

5 children dead, 12 injured
F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: At least five children killed, twelve other injured when a mortar shell exploded in the Serband area of Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to District Police Officer (DPO) Nazir Khan, the children had found the mortar shell on a nearby mountain and brought it home, mistaking it for a toy, which led to the blast.



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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif receiving President of Iran, Dr. Mahmoud Pezeshkian upon arrival at airport.

COAS witnesses induction of Z-10ME attack helicopter in Pak Army Aviation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) visited Multan Garrison and presided over the induction ceremony of the Z-10ME attack helicopter into Pakistan Army Aviation.

The COAS witnessed firepower demonstration by the newly inducted Z-10ME helicopters at the Muzaffargarh Field Firing Ranges, said a news released by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). The induction of this potent system marks a major leap in the modernization of Army Aviation, reinforcing its integrated battlefield response and capac-

ity to deliver decisive effects against potential adversaries.

This state-of-the-art, all-weather platform is capable of precision strike operations day and night. Equipped with advanced radar systems and cutting-edge electronic warfare suites, the Z-10ME significantly enhances the Army's capability to engage diverse aerial and ground threats.

Interacting with troops, the COAS lauded their exceptional morale, professionalism, and combat proficiency. He appreciated the successful demonstration of combined arms tactics, reflecting the Army's firm resolve to maintain a decisive edge in the evolving character of warfare.

Earlier, at Corps Headquarters, the

COAS was briefed on the formation's operational preparedness and ongoing training activities. Expressing satisfaction over the high standards of readiness, he reaffirmed the Pakistan Army's unwavering commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Later, the COAS engaged with members of academia and civil society in an interactive session, where he underscored the significance of national unity, civil-military synergy, and a whole-of-nation approach in countering hybrid threats and fostering societal cohesion. Earlier, upon arrival at Multan Garrison, the COAS was warmly received by the Corps Commander Multan.

Entire nation welcomed Iranian President: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Saturday said the entire nation welcomed Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian along with his delegation which would spend a busy day in Pakistan to further advance the bilateral cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Their stay in Islamabad included bilateral meetings and a warm reception, the minister said while talking to the media along with Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman of Capital Development Authority Muhammad Ali Randhawa after reviewing the arrangements.

Tarar said the whole route from airport has been decorated with Pakistani and Iranian flags while portraits of Pakistani and Iranian leadership are displayed across the city creating an environment of festivity in Islamabad to welcome the Iranian President.

"This is a very crucial visit as the Iranian President is visiting on the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif," the minister said, adding their meeting took place in Azerbaijan that was further supplemented with a successful visit of the prime minister to Iran along with Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Previously, he said, multiple trade initiatives came under discussion during the former Iranian President martyred Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Pakistan. The minister said joint border markets and cooperation for advancing trade volume would be discussed in today's visit.

Iran's President lands in Islamabad, eyeing to boost ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian landed in Islamabad on Saturday for a two-day visit, eyeing to reaffirm his commitment to elevate annual bilateral trade with Pakistan. Pezeshkian is paying a two-day official visit to Pakistan over the weekend, making it his first trip to Islamabad in his current role, the Foreign Office said. Ahead of his trip, Pakistan yesterday pledged to help defuse tensions between Iran and the United States.

Dr Pezeshkian arrived at Nur Khan Air Base, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Information Minister Attaullah Tarar received him. PM Shehbaz said he was honoured to welcome the Iranian president and looked forward to "substantive engagements during this important visit that will pave the way forward for stronger Pakistan-Iran ties".

Dr Pezeshkian arrived earlier in Lahore, where PML-N President Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz received him. Tight security arrangements were in place to ensure the safety of him and his delegation throughout the visit.

According to Iran's state media IRNA, before departing for Pakistan, Pezeshkian emphasised the plan to elevate their annual trade exchanges to \$10 billion. The two countries had

Pezeshkian pays respects at mausoleum of Allama Iqbal

F.P. Report

LAHORE: President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Masoud Pezeshkian, visited the mausoleum of the Poet of the East and national philosopher, Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal, on Saturday to pay tribute to his legacy. He was accompanied by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, and Provincial Information Minister Azma Bokhari. During the solemn ceremony, President Pezeshkian laid a wreath at the grave and offered Fateha, led by Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee and Khateeb of Badshahi Masjid Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad. The Iranian president also penned heartfelt remarks in the visitors' book, expressing admiration for Allama Iqbal's visionary contributions to Islamic philosophy and the Pakistan Movement. Tight security arrangements were in place to ensure the safety of the distinguished guest and his delegation throughout the visit.

agreed in April last year to boost trade over the next five years. The president termed the trade relations between Tehran and Islamabad as "good" and identified boosting trade with Pakistan via land, air and sea as priorities for this trip, the report added.

"Through Pakistan, Iran can connect to the Silk Road linking China and Pakistan, and the route can then extend through Iran to Europe," he said. Emphasising that security and border issues were of great importance to both Iran and Pakistan, he stressed that regional security must be achieved through cooperation, according to IRNA.

Pezeshkian noted that the two neighbours have "enjoyed good, friendly, and deep-rooted relations" since

Pakistan's independence. "The two countries cooperate in economic, scientific, cultural, and border areas, and a deep bond exists between the people of both sides," he was quoted as saying.

According to IRNA, the president also noted that "the enemy plans to create division among Muslims, but Iran will thwart the enemies' plots", adding that Tehran aims to maintain unity and solidarity between Iran and Pakistan. Pezeshkian had left for Pakistan earlier on Saturday. He is accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, senior ministers and other high-ranking officials.



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Governor vows to uphold merit in educational institutions

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said on Saturday that eliminating the culture of recommendations and upholding merit in educational institutions remains his top priority.

He stated that ensuring a safe, transparent, and merit-based academic environment is essential, adding that the Chancellor's Office is working round the clock to support the development, reform, and positive transformation of higher education institutions across the province.

He expressed these views during a visit to Bahawalpur, where he inaugurated the newly constructed Arfa Karim Academic Block at the Government Sadiq College Women University, said a handout issued here on Saturday.

He also participated in the centennial celebrations of Islamia University Bahawalpur and chaired a

meeting of the Board of Governors of Sadiq Public School.

On the occasion, Governor Saleem Haider said the inauguration of the Arfa Karim Block was a moment of pride. He paid tribute to Arfa Karim's global recognition in the IT sector at a young age, noting that her achievements had brought honor to Pakistan and inspired a generation of youth to pursue excellence in science and technology. He underlined that the current era is defined by knowledge, innovation, and digital advancement, and expressed satisfaction over students' growing interest in academic research and constructive extracurricular activities. He described institutions like Sadiq Public School as a symbol of Pakistan's academic excellence and emphasized the important role that educational institutions in

South Punjab are playing in the socio-economic development of the country.

The Governor reiterated his zero-tolerance policy against harassment in women's universities, stating that any proven incident would lead to immediate dismissal and legal action. "I will not allow any harassment case to go unpunished. If any such complaint reaches me, strict action will be taken in accordance with the law," he asserted. He further stressed that drug use and unruly behavior will not be tolerated in academic settings, and that the administration is committed to maintaining discipline and safeguarding the educational environment.

The Governor said that his office remains accessible at all times to promote constructive reforms and support the growth of educational institutions across Punjab.

CM Murad celebrates 75 years of PFUJ's struggle for press freedom

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah addressed the distinguished gathering at the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists' (PFUJ) Platinum Jubilee celebration, honouring the organisation's 75 years of unwavering commitment to press freedom.

In his speech, he reaffirmed the historical significance of journalist unions in Pakistan, tracing their roots back to the establishment of the Sindh Union of Journalists in 1948 and underscoring the pivotal role they have played in advocating for the rights of journalists throughout the nation's tumultuous political history.

During his address, CM Shah praised the contributions of the late former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who bravely stood against authoritarianism, and acknowledged the sacrifices made by journalists in the face of oppression. He highlighted the struggles faced by media professionals in contemporary times, including economic hardships and delayed salaries, urging for immediate reforms to protect jour-



nalists' rights and enhance their working conditions.

