a news item.

He further said that monitoring is done on daily basis, data is collected and pursued timely under the supervision of the district administration and the local leadership. He added that Tahira Aurangzeb, a senior parliamentarian along with other public reps are onboard to conduct well targeted campaign including the door-to-door activities.

To miscellaneous media questions, Dr. Ehsan Ghani assured that dengue counters are fully operational in major hospitals, with 50 staff members at Holy Family Hospital (HFH) receiving specialized training. "Unlike last year, when some fatalities occurred, the authority is fully prepared this year, with rapid responses to larvae detection sites to prevent further spread", he said.

Earlier, Dr. Waqar Ahmad, DHA spokesperson, briefed the press that 27 Maryam Nawaz Health Clinics have been established, serving 19,000 patients between August 1 and 19, and recording 242 deliveries. These clinics provide facilities such as ultrasound and ECG. The DHA conducts around 350 inspections daily, resulting in 61 FIRs in a single day, supported by 3,717 mobile teams and over 900 daily-wage workers. Control rooms at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Murree and Basic Health Units are operational to manage patient care in high-risk areas.

Dr. Hafiz Jawad Zahid DHO, emphasized the coordinated efforts among

Rawalpindi institutions to combat dengue. He informed that the DHA holds two daily meetings to ensure swift responses to potential breeding sites, maintaining strict vigilance to prevent the virus from spreading further. Dr. Jawad urged the media to come ahead in support of the anti dengue campaign and create massive awareness.

IRSA releases 397,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 397,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 465,500 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1549.00 feet which was 147.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 284,000 cusecs and 254,600 cusecs, respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1216.55 feet, which was 166.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 46,000 cusecs and 7,400 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 400,000, 488,300, 375,500 and 278,800 cusecs, respectively.



RAWALPINDI (APP): Charge de Affairs, Embassy of Iraq Abdul Qadir Sulayman Alhimeri called on Federal Minister for Defence Production, Muhammad Raza Hayat Harraj here on Wednesday at Ministry of Defence Production.

The Minister for Defence Production warmly welcomed the dignitary and explained that Pakistan

highly values its relations with Iraq and wishes to enhance cooperation in the field of defence, said a press release.

The Minister said that Pakistan strongly supports the sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. The Minister highlighted that Pakistan Defence Industry has huge potentials and

capacity. Both countries may share mutually benefiting areas of defence related cooperation.

Charge de Affairs Abdul Qadir Sulayman Alhimeri said that Iraqi Government and its people have a great regard for Pakistan and its peoples. Iraq is ready to cooperate with Pakistan in all fields including defence production.

19 detained in Ghor

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): Nineteen individuals have been arrested over collecting and selling yama grass in Ghor province, an official said on Wednesday. Police spokesman Abdul Rahman Badri told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Security forces of Noorak area of Pasaband district arrested 19 people in connection with collecting and selling yama plant". During the operation, more than 1,000 kilograms of yama was seized and burnt, the spokesman added.

The Frontier Post

Safar 25, 1447 — Thursday, August 21, 2025

IEA extends condolences

KABUL (BNA): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan expressed deep sorrow over the devastating road accident in Herat province that left dozens of citizens dead and injured. "In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate," the statement read. "It is with great sadness that we learned of the bus collision and fire in Herat last night, in which many Afghans were martyred or wounded. Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un."

EU condoles victims after deadly bus crash in Heart

HERAT (Khaama Press): At least 79 Afghan migrants returning from Iran, including 19 children, were killed when a bus collided with a truck in Herat. The EU mission in Kabul expressed condolences, calling the tragedy a reminder of Afghanistan's poor road safety.

The European Union delegation in Kabul has offered condolences following a devastating road accident in Herat province that killed dozens of returning migrants from Iran. In a statement issued on Wednesday, August 20, the mission expressed solidarity with the victims' families, calling the tragedy a stark reminder of Afghanistan's urgent road safety challenges.

Taliban authorities confirmed that 79 people, including 19 children, died in the crash. The victims were Afghan migrants who

had recently crossed back from Iran, many of them families attempting to return to their home provinces.

Local sources reported that the accident occurred late Tuesday night when a bus carrying returnees collided with a cargo truck on the ring road in Guzara district of Herat. The bus caught fire after the impact, trapping passengers inside and causing most deaths at the scene.