Mr Shah noted, "Today's journalist faces a severe economic and professional crisis. Media organisations are under immense financial pressure, and many journalists go months without their salaries. When a journalist struggles to provide for their family, how can they raise their voice against injustice?"

The CM also paid tribute to the late Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who was a steadfast advocate for press freedom. He recalled how she took concrete steps to address journalists' housing issues and led protests for media rights, reinforcing the

PPP's commitment to supporting journalists at all costs. He stated, "Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was the first national leader to take the journalists' housing problems seriously and acted decisively to find solutions. Her legacy is a testament to the importance of a free press in a democratic society."

Additionally, the chief minister highlighted the current efforts of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who continues to advocate for media rights and the welfare of journalists. "Under Chairman Bilawal's leadership, we are committed to taking practical measures that prioritise the well-being of journalists and ensure the

financial independence of media houses," he said. "A strong, independent, and free press is crucial for a robust, sovereign, and democratic Pakistan."

Murad Shah committed the Sindh government to collaborate with PFUJ and other media organisations to implement sustainable initiatives that ensure journalists' welfare and strengthen the independence of media houses. He stated, "If we want journalism to uphold democracy, we must prioritise the economic independence and professional dignity of journalists."

In his speech, Mr Shah recalled the historic struggles against censorship, emphasising the resilience

shown by journalists during various regimes, particularly during the martial law of General Zia-ul-Haq and the state actions against the Jang Group in 1998. He expressed the commitment of the Pakistan Peoples Party to stand alongside journalists in their fight for freedom of expression.

He concluded his address by celebrating the legacy of PFUJ and expressing hope for a future where the pursuit of truth remains at the forefront of journalism in Pakistan. "As we honour PFUJ's 75 years of exemplary struggle, it is time to reaffirm our responsibility towards a transparent and accountable media landscape. Our goal is to ensure that the search for truth becomes the central aim of journalism once again."

The event served as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to uphold democratic values and ensure that journalists can report the truth without fear. The CM extended heartfelt congratulations to PFUJ leaders, workers, and the countless brave journalists who have upheld the banner of truth through their relentless struggle.



LAHORE: View of business activities seen closed while markets gives desert look due to security reasons on the arrival of Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, at Hall road in Lahore on Saturday. —PPI Photo

Punjab aims to become hub of healthcare innovation

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique on Saturday said that the provincial government is committed to transforming Punjab into a hub of healthcare innovation through smart hospitals, telemedicine, artificial intelligence, and evidence-based clinical practices.

He made these remarks while addressing the National Research and Innovation Conference 2025 held at King Edward Medical University (KEMU) as the chief guest. Highlighting the government's priorities under the leadership

of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the minister said that historic healthcare initiatives have been launched, including the Chief Minister's Children's Heart Surgery Program, Dialysis Program, Transplant Program, Clinic on Wheels, and Field Hospitals. He also noted the establishment of cutting-edge institutions such as the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research, Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Lahore, and Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Sargodha. "We are integrating AI education into undergraduate medical curric-

ula, launching health data management programs, and building AI and research labs in medical colleges," he added.

Vice Chancellor of KEMU Professor Mahmood Ayaz thanked the minister for his presence and emphasized the university's commitment to serving humanity and enhancing global academic rankings. Vice Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Medical University, Professor Khalid Masood Gondal, lauded the contribution of Punjab's medical graduates to global healthcare and praised the organization of the conference.

Over 1.6 mln children forced into labour in Sindh: Survey reveals

KARACHI (APP): The first comprehensive child labour survey conducted in Sindh after 28 years, has uncovered alarming data which revealed that over 1.6 million children aged 5 to 17 are currently engaged in various forms of labour across the province, many in dangerous and exploitative environments.

According to official statement, Sindh Child Labour Survey 2022-24 conducted by Sindh Labour Department with technical assistance from UNICEF and the Bureau of Statistics, stated that 50.4 percent of working children between ages 10 and 17 are exposed to hazardous conditions including excessive working hours, extreme weather, and unsafe tools and machinery.

Director General Labour Sindh Muhammad Ali Shah, who led the project stated that the report has been submitted to the provincial government for action. He noted a significant decline in child labour compared to the 1996 national baseline — nearly 50 percent lower — but emphasized that the numbers are still deeply concerning.

As per the findings, school attendance among working children is just 40.6 percent, in contrast to 70.5 percent among non-working children. Educational participation drops significantly with age, particularly among girls aged 14 to 17, who also shoulder the bulk of household chores — averaging 13.9 hours of unpaid domestic work per week. This, the report says, contributes heavily to school dropout rates.

District-level data shows wide disparities. Qambar Shahdadkot tops the list with a child labour prevalence of 30.8 percent, followed by Tharparkar at 29 percent, Tando Muhammad Khan at 20.3 percent, and Shikarpur at 20.2 percent. Karachi has the lowest rate, at just 2.38 percent.

The report also draws a strong correlation between poverty and child labour. In the poorest households, 33.7 percent reported having at least one child engaged in work. Mental health is another area of concern — 20.1 percent of children in labour reported symptoms of depression, nearly twice the rate among their non-working peers.

814,000 citizens avail driving license services in July

LAHORE (DNA): As many as 814,000 citizens across Punjab availed driving licence services in July, reflecting a significant surge in public engagement following the provincial government's expansion of licensing facilities.

According to traffic police sources, over 268,000 individuals obtained learner's licences, more than 264,000 were issued fresh driving licences, and approximately 271,000 citizens renewed their learner and regular licences during the month.

This progress comes under the directive of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, who instructed a province-wide enhancement of driving licence facilities. As a result, the month of July recorded a 20 per cent increase in licence issuance compared to June, as per data provided by DIG Traffic Muhammad Waqas Nazir.

Additionally, more than 6,100 international driving permits were issued during the month. Authorities highlighted the role of the Driving Licence

Information Management System (DLIMS) — developed by the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) — which has streamlined the process of applying for, managing, and tracking licences. Citizens can now access services online or through Police Khidmat Markaz (PKM) centres established across the province.

The initiative is part of the government's broader commitment to improving public service delivery and promoting road safety through streamlined licensing.

NCRC releases key reports on Children's rights in Pakistan



F.P. Report

LAHORE: The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) launched two publications: the "State of Children in Pakistan 2024" and the "Situation Analysis of Children from Minority Religions in Pakistan." The launch event brought together provincial government representatives, human rights defenders, academics, police officials, civil society leaders, and development partners to collectively examine the systemic challenges facing children in Pakistan, especially those from religious minority backgrounds.

Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC welcomed the participants and emphasized the Commission's mandate to serve as an independent watchdog focused on protecting and promoting rights

of children across Pakistan. She said "Both these reports being launched today are aligned with our mandate—to generate evidence, identify policy gaps, and guide duty-bearers toward systemic and sustainable solutions. While there has been measurable progress—such as improved birth registration and legal reform in certain provinces—millions of children in Pakistan still fall through the cracks due to fragmented efforts, lack of coordination, and limited political will.

The Commission is working closely with governments to harmonize child protection laws, raise the age of marriage to 18, ensure inclusive education, and strengthen systems that safeguard all children—especially those from minority communities. But we cannot do this alone. I urge every stakeholder—

policymakers, educators, law enforcers, civil society, and faith leaders—to move beyond silos and act in unison. Every child, regardless of religion or background, deserves dignity, safety, and a fair chance at life."

Dr. Mehek Naeem, Member Punjab-NCRC presented the key findings of the State of Children in Pakistan 2024 report. The report provides a comprehensive review of the status of children's rights in the country. It highlights critical issues such as child labor, child marriage, education gaps, juvenile justice, and violence against children. With a province-wise breakdown of indicators and policy analysis, the report serves as a vital resource for legislators, child protection institutions, and rights-based organizations.

Sindh govt reaffirms commitment to press freedom and welfare

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A grand luncheon was hosted by Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, in honor of the office bearers of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists at a local hotel in Karachi.

The event was attended by Sharjeel Inam Memon, Provincial Minister Saeed Ghani, Sindh Government Spokespersons Samata Afzal Syed, Ganhwar Khan Isran, Saadia Javed, Buland Khan Junejo, Aqraba Fatima, Sukhdev Asardas Himmani, Nader Nabil Gabol, Tahseen Abidi, and Mustafa Baloch. Senior office bearers of the Union



of Journalists from Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Sindh were also present at the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Sindh government's policy is founded on the principles of protecting journalists, ensuring their welfare, and upholding freedom of expression. He emphasized that all hos-

pitals in Sindh provide free treatment to Pakistani citizens, and even patients from countries such as Iran and Afghanistan come to Sindh for medical care.

He said that if a journalist is attacked, they receive immediate treatment at the province's top hospitals. He further added that We do not consider political differences. We are here to serve. Sharjeel Inam Memon, emphasizing that support for the media industry is a priority of his government, stated that they have always strived to maintain a media-friendly approach and promote the growth of the media sector.

He added that ensuring the full implementation of the minimum wage law in media houses is a top priority for the government.

He stated that Pakistan delivered a historic defeat to India, and celebrating this victory is a matter of honour. He added that travelling on a Pakistani passport is now a source of pride and confidence. Today, the global respect for our passport has increased, and the country is on the path to progress. He further mentioned that 93,000 jobs were provided in the Sindh Education Department through a fully transparent process. He highlighted that the world's largest housing project is currently underway in Sindh, where the PPP government is constructing 2.1 million homes.

At the ceremony, Provincial Minister for Labour and Local Bodies,

Saeed Ghani, stated that a democratic society can not exist without an independent judiciary and a free press. He emphasized that while the courts have full freedom to make decisions, that freedom must remain within the boundaries of the Constitution.

He noted that when institutions exceed their constitutional limits, it causes harm to the state. He also said that some individuals operate under the guise of media while serving other agendas, which negatively impacts the credibility of institutions. He said that the country may not have a perfect system but it is our responsibility to work toward improvement from within the existing framework.

In his address, Special Assistant Raza Haroon emphasized that accuracy and responsibility are essential in news reporting. He said that Bilawal Bhutto achieved significant diplomatic successes for Pakistan, while President Asif Ali Zardari advanced reconciliation politics in the country by promoting the slogan 'Pakistan Khappay'. Raza Haroon said that some uninformed elements in the parliament are unfortunately supporting an anti-Pakistan narrative. They claim that peaceful protest is a democratic right of every citizen, but it is important to identify which groups are inciting chaos. They also stated that journalism is a pillar of democracy and must not be allowed to weaken.



PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

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SCCI and TDAP set up Business Facilitation Desk

— to enhance export from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) has established a Business Facilitation Desk at the chamber.

The initiative aimed to facilitate the business community, especially exporters, to boost the country's exports through the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region.

The desk was inaugurated by the SCCI president Fazal Moqem Khan along with Director TDAP Nauman Bashir during a ceremony here on Saturday.

Officials from TDAP posted permanently at the Business Facilitation Desk for guidance of traders and exporters. On the occasion, the SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice

president Shehryar Khan, officials of TDAP, Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan and officers were present.

Speaking on the occasion, SCCI president Fazal Moqem said the initiative would play a pivotal role in provision of a better facility to the business community, particularly exporters but it would also assist in enhancing the country's exports with neighbouring and Central Asian Republic.

Moqem urged traders and exporters to take full advantage of this initiative and play their role in enhancing the country's exports.

The chamber president emphasized it is highly crucial to improve the country's exports to revive and strengthen the national economy.

Moqem Khan said

Pakistan's exports showed tremendous improvement owing to strategic planning and prudent policies of the incumbent government.

He, however, said the current export figure of Pakistani manufacturing products throughout the world doesn't reflect appropriately the true potentials that existed in the country.

In that case, he particularly mentioned that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has enormous potential to further strengthen the country's export and bilateral trade with neighbouring and central Asian republics.

SCCI is fully committed to selflessly serve and facilitate the business community, besides to support the government's initiatives toward enhancing the country's export and mutual trade, and today's initiative is testimony of this com-

mitment, says Moqem.

The chamber president lauded TDAP for setting up a special desk for facilitation of the business community.

Earlier, the TDAP senior official shed light on the trade body's commitment toward improving Pakistani products export, essentially upcoming events, trade exhibitions and others.

Director Nauman Bashir stressed the coordinated and collaborative efforts to improve the country's export.

The senior official assured that TDAP would provide every assistance and facilitation services to the business community, especially exporters and remove all forms of irritants and obstacles in the way of export to neighbouring countries as well as the rest of the world.



PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Masood presenting cash prize to a disabled student obtained high marks in Martic result.

Pakistan Air Force soaring the future wind



Izmi Heriani

Whenever our history has looked uncertain and our skies have been threatened to darken, Pakistan Air Force hasn't just braced for the storm, it has become the storm. In just four transformative years, PAF has reshaped its destiny, turning the tide of regional power with visionary reforms, fearless innovation and cutting-edge oper-

ational might. PAF's unprecedented progress in the past few years is no ordinary chapter in military evolution, it's a revolution in flight led from the front by Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. At a time when conventional thinking would have called for cautious upgrades, the Air Chief dared to dream bigger. He ignited a movement, a renaissance that turned Pakistan's air arm into a symbol of unmatched resolve, relentless precision and rising indigenous power. Under his command today Pakistan Air Force is not just defending airspace-it's Redefining it.

When ACM Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu took charge of PAF in 2021, the regional balance was tilting dangerously. Rivals were

flaunting 4.5+ generation fighters, cyber tools and space-based dominance. But rather than mirroring their playbook, the Air Chief tore it up and rewrote it. With a deep understanding of contemporary warfare's new frontiers, he launched an ambitious blueprint for Full Spectrum Multi-Domain Dominance. This wasn't just a military jargon, it was a rallying cry to unify air, space, cyber and electronic warfare into one lethal responsive force, knitting a Kill Web that resulted into a humiliating defeat to Indian aggressive designs. Experts believe that ACM Sidhu has pushed the envelope far beyond traditional air combat, bringing in real-time intelligence, networked ISR and agile electronic warfare capabilities into PAF's

operational framework at an unprecedented pace. The results? Monumental. PAF hasn't just leveled the playing field rather it has completely turned it in its favor.

On the fateful night of 06-07 May, when Pakistan's sovereignty was brazenly challenged, Pakistan Air Force didn't blink. What unfolded was more than retaliation, it was a masterclass in modern warfare. From satellites to radars, electronic jamming to precision strikes, PAF unleashed a perfectly synchronized ballet of technology, tactics and tenacity. The response was swift, stunning and surgical. A 7-0 clean sweep against Indian aggression sent shockwaves across the region, rewriting rules of deterrence and reasserting PAF's supremacy in the skies. It

was No drama, No grandstanding but just Mission Excellence.

While Pakistan's adversary invested in headline-making hardware and flashy narratives, PAF chose a different path, Doctrine over Drama. PAF's every sortie was backed by intelligence, it's every move rehearsed through simulation and it's pilots flew with real-time updates with unmatched situational awareness. This wasn't Combat; it was Choreography. This disciplined approach made all the difference. During the conflict PAF didn't just fly better platforms, it flew smarter missions. With satellite-linked targeting, cyber protection, smart use of UAVs & Killer Drones backed by electronic warfare dominance, Pakistan Air Force orchestrated the

air battle in a theater few even understood.

The J-10C's induction with its PL-15 BVR missiles wasn't just about keeping up with India's Rafales. It was about regaining the edge and doing it on PAF's terms. But the transformation wasn't confined to cockpits. The real leap came in connecting every domain: Air, Space, Cyber, Unmanned Force and Electronic Warfare. With a seamless kill chain, advanced data-sharing and AI-enabled decision support, PAF has proved to be an integrated force of the future today. Indigenous UAVs, electronic warfare platforms and network-centric operations have become the backbone of this modernization. It's a full-spectrum shift, not just in how PAF

fights but how it thinks.