This disaster marks the second major traffic tragedy in less than a year. In December 2024, over 60 people were killed in two separate crashes on the Kandahar highway, highlighting Afghanistan's growing record of deadly road accidents.

Poor infrastructure, overcrowded vehicles, lack of traffic enforcement, and hazardous conditions on highways have made road

travel one of the most dangerous aspects of daily life in Afghanistan. Aid agencies and civil groups have repeatedly called for safety measures to prevent such large-scale tragedies.

The EU's condolence message reflects the international community's concern over Afghanistan's fragile infrastructure and the disproportionate impact of road disasters on vulnerable groups such as returning migrants. With limited emergency response systems, accidents often claim higher casualties than in neighboring countries.

Unless immediate steps are taken to improve roads, regulate transportation, and enforce safety standards, experts warn that such incidents will continue to devastate Afghan families already struggling under economic hardship and displacement.

36 new sites to be build in Ghor: ATRA

GHOR (BNA): Mawlawi Sayeed Barat Shah Agha Nadim, the Director General of the Afghan Telecommunications Authority (ATRA) of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has announced the establishment of 36 telecommunications sites in Ghor province.

According to Bakhtar News Agency, Mawlawi Mohammad Sadiq Rassas, spokesperson for the Governor of Ghor, stated that Mawlawi Syed Barat Shah Agha Nadim, Director General of ATRA, during a meeting with Mawlawi Hayatullah Mubarak, Governor of Ghor, presented information about these centers, which are planned to be established soon.

He said that 14 sites will be established by ATRA, and 22 other sites will be built by telecom networks to provide the people of Ghor with access to telecommunications services.

During the meeting, the Governor of Ghor raised the telecommunications challenges and needs of the people and requested the Director General of ATRA to prioritize providing services to residents of remote and underserved areas of the province.

The Director General of ATRA also emphasized that the establishment of 36 sites in Ghor will be implemented soon and efforts will be made to resolve telecommunications issues in the remote areas of the province.

3,000 job opportunities provided

KABUL (TOLONews): For the second time, Qatar has announced 3,000 job opportunities for Afghan workers.

These workers will be registered in 23 different professions across the country's 34 provinces, and after completing the official procedures through the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, they will be deployed.

In Charikar, the provincial center of Parwan, dozens of young people stood in line to register in hopes of being selected to work in Qatar.

Shafiu Rahman, a resident of Parwan, said: "Fortunately, we have reached the first stage. God willing, we will find work there. We are going for labor and livelihood. I rely on God. I have been to Iran and Turkey as well, but they sent me back. I hope this will be a good opportunity for me."

Another Parwan resident, Mohibullah, said: "I came here to register. If a chance for work abroad is given to us, it will be very good. I am pleased with the Islamic Emirate, as the process here is going smoothly."

China eager to include Afghanistan in 'Belt and Road' project



KABUL (Pajhwok): Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi says his country is eager to officially include Afghanistan in the "Belt and Road" project.

He said this at a meeting with Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi on Wednesday, deputy spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal wrote on his Facebook account.

He said the two sides discussed expanding cooperation in various sectors between Kabul and Beijing. Muttaqi highlighted the

growing China-Afghanistan ties, calling China a valuable trade partner for Afghanistan, noting that the annual trade volume between the two countries reaches one billion US dollars.

He added the trade volume between the two nations would increase significantly in the near future. As part of strengthening Afghanistan-China economic cooperation, Muttaqi presented practical proposals in the areas of transport cooperation, banking relations and balancing trade and called for the establishment of intergovernmental commissions to further

expand economic cooperation and conduct technical discussions.

He once again reiterated that Afghanistan's soil would never be used against neighbouring countries.

For his part, Wang Yi also described relations between the two countries as growing and highlighted the significant expansion of cooperation in many areas.

He said that relevant institutions of both countries were working to further increase Afghanistan's exports to China.

He added that Beijing was keen for Afghanistan to

be formally included in the major Belt and Road project. He further said that cooperation with Afghan institutions in the field of mining exploration and extraction would also be enhanced.

The Chinese Foreign Minister added that his country plans to begin practical mining operations this year.

He pledged continued political and economic support for Afghanistan and vowed efforts to remove existing obstacles in the import of Afghan agricultural products and other goods.