If there's a cornerstone of this revolution, it's Self-reliance. In a world where technology can be withheld at will, PAF turned inward and upward. Air Chief Marshal Sidhu's push for indigenous innovation wasn't a luxury; it has turned out to be a lifeline. Enter National Aerospace Science and Technology Park, Pakistan's bold leap into the future and one will witness a convergence point for academia, industry and government. NASTP isn't just a lab for innovation; it's evolved into a launchpad for Strategic Autonomy. In pursuance to the vision of the Air Chief, with home-grown technologies, talent development and thousands of high-tech jobs in the pipeline, Pakistan is no longer a buyer; it's on its

way to becoming a builder and eventually an exporter of advanced defence solutions. The transformation of Pakistan Air Force under ACM Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu isn't just a military milestone-it's a national resurgence. Where once the future looked uncertain, today it looks unstoppable. From rearming the fleet to reshaping the doctrine, from building indigenous capacity to outclassing adversaries in real combat, PAF now stands as a fortress in the skies and a beacon of resilience on the ground. And above all, it soars as a symbol of Pakistan's ingenuity, strength and unshakable will. So when the world looks up and sees PAF flying, they're not just witnessing its aircraft in motion, they're witnessing a Nation in Ascension.

Shelling on PPP workers: AD&SJ issues notice to CM, police

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Asmatullah Wazir has issued notices to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, and police authorities, seeking their response to a petition filed by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha. The petition requests the registration of a case against CM Ali Amin Gandapur for alleged police brutality during a peaceful protest by PPP workers in Peshawar.

The counsel Gohar Rahman advocate argued that plainclothes personnel, allegedly affiliated with Gandapur, used tear gas shells dur-

ing the protest, which resulted in injuries to several workers. The police denied involvement, but the PPP leadership discovered that Gandapur's associates were responsible. The petition claims that the tear gas shells used were expired, further exacerbating the harm caused to the protesters.

Despite filing a complaint with the police, no case was registered, prompting the PPP to approach the court. The court has now summoned Ali Amin Gandapur's response. The petitioner's advocate, Gohar Rahman Khattak, stressed that the PPP is seeking justice and accountability for the alleged actions of Gandapur and his associates.

KP-EZDMC and TDAP host training session on Amazon

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), through its Inclusive Business Development Park (IBDP) in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), hosted a training session, focused on "AMAZON" – the leading global online marketplace, said a press release issued on Saturday.

The session aimed to equip participants with practical knowledge on setting up Amazon seller accounts, managing product listings, handling sales processes, and exploring strategies to expand their businesses through e-commerce.

This initiative reflects KP-EZDMC's continued efforts to foster a business-enabling environment and provide growth-oriented opportunities for entrepreneurs and SMEs in the province.

Again, despite 'never again': The weaponization of hunger

Fiza Hussain

As you read this, nearly six children under five in Gaza are dying of acute malnutrition - victims of a man-made famine born of siege, deprivation, and relentless warfare. One in three people is going days without food. The healthcare system has collapsed. With the death toll surpassing 60,000, the UN warns the famine is entering its final, irreversible stage. Many patients are so malnourished their bodies can no longer absorb nutrients. Gaza has become a vast concentration camp, where people, especially young children, face death by starvation, disease, and trauma, with no escape in sight.

The deliberate blocking of aid and vital resources marks a clear shift from natural disaster to man-made catastrophe. Language matters. Terms like famine are often used by western corporate media

to obscure responsibility, dull public outrage, and rewrite the narrative. On 29 July, Israel allowed just 109 aid trucks into Gaza, that was reportedly looted. Air-dropped food amounted to a mere 10.5 grams per person, barely one truckload.

These token gestures are nowhere near what is needed. What Gaza requires is not token gestures but refeeding experts and long-term care. Starvation has long been a strategic weapon in war, targeting civilians under the guise of military necessity. Yet its classification as a war crime came shockingly late. It was a tactic once used by colonial powers like Britain and France, ironically, architects of modern international law. As a form of bio politics, starvation has proven more lethal than bombs, leaving behind broken societies, not just bodies. In Gaza, the occupying force, fully aware of the consequences,

is carrying out an invisible extermination. What has been constructed is a cost-effective death zone is framed politically as pressure on Hamas.

Beyond military strategy, such hunger campaigns reflect a deeper, criminal intent: to strip victims of their humanity. The aim is not just to kill, but to psychologically break a population: to erase dignity, blur identity, and leave survival as something animalistic. The trauma, shame, and erosion of social taboos create a collapse of the human spirit and will. The occupying force aware of the effects is strategically carrying out an invisible extermination. This crisis has moved beyond the framework of international law. It reflects a global failure of conscience. Silence itself has become complicity. Israel continues to justify its actions under the pretext of "self-defense" while committing war crimes with impunity.

It is fair to say that today's Israel insults the memory of Holocaust survivors. There is a bitter irony in seeing a nation born from genocide now stand accused of inflicting the same horrors against Palestinians. Never Again was meant to be a universal vow. Today, it sounds hollow. Was it truly for all, or only for some? The names have changed - Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Sobibor replaced by Rafah, Khan Younis and Nuseirat. The methods may differ, but the suffering is no less calculated. This is the quiet victory of cruelty - not just through bombs, but through slow erasure of empathy and memory. That is the sinister nature of terrorism: it hides in ideology, wears the mask of victimhood, and carries the mark of corrupt minds and failed morality. It increasingly feels as if Hitler's vision never died and simply changed form.

fizakhattak999@gmail.com

Bikers rally reaches City

PESHAWAR (APP): The Central Asia Friendship Bikers rally, en route to Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, was warmly welcomed in Peshawar after starting from Lahore.

The 23-day journey covers approximately 5,000 kilometers and includes 11 bikes and one support vehicle with 15 participants.

Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture & Tourism Authority Habibullah Arif, along with other officials, received the bikers and presented them with flowers.

Speaking at the ceremony, the DG said the rally promotes the historic Silk Route and strengthens tourism ties with Central Asian countries.

President of the Motorbike Association of Pakistan, Mukarram Tareen, said that the rally aims to promote tourism, culture, and archaeology, and to project a positive image of Pakistan.

The bikers will continue their journey via Bab-e-Khyber to the Torkham border and into Afghanistan.

15-day clean and green KP campaign launched

PESHAWAR (APP): A 15 days clean and green Khyber Pakhtunkhwa campaign was launched aimed at improving hygiene through mass mobilization.

Under the directives of the provincial government, the district administration of Peshawar launched the campaign. The campaign focuses on cleanliness operations, timely waste removal, improved drainage, and public awareness walks.

Under the supervision of DC Peshawar, Sarmad

Salim Akram, teams from the district administration, capital metropolitan government, town administration, civil defense, PDA, and other relevant departments are actively engaged in various areas. Special cleaning activities are being carried out in streets, markets, government offices, schools, and hospitals.

Additionally, to raise public awareness about cleanliness, awareness walks, mosque announcements, and social media cam-

paigns are ongoing to highlight the importance of cleanliness among citizens.

DC said the campaign is not just the government's responsibility but a collective duty of every citizen. "We must all work together to keep our city clean."

Citizens are urged to dispose of garbage in designated areas, avoid encroachments, and cooperate with sanitation staff so that Peshawar can become a healthier and more beautiful city.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan visiting Business Facilitation Desk at Chamber's House.

VC Islamia College assures action on ICS staff demands

— staff seeks promotions, payments in meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of cabinet members from the Islamia Collegiate School Teaching Staff Association, led by President Kafeel Ahmad Khalil, held an important meeting with the Vice Chancellor of Islamia College Peshawar, Professor Dr. Ahmad-ur-Rehman Saljoogi, at his office. The meeting aimed to discuss and address the pressing issues faced by the

teaching staff.

During the meeting, the delegation highlighted several key concerns, including the immediate promotion of eligible teachers, approval of the second shift policy, prompt disbursement of six months' pending salaries, timely payment to visiting faculty, inclusion of the school in renovation and development plans, provision of personal grade to deserving teachers, and specific

issues related to the Girls Section of Islamia Collegiate School.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Saljoogi listened to the concerns attentively and assured swift action. He issued instructions to Shabbir Ahmad, Principal Officer (Vice Chancellor's Secretariat), to resolve all legitimate matters concerning the faculty on a priority basis.

The Vice Chancellor also emphasized increasing the school's annual revenue and

aligning its development with modern educational needs. He further announced his intention to visit the school in the near future.

At the conclusion of the meeting, cabinet members Dr. Muhammad Shehzad (General Secretary), Khaleel-ur-Rehman, Alamgir Khan, Muhammad Jaleel, and Rashid Abbas expressed their gratitude to the Vice Chancellor for his cooperation and attention to the teachers' concerns.



In brief

Rally hails police sacrifices F.P. Report

TANK: A walk was organized from DPO Office to District Press Club Tank to observe Police Martyrs Day, where participants paid tribute to the sacrifices of police personnel. District Police Officer (DPO) Shabbir Hussain Shah, Assistant Commissioner Jamshid Alam Khan Marwat, and Assistant Commissioner Anwar Khan led the walk, which was attended by local elders, martyrs' families, and community members. On the occasion, DPO Shah and the Assistant Commissioners praised the sacrifices of police martyrs, emphasizing that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police has made unparalleled sacrifices in restoring peace and order. They assured that the sacrifices of the martyrs would not go in vain and their families would be supported. The speakers highlighted the high morale of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, stating that they would not be intimidated by challenging circumstances. They emphasized that anti-state and anti-society elements would never succeed in their objectives. The event underscored the appreciation and gratitude of the public and the police department for the ultimate sacrifices made by police personnel in maintaining law and order.

Youth foils car lifting attempt F.P. Report

BUNER: The Youth of Salarzai tribe and the police foiled an attempt of car lifting and arrested Muhammad Rizwan Arain and Kashif Husain hailing from Sakhar Sindh and recovered the car from them. Police have registered case against the arrested two out district alleged car lifters and alleged local accomplice namely Mueen from Bazargay Salarzai Buner district who is yet to be arrested. The complaint was lodged by car owner Sahibzada from Karay Tangay Jowar Salarzai Buner district on Friday. The car owner in his statement narrated he was offering prayer at Speen Masjid on main Jowar road when came out his silver colour Aqua car was missing. He informed police and Salarzai Youth via cell phone and also registered report at Jowar Police Station personally. Later on his car was identified by locals at Baba Seraray Hazrat Palaza Salarzai and stoned it by force. The Jowar Police rushed to the spot and further proceed.

Bus terminal inaugurated F.P. Report

WANA: A second bus stand has been officially inaugurated in Lower South Waziristan's Wana, promising enhanced transport facilities for the local population. The launch of the new terminal, Joint Waziristan Transport Bus Stand, has sparked widespread satisfaction among residents, who believe the initiative will ease travel difficulties and foster healthy competition in fares. The inauguration ceremony, held at Rustam Bazaar's General Bus Stand (Private), was attended by hundreds of people, including tribal elders, religious scholars, and community members from diverse backgrounds. The newly established terminal features separate waiting areas and restrooms for women, mosques, and accommodation and dining facilities for drivers. Local residents expressed optimism that the competition between the two bus stands would lead to improved services and lower fares for passengers.

Cermony held Islamia Varsity of Bahawalpur Punjab Governor award students with cash prizes



F.P. Report

BAHAWALPUR: Governor of the Punjab and Chancellor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. These celebrations have been organized at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur to mark the 100th anniversary and Marka e Haq and Independence Day. Governor of the Punjab attended a special ceremony at Ghulam Muhammad Ghotvi Hall at Abbasia Campus.

Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the historic building of Ghulam Muhammad Ghotvi Hall is an motivates us to celebrate a century of promotion of knowledge, hard work and dedication, vision and nation building. Jamia Islamia was established with the vision of the knowledge-loving rulers of Bahawalpur. The inclusion of the state in Pakistan by the Nawab of Bahawalpur is a favor to all of us the Pakistani nation.

In 1975, Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto granted Jamia Islamia the status of a fully chartered university, which is a masterpiece of Shaheed Quaid's love for his beloved land and of knowledge. The Governor of the Punjab said that Pakistan is a gift from Allah and its destination and position are very high. Recently, India showed arrogance. The entire nation united and defeated a five times larger and powerful country. The Governor of Punjab said that the current era is of knowledge economy, science and technology and digital development.

Our youth are facing challenges like environmental changes, rapidly growing population and food security, which the educated generation has to solve. Along with science and technology, we have to protect our great intellectual and cultural heritage. The teachings of brotherhood and love of Khwaja Ghulam Farid are a beacon of light and hope for us. The Governor of Punjab appreciated the efforts for the improvement and development of the university under the leadership of Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamran.

He said that the Vice Chancellor is hard-working and has the best vision for the development of the university. In his speech on this occasion, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamran said that the presence of Chancellor and

Governor of Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the beginning of the centenary celebrations is an honor for the teachers, students, employees and alumni. Jamia Abbasia was established 100 years ago in 1925. In 1963, it was given the status of Jamia Islamia and then on March 4, 1975, it was called the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

Today, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, a university spreading over a vast area, is playing a prominent role in the social, economic and educational development of South Punjab and the dear homeland. The students of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur are doing outstanding work in every field. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur is among the top 1000 universities in the world in the Times Higher Education and QS rankings. Steps are being taken in the university for quality education so that teaching and research are of high quality and in line with national development.

The cooperation of government institutions in this regard is a welcoming sign. The Governor of Punjab awarded cash prizes to the students who performed the national anthem and song at the ceremony. On the occasion of his arrival, the Governor of Punjab hoisted the flag in connection with the Marka e Haq and independence month. He also inaugurated the Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi Centenary Gate, Faculty Hostel and Shopping Market. On this occasion, he also planted a sapling in the lawn of Abbasia Campus in connection with tree plantation drive.

The ceremony was attended by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar, Vice Chancellor, National Skills University Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum, Vice Chancellor, Government Sadiq College Women University Bahawalpur, Prof. Dr. Saeed Ahmed Buzdar, Vice Chancellor, Thal University Bhakkar, Prof. Dr. Mazhar Ayaz, Vice Chancellor, Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Bahawalpur, former Vice Chancellor, Rao Muhammad Afzal Khan, Director Information Bahawalpur Tariq Ismail, Sahibzada Asim Javed Abbasi, deans, teachers, government officers, industrialists, civil society and media representatives and students in large numbers.

LG&RDD launched cleanliness drive

F.P. Report

KARAK: Assistant Director Local Government and Rural Development Department Abdul Halim and the administrators of Karak Development Authority started a cleanliness campaign by sweeping and planting saplings. An awareness walk was also organized in this regard, in which the officials of the Local Government Department and the Authority participated holding banners in their hands.

Haji Fadaullah of Karak Development Authority and AD Local Government said that keeping Karak district clean is our top priority. On the instructions of the provincial government, a 14-day cleanliness campaign has been started in the entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, while the cleanliness campaign is in full swing in Karak district. Local Government Department. Karak Development Authority.

The officials of the Tehsil Municipal Committee are engaged in the cleanliness campaign with full dedication. He further said that the cleanliness campaign has started in 61 village councils and neighboring areas of Karak district. We will leave no stone unturned to provide facilities to the people of Karak district and keep Karak clean. In this regard, we also appeal to the people to fulfill their responsibilities, wash their hands in the provided bins and take care of cleanliness.

Police crackdown on drug peddlers continued: Police crackdown against drug peddlers. During July 2025, more than 450 kilograms of drugs were seized in anti-drug operations across the region, including 52.5 kilograms of ice, 354.7 kilograms of hashish, and 1.2 kilograms of heroin.

During this period, 116 cases of drug trafficking were registered and more than 350 suspects were arrested. Kohat district stood out in this regard where 41 kilograms of ice and 112 kilograms of hashish were seized. Significant operations were also carried out in Karak, Hangu, Kurram and Orakzai districts. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Kohat Abbas Majeed Khan Marwat has issued instructions to maintain a zero tolerance policy against drug peddlers and further intensify operations.

TMA in Dir launch cleanliness campaigns

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs) of Timergara and Samarbagh have launched special cleanliness drives in their respective areas to improve sanitation and provide a healthier environment for residents ahead of Independence Day.