King Amanullah Khan: From birth, reign to abdication

KABUL (TOLONews): King Amanullah Khan was born in 1270 of the solar calendar in Paghman, Kabul.

At the age of 27, after the death of his father Amir Habibullah Khan, he assumed leadership of the country and on Asad 28, 1298 (solar calendar), gained political independence from British colonial rule.

Mohammad Waez Zahraizai, an ethnologist in Nangarhar, said: "The constitution was established during his time. He aimed to lead the country toward education, economy, and progress so that our country would

be on par with others. That was his approach."

Between the solar years of 1300 and 1301, King Amanullah Khan convened a Loya Jirga in Nangarhar with the participation of 872 representatives of the people.

Mast Ali Khan Niazi, a historian in Nangarhar, said: "After returning from his trip, he formed a Jirga, but problems arose. These problems led to the failure of his reforms, and later, Amir Habibullah Kalakani nullified his laws, reforms, and actions."

In the solar year 1307, to prevent internal conflicts

and bloodshed, King Amanullah Khan abdicated power and introduced his brother Inayatullah as his successor.

Shah Mahmood Shinwari, a writer in Nangarhar, said: "They gave the entire nation the idea of independence. If we look at history, unfortunately, political motives began at that time, and the British, Afghanistan's enemies, did not want an independent Afghanistan. Unfortunately, they worked on certain agendas, examples of which we still see in Afghanistan today, agendas that incite division. It is this

divisiveness that draws criticism for our failure to preserve our freedom."

Although King Amanullah Khan defeated the mighty British Empire on a global level, internal conflicts and rebellions forced him to leave the throne and his homeland.

He passed away in 1338 in Switzerland.

In accordance with his will, his body was transferred from Italy to Afghanistan and buried beside his father, Amir Habibullah Khan, in the Amir Shaheed Garden in Jalalabad city.

ANDMA official meets Turkish Red Crescent Representative

KABUL (BNA): Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, the General Director of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), recently met with Naeemullah Karimi, the Turkish Red Crescent Representative.

During their discussion, Mullah Nooruddin Turabi emphasized the need for ANDMA to operate as a strong, impartial, and humanitarian institution, ensuring that its services reach all citizens. He announced the initiation of a recruitment and training process for volunteers in Kabul, which is expected to expand to other provinces soon.

Karimi commended the recent reforms within ANDMA, describing them



as a positive development. He indicated that further consultations would take place with the Turkish

Embassy and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to enhance cooperation and strengthen

ties between ANDMA and Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD).

Volleyball tournament begins in Khost

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): A volleyball tournament, featuring 10 teams including two teams from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has commenced in southeastern Khost province, an official said on Wednesday.

The volleyball competitions were launched at the Sheikh Zayed Volleyball Stadium in Azadi Mena area of Khost city with financial support of an investor to encourage youths to indulge in healthy activities and improve their mental health.

The investor, Ismail Salar, said the games would last for about two

months and the champions would be awarded a Mark X car and the runners an Alto car.

"Recently, there has been an increase in suicide cases. We want to turn people's thoughts and minds towards sports so that they could avoid suicide tendency because suicide is forbidden in Islam. We hope that the leaders will encourage the youth to play sports."

On the other hand, volleyball players said such sports programs were effective in entertaining and uniting young people.

Adnan Khan, a volleyball player from Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, told Pajhwok that if such joint games were organized in other sports as well, it would increase the atmosphere of trust between the youth on both sides of the Durand Line.

"We are Pashtuns and there is nothing wrong with that. Mashallah, you have very good players. So if the government provides them with facilities, whether it is cricket or volleyball, then God willing, Afghanistan would gain more fame," he added.

Meanwhile, Ehsanullah Ehsan, a player from Khost, said such games are very important for the

unity of youth and prevention of drug abuse.

He asked other investors to arrange similar events of other sports to provide mental peace to the youths.

"Such competitions have not been held at the national level; this is a matter of pride for Khost and the people of Khost, with teams from various provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Afghanistan participating."

Officials of the Physical Education Department assured that the foundation stone of an Asian-level sports gym would be laid in the province as soon as possible.

400-bed hospital to be constructed in Kandahar



KABUL (Pajhwok): A 400-bed specialized mother-child hospital will be constructed in Kandahar province over the next two years with funding from a Qatari charity foundation.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the hospital's construction was signed on Wednesday between Dr. Mohammad Hassan Ghiyasi, Deputy Minister of Policy and Health Development at Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health, and Momin Shah, representative of the Qatari charity organization.

Sharafat Zaman Amar, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health, told reporters that the hospital will include departments for internal medicine, surgery, gynecology and obstetrics, a laboratory, and pharmacy.

It will be built on a 10,000-square-meter plot in Kandahar province. The construction cost will be determined once the design is finalized.

Speaking at the signing

ceremony, Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, Minister of Public Health, said: "It is a matter of happiness that we are witnessing the signing of the agreement for a 400-bed specialized hospital, which will be built with financial support from the Qatari charity within the next two and a half years."

Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, Minister of Public Health added that the hospital will significantly meet the health needs of mothers and children not only in Kandahar but also in other southern provinces of Afghanistan.

The minister highlighted that over the past two decades, health centers in Afghanistan were established unevenly, leaving many areas underserved. In southern provinces, including Kandahar, many "white areas" (zones without health facilities) forced people to travel long distances for medical care.

Jalali emphasized that the Islamic Emirate priori-

tizes the health sector, and under a new policy, services will be expanded according to people's needs.

Dr. Murdif Al-Qashouti, Qatar's Chargé d'affaires, said the hospital's construction will reduce maternal and child mortality and meet the healthcare needs of Kandahar as well as other southern provinces of Afghanistan.

"It is a pleasure to see another project from the State of Qatar presented to Afghanistan," Murdif Al-Qashouti added.

Momin Shah, representing the Qatari charity in Afghanistan, said: "We are delighted to witness the signing ceremony of the MoU for this hospital, funded by the Qatar Fund for Development. We have long awaited this moment."

He noted that the hospital will provide services in surgery, gynecology and obstetrics, internal medicine, emergency care, and other departments.

166 million afs e-toll gate being built east of Kabul



KABUL (Pajhwok): Construction work has been initiated on an electronic toll gate on the eastern highway in Sarkhi Pul area of Kabul at a cost of 166 million afghanis.

Deputy Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Maulvi Fathullah Mansour, told the inaugural ceremony that the ministry had launched the project as

part of its infrastructure development programme.

He said the project, costing more than 166 million afghanis, would be completed within 12 months.

Mansour reaffirmed the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation's (MoTCA) commitment to initiating new projects for the country's economic growth, improving travel facilities

for the public and enhancing the quality of transport services.

He added that the toll gates were being constructed to ensure transparency, provide standardised services to the public and drivers and improve operational efficiency.

Mansour stressed that the launch of the project marked a positive step

towards modernising and standardising Afghanistan's transport system, enabling transparent revenue collection and better management.

Speaking at the event, Mohammad Rustam Hafizyar, Director of Infrastructure Planning and Development at MoTCA, said the toll gate was being built on 7.5 acres of land.

He noted that the facility would be equipped with internet services and surveillance cameras, ensuring that even minor details would be monitored.

Hafizyar further said that 50 different projects were currently under construction across the country, while 48 others were in the design and procurement stages.

Similarly, representatives of the contracting company said the project would include a five-story administrative building, a hotel for passengers, mosques for men and women, a vehicle parking area, and a car repair facility.



KARACHI: Locals facing problems while passing through flooded street in Port City as monsoon rains continue.

Solangi appointed spokesperson for President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Senior journalist and former caretaker information minister Murtaza Solangi has been appointed as the spokesperson for the President of Pakistan.

The appointment, confirmed via official notification, is on an honorary and pro bono basis with immediate effect. Solangi, who served as caretaker minister for information and broadcasting from August 2023 to March 2024, announced the news on X, stating: "A little personal news. I have been appointed the Spokesperson of the President of Pakistan. I will assume my new responsibilities starting tomorrow. Thank you."

A veteran of the media industry, Solangi previously served at Radio Pakistan (2008–2013), managing over 3,000 staff across 64 broadcasting units. He played a key role in building ties with international broadcasters such as Voice of America, China Radio International, and Deutsche Welle.

Solangi also made history as the first Pakistani to be elected vice president and later acting president of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union. In 2011, he was awarded the Sitara-e-Imtiaz by the President of Pakistan for his contributions to media and public service.