In Timergara, a 14-day cleanliness campaign was inaugurated on Saturday by Tehsil Municipal Officer (TMO) Kashif Rasheed, who also led an awareness walk accompanied by TMA staff and local officials, including Finance Officer Badshah Muhammad and Infrastructure Officer Muhammad Shafullah.

Speaking to the media, TMO Kashif Rasheed said the drive aims to clean streets, markets, public spaces, and residential areas, ensuring a cleaner and healthier city. He stressed the importance of proper waste disposal and urged residents to use designated garbage bins instead of throwing trash in streets and drains. He also called on the public to cooperate with sanitation workers and support the campaign.

Meanwhile, the Samarbagh TMA launched a parallel campaign focusing on all major and minor markets and intersections. The drive was formally launched from the TMA office, with an awareness walk led by TMO Amjad Raza and Tehsil Chairman Saeed Ahmad Bacha. A large number of sanitation workers, traders, and locals participated.

The TMO Amjad Raza distributed face masks, gloves, and plastic bags

among sanitation staff. He said the campaign is part of preparations to celebrate Independence Day in a clean and joyful atmosphere. He also deployed road-cleaning machinery and supervised waste collection and its transfer to designated dumping sites outside the town.

Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat resolves widow pension case in one month: The Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat (WMS), known as the "poor man's court" has demonstrated its effectiveness by resolving a six-year pension dispute in just one month, without any legal fee or lengthy litigation.

This was stated by Sanaullah Khan, Commissioner Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat (WMS) Malakand Division, while talking to this reporter during his visit to Dir here on Saturday. He said that one Ibrar Hussain Shah, a resident of Malakand and son of the late Fazal-e-Mabood (a former WAPDA employee), successfully pursued his family's long-delayed pension restoration through the WMS Malakand regional office.

"Fazal-e-Mabood retired in 2007 and passed away in August 2013, after which his pension was converted to a family pension," Sanaullah said, adding that in September 2019, Fazal Mabood's family was entitled to have its family pension restored as per prevailing rules. He said the family got Rs 31,220 per month, however, after restoration the pension increased only to Rs 34,406, just Rs 3,186 increase. "Despite the restoration, WAPDA con-

tinued to pay the lower amount, causing hardship to the family, which includes Ibrar's widowed mother, five younger siblings, his wife, and three children," he explained.

Ibrar, the sole breadwinner, made multiple attempts to get the matter resolved. He submitted various applications to the relevant department but received no response. After exhausting all other options, he filed a complaint on the WMS Online Portal on May 22, 2023.

Acting swiftly, the WMS summoned WAPDA Lahore to submit a reply. A hearing was held on May 30, and within days, WAPDA Lahore revised the pension and approved arrears. Fazal-e-Mabood's family pension was raised to Rs. 48,030 per month, and a lump sum of Rs. 1,179,163 in arrears was also paid to the family.

Sanaullah said that several other genuine cases in Malakand division were also resolved this way. He said that this particular case was a strong testament to the accessibility, affordability, and efficiency of the WMS mechanism, particularly in providing justice to underserved and vulnerable families. The Secretariat strictly follows timelines and delivers relief based on merit without any financial burden on complainants. He said that the general public often faced long court cases where they bounced around various offices with a large payment of sums to lawyers. He said the WMS was providing speedy justice to vulnerable citizens without any charges.

Plantation drive at Govt Centennial High School launched

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A tree plantation campaign was launched at Government Centennial Model High School, Alpuri, with the support of the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD). The campaign was formally inaugurated by Mr. Sajjad Akhtar Iqbal, Additional Director of Elementary & Secondary Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, by planting a sapling in the school premises.

The event was attended by District Education Officer Shangla, Muhammad

Aurangzeb, along with school staff, students, and local community members. In his address, Sajjad Akhtar Iqbal emphasized the spiritual and environmental significance of tree planting:

"Planting a tree is a form of perpetual charity (Sadaqah Jariyah). The Holy Qur'an and Hadiths emphasize the care of nature. Trees provide oxygen, reduce the impact of climate change, conserve water, and improve biodiversity. As Muslims and responsible citizens, it is our duty to plant and protect trees for a sustainable future."

Add Director E&ED vis-

its Govt. Centennial Model School: Additional Director Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sajjad Akhtar Iqbal, emphasized that education is the only tool through which economic and social transformation can be achieved in the country. Without education, neither economic stability nor progress is possible. He expressed these views while addressing the morning assembly on the first day of school after the summer vacation at Government Centennial Model High School Alpuri, District Shangla.

Saving the dying cultures

Malaika Fatima

CULTURAL Diversity of Pakistan: Pakistan is a culturally rich country where many ethnic groups live side by side, each with its own unique traditions, languages, and lifestyles. The major ethnic groups include Punjabis, Sindhis, Baloch, Pashtuns, Saraikis, and the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. Despite their differences, these communities contribute to a shared national identity. This diversity is reflected in the variety of languages spoken, regional cuisines, traditional clothing styles, and local music and dance forms. Together, they form a beautiful mosaic that defines Pakistan's cultural soul.

Punjab: Punjabi is the primary language spoken in Punjab, a region known for its energetic and colorful culture. People in Punjab are famous for their warm hospitality and vibrant celebrations. Traditional dishes such as makki di roti and saag, often accompanied by a glass of creamy lassi, are household favorites. Men typically wear dhotis and turbans, while women wear brightly colored shalwar kameez. The traditional dances, Bhangra and Giddha, are joyful expressions of local life, performed to the beat of the dhol. Punjabi culture is deeply rooted in community, generosity, and family values.

Sindh: Sindh culture is one of the oldest in the region, closely tied to Sufism and spirituality. The Sindh language is widely spoken here. Famous dishes include Sindh biryani, sai bhaji (a vegetable curry), and koki (a flatbread). Cultural symbols such as the Ajrak and Sindh topi are worn with pride during festivals and special events. Music and folk dances like the popular Ho Jamalo are an important part of social gatherings. Sindh people are known for their artistic expression, spiritual traditions, and strong sense of heritage.

Pashtun: In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and parts of Balochistan, Pashtuns follow a unique cultural code called

Pashtunwali, which emphasizes honor, hospitality, and courage. Pashto is the dominant language. Their cuisine includes rich, flavorful dishes like chapli kebab and Kabuli pulao. Men often wear Peshawari chappals and woolen caps, while women dress modestly in traditional clothing. The Attan, a traditional dance performed in circles to drum beats, is a proud symbol of Pashtun culture. Pashtuns are deeply respected for their values, resilience, and welcoming nature.

Balochi: Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province by area, is home to the Balochi-speaking people. Their culture is tribal and centered around strong family and social bonds. The food here is distinct, with dishes like saji—a whole lamb or chicken slow-roasted over an open fire—being particularly popular. Traditional dress includes loose-fitting clothes for comfort in the desert climate and ornately embroidered garments for women. Balochi music is slow and soulful, often featuring instruments like the soroz. The people place a high value on tribal honor, respect for elders, and a strong sense of identity.

Saraiki: The Saraiki-speaking population is mostly found in southern Punjab. The language has a lyrical quality and is deeply associated with poetry and spirituality. Sohan halwa, local lentil dishes, and regional breads are key parts of their cuisine. Clothing often features rich embroidery and mirror work. Cultural pride is expressed through Jhumar, a graceful and slow-paced folk dance, along with heartfelt music. The Saraiki community is known for its gentle manners, hospitality, and deep connection to Sufi traditions.

Gilgit-Baltistan & Kashmiri Culture: In the northern highlands of Pakistan, people speak a variety of languages including Shina, Balti, and Kashmiri. The climate influences their cuisine, which includes nourishing foods such as harissa, wheat-based dishes, and preserved fruits.

Clothing is typically warm and made from wool-regional caps and coats are common. These regions celebrate traditional festivals like Navroz with dance and music that reflect the peaceful and nature-connected way of life. Simplicity, community, and a deep respect for nature are hallmarks of their culture.