ATC issues warrants for PTI leaders

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) has issued non-bailable arrest warrants for 14 convicted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, including Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz, Sheikh Rashid Shafiq, Zartaj Gul, Kanwal Shauzab, and Sahibzada Hamid Raza, in connection with the May 9 riots and GHQ attack cases. The court ordered their arrest and production at the next hearing on September 3.

Judge Amjad Ali Shah heard 12 cases related to the May 9 incidents registered in Rawalpindi division, including the GHQ attack, Army Museum assault, arson at sensitive buildings in Saddar, and torching of Metro stations on Murree Road. The jail trial of the GHQ attack case was postponed once again, with the next session fixed for September 3.

The court rejected exemption pleas filed by lawyers of the 14 convicted leaders, ruling that since they had already been sentenced in the Faisalabad court, they must surrender before seeking relief.

Warrants were also issued for 31 other accused who failed to appear without justification. Out of 119 witnesses in the GHQ attack case, 27 have recorded their statements, while three more have been summoned for the next hearing. Copies of challans were distributed among the present accused in other cases, with charges set to be framed against PTI's founder and co-accused on the next date of hearing. Former Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, former MNA Sadaqat Abbasi, and others appeared before the court. Strict security arrangements were made at the district courts during the proceedings.

Traffic accident in Herat; death toll reaches 79

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): At least 79 people—most of them recently returned refugees from Iran—have died, and three others were injured in a traffic accident in western Herat province, local officials said Wednesday.

Mufti Mohammad Yusuf Saeedi, spokesman for the Herat governor, said a 580-model passenger bus travelling from Islam Qala towards Kabul collided with a motorcycle and a Mazda lorry on the ring road, before catching fire.

He said the victims included elderly people, women, children, the bus driver, the motorcyclist and the Mazda driver. Three others were seriously injured. Saeedi added that, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Defence and

the 207 Al-Farooq Army Corps, all the bodies had been transferred to the corps' mortuary, with preparations made for their burial and transfer to Kabul province.

He said the Herat administration, while expressing deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, confirmed that rescue teams and medical staff had reached the site immediately and the injured were swiftly taken to local hospitals. He added that among the casualties of this accident, 76 were migrants who had recently returned from Iran to the country. The provincial administration urged all drivers to exercise utmost caution and strictly observe traffic regulations to prevent such tragedies.

More than 1.5 million

Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan this year alone, according to the United Nations migration agency, as both countries step up deportations after decades of hosting Afghan refugees. Many arrive with little means and face dire conditions in a country battling poverty and mass unemployment.

The state-run Bakhtar News Agency described the incident as one of Afghanistan's deadliest accidents in recent years. In December 2023, two separate bus crashes involving tankers killed 52 people, while in March 2024, another 20 died in a collision in Helmand province. In late 2022, a tanker overturned in the Salang Pass, igniting a fire that killed 31.

Israel okays major West Bank settlement project

JERUSALEM (AFP): Israel approved a major settlement project on Wednesday in an area of the occupied West Bank that the international community has warned threatens the viability of a future Palestinian state. Israel has long had ambitions to build on the roughly 12-square-kilometer (five-square-mile) parcel known as E1 just east of Jerusalem, but the plan had been stalled for years amid international opposition.

Critics say the settlement would effectively cut the West Bank in two, undermining hopes for a contiguous Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. Last week, Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich backed plans to build around 3,400 homes on the ultra-sensitive tract of land, which lies between Jerusalem and the Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim.

"I am pleased to announce that just a short while ago, the civil administration approved the planning for the construction of

the E1 neighborhood," the mayor of Maale Adumim, Guy Yifrach, said in a statement Wednesday. The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority swiftly slammed the move. "This undermines the chances of implementing the two-state solution, establishing a Palestinian state on the ground, and fragments its geographic and demographic unity," the PA's foreign ministry said in a statement.

It added the move would entrench "division of the occupied West Bank into isolated areas and cantons that are disconnected from one another, turning them into something akin to real prisons, where movement is only possible through Israeli checkpoints and under the terror of armed settler militias." All of Israel's settlements in the West Bank, occupied since 1967, are considered illegal under international law, regardless of whether they have Israeli planning permission. Israel heavily restricts the movement of West Bank Palestinians,

who must obtain permits from authorities to travel through checkpoints to cross into east Jerusalem or Israel.

King Abdullah II of Jordan on Wednesday also affirmed his country's rejection of the E1 project, saying "the two-state solution is the only way to achieve a just and comprehensive peace." Violence in the West Bank has soared since the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel that triggered the Gaza war. Since then, Israeli troops and settlers have killed at least 971 Palestinians in the West Bank, including many militants, according to health ministry figures.

Over the same period, at least 36 Israelis, including security forces, have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during Israeli military operations, according to official figures. UN chief Antonio Guterres warned last week that constructing Israeli homes in the E1 area would "put an end to" hopes for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

UK set for more legal challenges over migrant hotels

LONDON (AFP): Britain's government was considering Wednesday whether to appeal a court ruling blocking the housing of asylum seekers in a flashpoint hotel, as it scrambled to come up with contingency plans for the migrants. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour administration braced itself for further legal challenges from local authorities following judge-issued injunction that has dealt it a major political and logistical headache.

Anti-immigrant firebrand Nigel Farage indicated that councils run by his hard-right Reform UK party, leading in national polls, would pursue similar claims as he called for protests outside migrant hotels. Security minister Dan Jarvis said the government was weighing challenging high court judge Stephen Eyre's granting of a temporary injunction to stop migrants from staying at the Bell Hotel in Epping, northeast of London.

The local authority sought the ruling following several weeks of protests outside the hotel, some of which have turned violent. The demonstrations erupted after a resident was

charged with sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl. "We're looking very closely at it," Jarvis told Sky News of a possible appeal. The interior ministry had tried to have the case dismissed, warning it would "substantially impact" its ability to provide accommodation for tens of thousands of asylum seekers across Britain.

"We're looking at a range of different contingency options," Jarvis told Times Radio, adding: "We'll look closely at what we're able to do." Several Reform-led councils, including in Staffordshire and Northamptonshire in the Midlands area of England, announced on Wednesday that they were exploring their options following the court ruling.

Protests, some of them violent, broke out in Epping in mid-July after Hadush Gerberslasie Kebatu, 41, was charged. He denies the allegation and is due to stand trial later this year. Hundreds of people have since taken part in demonstrations and counter-demonstrations outside the Bell Hotel. Further anti-immigration demonstrations also spread

to London and around England.

Several men appeared in court on Monday charged with violent disorder over the Bell Hotel protests. Epping Forest District Council argued the hotel had become a risk to public safety and that it had breached planning laws as it was no longer operating as a hotel in the traditional sense. The judge gave authorities until September 12 to remove the migrants.

Writing in the right-wing Daily Telegraph newspaper, Farage said the "good people of Epping must inspire similar protests around Britain." He said peaceful demonstrations can "put pressure on local councils to go to court to try and get the illegal immigrants out." In Epping, an attractive market town connected to London by the underground, residents appeared to broadly welcome the imminent removal of the asylum seekers. "It has made people feel unsettled, especially with schools being down there," 52-year-old Mark Humphries, who works in retail, told AFP on the high street.

Achakzai named as Opposition leader in NA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has nominated opposition alliance chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai as the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly.

According to reports, Imran Khan informed visitors at Adiala Jail about the nomination. He also directed further consultations on the Senate opposition leader slot, where PTI's Azam Swati remains the strongest contender so far. Earlier, PTI's Omar Ayub lost his position as opposition leader in the National Assembly following his conviction in the May 9 cases by an Anti-Terrorism Court. He was also removed from the Public Accounts Committee and all standing committees.

Subsequently, the Election Commission issued disqualification notifications for Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz, a decision both leaders have challenged in the Peshawar High Court. The disqualification was executed under Article 63(1)(h) of the Constitution, which bars individuals from Parliament if convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude.

The ECP cited the ATC Faisalabad's verdict in its notification, noting that the concerned members had been convicted in connection with the May 9 violence cases. The court had sentenced each of them to prison terms of up to 10 years. The ruling came just days after the ATC announced its decision in three separate cases related to the May 9 incidents, which involved protests and violence following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

SC adjourns Imran's bail petitions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday adjourned hearing till tomorrow on bail petitions of PTI founder.

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by the Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and comprising Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui and Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case.

During the hearing, the Chief Justice said that the court will not grant a long adjournment, but first the arguments of the prosecution will be heard. He said that the prosecution will have to explain how the Lahore High Court's decision to deny bail can be upheld. They will have to cross this threshold.