Threats Faced by Cultural Diversity of Pakistan: Despite its richness, Pakistan's cultural diversity faces many challenges. As cities grow and modern lifestyles spread, traditional ways are often left behind. More than 37% of Pakistanis live in urban areas, where traditional clothing, food, and customs are being replaced by more modern habits. With around 9 million Pakistanis living abroad, many adopt foreign cultures and may lose connection with their roots.

Smaller languages like Balochi, Shina, and Brahui are under threat because they are not widely taught or used in media. Urdu and English dominate education and communication. The media often focuses on mainstream urban culture, ignoring the diverse traditions of rural and minority communities. Discrimination based on language, ethnicity, or religion also discourages people from expressing their cultural identity openly. As younger generations grow up watching foreign content and trends, they risk forgetting their own rich heritage.

Preserving the Cultural Diversity of Pakistan: Pakistan's diverse heritage is something to be proud of, but it needs active efforts to protect it. Many traditional languages, crafts, and customs are slowly fading. Media and education mostly highlight urban lifestyles, giving little space to local cultures. We must take serious steps now to preserve this richness for future generations. By promoting cultural awareness, supporting regional expressions, and creating inclusive spaces for every ethnic group, we can ensure that Pakistan's diversity remains alive and thriving.

Promoting Regional

Languages: Language is at the heart of any culture. Pakistan is home to over 70 languages, but many are rarely taught or given recognition in schools. Languages like Brahui, Shina, and Balti are endangered because they are not used in education or media. To protect these, the government should include regional languages as part of school curricula and produce books, poems, and digital media in these languages. Promoting regional newspapers, TV shows, and radio stations can also help youth feel more connected to their roots and proud of their linguistic identity.

Celebrating Cultural Festivals and Traditions: Cultural festivals offer a powerful way to experience and celebrate heritage. Events like Basant in Punjab, Sindh Ajrak Day, Chilam Joshi in Kalash, and Sufi Urs attract people from different backgrounds and help preserve traditional practices. Schools and universities should organize regular cultural days where students can learn about and participate in the customs of various regions. Wearing traditional clothes, cooking regional dishes, and performing local dances foster appreciation and respect among communities.

Supporting Traditional Arts, Crafts, and Music: Handicrafts and folk art are part of Pakistan's living heritage. From Balochi embroidery and Multani pottery to Peshawari chappals and Sindh quilts (rilli), each region offers unique craftsmanship passed down through generations. Sadly, many artisans lack support and face economic hardship. Government programs, NGOs, and private initiatives can help by providing training, funding, and market access. Cultural fairs and online platforms can also support artists. Similarly, folk music and traditional instruments like the rubab, sarangi, and alghoza should be promoted through festivals and media coverage.

Cultural Education and Representation in Media: Education plays a major role in

developing respect for cultural differences. Schools should teach students about the traditions, values, and histories of all regions of Pakistan. Lessons about diversity can help promote tolerance, understanding, and unity. The media should also reflect this diversity by giving equal representation to all cultures, not just urban or mainstream ones. Documentaries, regional music shows, dramas, and interviews can bring lesser-known cultures into the spotlight and keep traditions alive.

Promoting Respect, Tolerance, and Unity: Cultural preservation also means creating a society where everyone feels safe to express their heritage. Discrimination and prejudice should be replaced with respect and acceptance. Pakistan's diversity should be celebrated as a strength that unites rather than divides. Teaching cultural respect in schools, at home, and in workplaces can help bridge gaps and build trust. When people appreciate each other's traditions, it leads to a more peaceful and united society.

Cultural Diversity: The Soul of Pakistan: From the dhol beats of Punjab to the serene valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan's cultural diversity is what makes it truly special. Each region contributes something beautiful to the nation's identity. If respected and preserved, these traditions can continue to strengthen the bonds between different communities. Celebrating diversity means giving space to every voice, tradition, and language within the country.

Bringing People Together Through Respect and Celebration: Festivals, food, language, and music are powerful ways to connect people. Celebrating events like Chilam Joshi, Urs, and Ajrak Day encourages pride in cultural roots and brings communities closer. Supporting local languages in schools and media also ensures that no group feels left out or forgotten.

Role of Media, Youth, and Education: With social media



and modern platforms, today's youth can play a key role in preserving culture. They can share traditional music, crafts, clothing, and cuisine online, helping others learn and appreciate the richness of Pakistan. Schools should promote cultural clubs and exchange programs. Education that highlights every group's contributions to the country helps build mutual respect.

A Path to Unity Through Diversity: Pakistan's diversity can also boost tourism and the economy. People from around the world are drawn to its warm hospitality and colorful traditions. Most importantly, celebrating differences creates national unity. When every Pakistani, regardless of background, feels valued, the entire nation becomes stronger and more united.

Conclusion: Pakistan is blessed with a rich cultural heritage shaped by many ethnic communities. From language to festivals, from clothing to food, every tradition adds to the beauty of the nation. However, modernization, lack of awareness, and limited media representation are causing many traditions to fade. To protect this treasure, we need to promote regional languages, support artists and festivals, and encourage youth participation through education and social media. When people celebrate and respect each other's cultures, it strengthens peace and national unity. Preserving our cultural diversity means protecting the very soul of Pakistan for future generations.



ISTANBUL: A woman looks at a piece of melting ice on the Cilo glacier, Turkey.

Border clash between Ugandan, South Sudanese troops kills four

KAMPALA: At least four members of the South Sudanese security forces have been killed in fighting with the Ugandan army near the countries' shared border, according to local officials, as tensions flare over disputed border demarcations.

Three South Sudanese soldiers were shot dead by Ugandan forces who retaliated after one of their soldiers was killed, Major General Felix Kulayigye, spokesperson for the Ugandan military, said. But Wani Jackson Mule, a local official in South Sudan's Central Equatoria state, said he received the bodies of five soldiers.

Uganda has a history of involvement in South Sudan and has long provided military support to President Salva Kiir, including a deployment of special forces since March. A spokesman for South Sudan's military, Major General Lul Ruai Koang, said that military leaders from South Sudan and Uganda have agreed to an immediate ceasefire to enable an investigation of the latest border clash.

A statement from local authorities

quoted local South Sudan army commander Henry Buri as saying the Ugandan forces "were heavily armed with tanks and artilleries" and targeted 19 "joint operation" forces. There was no comment from the Ugandan government. An earlier statement by local county officials said there had been "loss of lives and injuries from both sides". It was not clear what triggered the fighting that South Sudan says occurred in Central Equatoria. The clashes reportedly occurred in a remote part of northwestern Uganda known as West Nile when South Sudanese soldiers crossed into Ugandan territory, set up camp and refused to leave, according to Kulayigye. "We had to apply force." But there are opposing narratives. Mule described the firefight as a "surprise attack" by Ugandan forces in territory South Sudan considers to lie within its land. Sections of the Uganda-South Sudan border have been contested for years. Leaders from the two countries have set up a joint border demarcation committee whose work is ongoing, Kulayigye said. Officials from both countries have

previously said they expect to reach a firm decision in 2027. Although there have been sporadic border clashes over the years, an exchange of fire between the military allies is rare. Uganda sent troops to support Kiir when civil war broke out in South Sudan in 2013, two years after it gained independence from Sudan.

The civil war between Kiir and his longtime rival Riek Machar lasted five years and killed about 400,000 people before a power-sharing agreement was reached in 2018. Uganda again deployed special forces in March this year as Kiir moved once again against Machar, eventually placing him under house arrest and stoking fears of a renewed civil war. That has all but buried the power-sharing deal and triggered conflict between the army and members of a militia from Machar's Nuer ethnic community. The Ugandan army has been accused of using chemical weapons, namely barrel bombs containing a flammable liquid that has killed civilians, against Nuer militias in South Sudan's northeast - accusations Uganda has denied.

Ukraine arrests air force officer for spying

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine's domestic security agency has detained an air force officer on charges of having spied for Russia by leaking the location of prized F-16 and Mirage 2000 fighter jets, officials said. The unidentified officer, a flight instructor holding the rank of major, stands accused of helping Russia carry out air strikes by providing coordinates and suggesting strike tactics, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said in a statement.