Lawyer Salman Safdar requested the court to allow the family of the PTI founder to speak, who are present in the courtroom, but the Chief Justice rejected this request, saying that the court will only hear the lawyer, family members cannot be allowed to speak.

The assistant lawyer on the occasion informed the court that the special prosecutor of the case, Zulfiqar Naqvi, has suffered from food poisoning, due to which he is undergoing treatment in the hospital and could not appear in court on Wednesday. The assistant lawyer requested that the hearing of the case be postponed until next week, however, the Chief Justice remarked that the hearing is being held tomorrow and the situation will be viewed.

King of UK sends condolence message

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a heartfelt message, The King of the United Kingdom expressed his deepest condolences to the people of Pakistan following the devastating monsoon flooding and a tragic helicopter crash during rescue operations.

The King stated, "My wife and I have been desperately saddened to learn of the tragic loss of life and widespread devastation... Our thoughts and deepest sympathy are with all those who have lost loved ones, homes, and livelihoods."

Heavy rains batter Karachi, leaving 17 dead

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The death toll from rain-related incidents in Karachi rose to 17 on Wednesday after intermittent downpours battered the city since the day before, with the port city receiving more monsoon showers at night.

The aftermath of urban flooding remains visible across the city, with stranded vehicles and potholes scattered along major thoroughfares. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) reported 178 millimetres of rainfall in the Gulshan-e-Hadeed and 145 millimetres on University Road during the past 24 hours. Drainage operations continued through the day to clear key roads, including Karsaz and Malir Halt, where several vehicles remained stuck. Rainwater also inundated parts of the Old City Area, Aram Bagh, Sindh High Court, Liaquatabad, and University Road.

Police confirmed that children and a woman were among the deceased. In one incident, a 70-year-old disabled man was found dead inside his PECHS residence after reportedly falling from his bed into accumulated rainwater. The power situation also worsened, with 2,400 feeders restored but 240 still down, suspending electricity in multiple neighbourhoods, including Gulistan-e-Jauhar, North Nazimabad,

Malir, Korangi, Orangi Town, Liaquatabad, Gadap, Bin Qasim, PECHS, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Sultanabad, Moinabad, and DHA. Many areas have been without electricity for over 24 hours.

Flight operations at Jinnah International Airport remain heavily affected, with several domestic flights cancelled as airline and PIA staff were unable to reach duty stations due to flooding. International flight schedules also suffered delays. In view of the deteriorating conditions, the Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court ordered the closure of all courts in Karachi, including the principal seat and subordinate courts. According to the PMD, strong monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal are impacting southern Pakistan. More showers, with isolated heavy falls, are expected in Karachi today and tomorrow, raising concerns of fresh urban flooding.

Speaking to media, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab said that while main roads had largely been cleared after the rains, drainage work was still underway in several waterlogged areas. "Drainage efforts are continuing where rainwater has accumulated," he said, noting that the city received over 235mm of rainfall—far exceeding its drainage capacity of just 40mm.

Wahab said that 3.024 million cubic feet of debris had so far been removed from storm drains, improving water flow and easing drainage across the city. He acknowledged shortcomings in the drainage system but stressed the need for long-term solutions. "Basic steps are needed to expand drainage capacity, but this requires land and faces resistance from residents, making the task difficult," the mayor said.

"Traffic is moving, but slows down where water remains on the sides of roads. Overall, the situation has improved compared to earlier in the day," he added. The mayor also confirmed receiving complaints about power outages in multiple neighbourhoods. Electricity supply has been disrupted to more than 550 feeders across the city, with some areas experiencing blackouts for up to 16 hours. A K-Electric spokesperson said that power is currently being supplied through more than 1,550 of the city's 2,100 feeders. The spokesperson explained that heavy rain had left many roads submerged, disrupting fuel deliveries and hampering access for repair teams. However, residents told media that several hours had passed since the rain stopped, yet no K-Electric teams had arrived to restore supply in their areas, leaving citizens distressed and helpless.

PHC extends status quo in Umar, Shibli case

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a notice to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in response to petitions filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Umar Ayub and Shibli Faraz and extended status quo in this regard. The petitions challenge their disqualification and subsequent removal as Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and Senate, respectively, on Wednesday.

PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Waqar Ahmad and Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhal heard the petitions. The petitioners' lawyer, Barrister Gohar Khan, Special Secretary Law Election Commission, Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah, and lawyers for the ECP appeared before the court.

Barrister Gohar Khan informed the court that Umar Ayub and Shibli Faraz were disqualified by the ECP, leading to their removal as Leader of the Opposition. He argued that the ECP exceeded its authority by taking this action without a reference from the Speaker. He emphasized that the Leader of the Opposition is a constitutional position determined under Assembly Rule 39 and that the ECP's decision was unconstitutional and illegal.

The Additional Attorney General informed the court that there is currently no Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and National Assembly and requested that the cases not be consolidated.

Meanwhile, Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhal noted that the case against the Speaker is separate and would be affected by any order on the ECP's decision. The Additional Attorney General argued that the House cannot function without a Leader of the Opposition and that the Leader of the Opposition is elected by the members of the assembly, not the ECP.

PHC extended the stay order on further proceedings against the petitioners and sought responses from the ECP and Attorney General. The court adjourned the hearing and directed the ECP to submit its reply on the next hearing date.

Court directs ECP, Attorney General to submit replies in MPAs oath-taking by Governor case: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Attorney General to submit replies in response to petitions filed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati. The petitions challenge the decision of the Chief Justice of the PHC regarding the oath-taking of members elected to reserved seats at the Governor's House, on Wednesday.

PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Waqar Ahmad and Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhal heard the petitions. During the hearing, Advocate General Shah Faisal Uthmankhel,

Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah, Special Secretary Law Election Commission, and lawyers for the Awami National Party (ANP) and ECP appeared before the court.

The Advocate General informed the court that the Chief Minister had filed a petition challenging the ECP's decision to declare PTI members as independents, while another petition challenged the oath-taking of members elected to reserved seats at the Governor's House. The court directed the Speaker to submit a schedule for oath-taking by the members.

The Special Secretary Law Election Commission informed the court that the Chief Justice had nominated the Governor to administer the oath to the members under Article 255(2) of the Constitution. The ECP's lawyer argued that if fresh oaths are taken, it could raise questions about the Senate elections and create further complications.

The lawyers for the new members, Babar Khan Yousafzai and Amir Javed, argued that private members would be affected if the oaths are taken again. They claimed that the Speaker did not want to administer the oath, which is why the Chief Justice nominated the Governor.

PHC directed all parties to submit their replies and also sought responses from the ECP and the Attorney General, stating that it would determine the maintainability of the petitions after hearing all parties on next hearing.

US targets more ICC judges including over Israel

WASHINGTON (AFP): The United States on Wednesday imposed sanctions on four more International Criminal Court judges or prosecutors, including from allies France and Canada, in a new effort to hobble the tribunal particularly over actions against Israel. "The Court is a national security threat that has been an instrument for lawfare against the United States and our close ally Israel," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement, using a term popular with President Donald Trump's supporters.

Rubio said that the four people targeted from the tribunal based in The Hague had sought to investigate or prosecute nationals from the United States or Israel "without the consent of either nation." The four include Judge Nicolas Guillou of France, who is presiding over a case in which an arrest warrant was issued for Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The case was brought forward by the State of Palestine, which is not recognized by Washington but, unlike Israel or the United States, has acceded to the statute that set up the tribunal in The Hague. Guillou, a veteran jurist, had worked for several years in the United States assisting the Justice Department with judicial cooperation during Barack Obama's presidency.

Also targeted in the latest US sanctions was a Canadian judge, Kimberly Prost, who was involved in a case that authorized an investigation into alleged crimes committed during the war in Afghanistan, including by US forces. Under the sanctions, the United States will bar entry of the ICC judges to the United States and block any property they have in the world's largest economy — measures more often taken against US

adversaries than individuals from close allies.

Rubio also slapped sanctions on two deputy prosecutors — Nazhat Shameem Khan of Fiji and Mame Mandiaye Niang of Senegal. The State Department said the two were punished by the United States for supporting "illegitimate ICC actions against Israel," including by supporting the arrest warrants against Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant.

The Trump administration has roundly rejected the authority of the court, which is backed by almost all European democracies and was set up as a court of last resort when national systems do not allow for justice. Trump on Friday welcomed Russian President Vladimir Putin to Alaska even though Putin faces an ICC arrest warrant, a factor that has stopped him from traveling more widely.