"In particular, the enemy's priority targets were airfields where F-16s, Mirage 2000s and Su-24s were based," it said. F-16s are US-made and Mirages are French while the Su-24 is an older, Soviet-manufactured jet bomber. "The agent collected the coordinates of the location of these aircraft, schedules and ...the order of their departure." The SBU said the suspect had also passed data on Ukrainian air force personnel and combat tactics to Russian military intelligence. Moscow regularly targets airfields and military bases across Ukraine, especially areas it believes are home to Western-provided weapons like the F-16 or Mirage jets.

The two aircraft have been critical to bolstering Ukraine's defences against mounting Russian air strikes and grinding battlefield advances in Moscow's three-and-a-half-year-old, full-scale invasion. This month, the SBU detained two Chinese nationals on suspicion of spying on Ukraine's Neptune anti-ship missile programme, a key part of Kyiv's growing domestic arms industry.

Thousands of Catholics head to Vatican City

VATICAN CITY (AFP): Pope Leo XIV made a surprise appearance in a crowd of 120,000 young Catholics who gathered in Rome for the Vatican's Jubilee of Youth -- an event that takes place every 25 years. The week-long event is taking place just over two months after Leo XIV became the head of the Catholic Church and the first American pope.

Groups of pilgrims -- chanting and draped in flags of their countries -- have flooded the streets of Italy's capital and the corners of the Vatican City. The Vatican had last week said it expected some half a million people from more than 150 countries to take part, with this year's events dedicated to faith and culture. Some 120,000 people attended the opening mass at St Peter's Basilica, according to the Vatican, where the Pope said he had a special welcome for people from regions affected by war, naming Ukraine and Palestine. Afterwards, he made a surprise appearance in the crowd aboard his "Popemobile". The week will culminate with a giant mass led by Pope Leo. The Jubilee of Youth is aimed at people aged between 18 and 35.

Pilgrims told AFP the subjects they most wanted to discuss at the events were wars, climate change, social inequalities and the dangers linked to AI. "The most important topic for me is war. Everyone is talking about it, thinking about it, and we want to know what the pope thinks about it and what he expects from us," said 25-year-old Tiago Santos from Portugal.

The event is taking place after almost two years of Israeli bombardment of Gaza, which has left tens of thousands of Palestinians dead and UN groups warning of starvation in the blockaded territory. Thousands have also been killed in Ukraine since Russia's 2022 invasion, with Moscow continuing deadly attacks despite Western pressure to end its campaign. Teophanie Nasta, a 26-year-old from Lebanon travelling overseas for the first time, said that despite the conflicts in the Middle East she was filled with "faith in humanity by seeing so many young people" gathered for the church. In an unprecedented move, the Vatican dedicated a series of events to Catholic influencers -- a sign of growing importance of social media for the church.

Protests held in Yemen against power outages

SANAA (AFP): Protests in eastern Yemen intensified for a third consecutive day as residents demonstrated against long power outages during scorching heat.

Hundreds of protesters in Mukalla, the capital city of Hadramout province, set up tents in the streets, blocked roads and chanted against the internationally recognized government based in Aden as they demanded the return of electricity, eyewitness Salem bin Mubarak told The Associated Press. The protests erupted in response to electricity blackouts that now last over 19 hours a day. The repeated outages this summer are due to fuel shortages, according to electricity officials with Aden's electricity institution, whose names were withheld because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

At the peak of the demonstrations, protesters set up fire to tires and blocked the coastal city's port, security official Ahmed al-Dahdouh said. Protesters also besieged the building of the Public Corporation of Electricity in Hadramout Coast. The fuel shortages have been caused by a lack of diesel and petroleum imports, corruption and budget deficits. The blackouts interrupt water supplies and increase fuel prices, according to a report issued by SARI Global, a center providing geopolitical and security

analysis for NGOs and companies.

"Though economic decline and service interruptions are familiar realities in southern Yemen, the sheer scale of Mukalla's electricity crisis and the rapid spread of unrest mark a dangerous tipping point," the report said, warning of further instability. SARI Global said fuel shortages also are attributed to disrupted fuel transport routes to Muakalla and closed power plants, while fuel supplier PetroMasila has delivered fuel quantities on a weekly basis instead of daily. Hadramout's population has long suffered from the lack of daily life necessities, including electricity, water, proper education and health care, as well as local currency deterioration, Hadramout Tribes Confederacy, an association representing the province's tribes, said in a statement.

"These are the main reasons for what is currently happening in the capital, Mukalla, and some of the districts, which is the result of accumulations that Hadhramaut is still suffering from," the statement said, citing internal corruption as part of the problem. Some regions in Yemen have experienced water insecurity in addition to power outages, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council. The organization said in a statement that low

seasonal rainfall has worsened an already dire situation for Yemenis trying to access clean water in rural areas and cities, with rainfall expected to decline by 40%. Yemeni journalist Abduljabar Bajabeer, the general director of TV3ad channel, was arrested during the protests on unspecified charges and jailed in Mukalla, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, which called for his immediate release.

"Bajabeer's arrest is yet another example of the systematic campaign to silence journalists in Hadramout and the areas controlled by Yemen's Internationally Recognized Government (IRG)," CPJ Program Director Carlos Martinez de la Serna said in a statement. Yemen's ruinous civil war began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa and much of northern Yemen, forcing the internationally recognized government into exile. A coalition led by Saudi Arabia and including the United Arab Emirates intervened the following year in an attempt to restore the government. The UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council controls much of the south, which has been fractured by the civil war. The council advocates for the south's secession and has its own militia forces allied to the internationally recognized government fighting the Houthis.

Thai family mourns soldier son killed just before truce

BANGKOK (AFP): The clock was pointing towards peace when Private First Class Theerayuth Krajangthong was cut down on the Thai frontier -- among the last casualties before a midnight ceasefire with Cambodia. His funeral rites began as Buddhist monks blessed his body with sacred chants, his remains in a shimmering silver coffin draped with Thailand's ensign and flanked by his neatly folded uniform.

"He was brave -- brave until the very last moment of his life," said his sister, 26-year-old Hormchan Krajangthong, her voice breaking with emotion. "He gave his blood and body for our king and country," she told AFP in the village of Nong Yang Pong Sadao, just 27 kilometres (17 miles) from the border with Cambodia. Five days of clashes over ancient temples on the frontier killed at least 43 people on both sides, sending more than 300,000 fleeing as the countries battled with jets, artillery and ground troops. A truce deal took effect and has broadly held despite scattered skirmishes. But it was not soon enough to save 22-year-old Theerayuth. He was killed by a shrapnel blast in Sisaket province -- after the truce was agreed, but before it began -- in one of the final artillery exchanges of the conflict.

Theerayuth joined the Thai military just last year and was assigned the role of ammunition bearer. "He wanted to be a soldier since he was little," said his 60-year-old father, Kimdaeng Krajangthong, his eyes red and glassy. "I'm both proud and heartbroken." When shelling began, his family fled their Buriram province home for an evacuation centre, but Theerayuth was called up to the front. As he boarded the military truck bound for the border, his mother Tin Krajangthong, 61, gave him a patch of her sarong to tuck in his uniform pocket -- a talisman to shield him from harm. His regular calls from the front line reassured them. Even when they stopped amid increasing strikes, his family did not worry -- assuming his silence was a safety precaution. "The last time we spoke, my brother told

me and our parents, 'Don't worry about me. I'm safe'," his sister Hormchan said.

The blow of grief only came after the guns fell silent. Hormchan received a call from an unknown number -- her brother's commanding officer. "He said my brother was gone," she told AFP. "I couldn't believe it." "Everyone at the evacuation centre was in shock." Now Theerayuth's mother stands beside his coffin -- gently knocking it in a Thai custom meant to call back a departed spirit one last time, or let a soul know loved ones are still near. Thailand and Cambodia will spend the coming days tallying losses from the fighting -- the deadliest to engulf their border in years. After two more days of funeral ceremonies, Theerayuth's body will be cremated according to Buddhist tradition, his family's own personal loss sealed. As the monks began their chants, his father clasped his hands. "I pray my son goes to heaven," he said. "And if there's another life, may he get to be our son again."

French govt prepares new law to return colonial-era art

PARIS (AFP): France's government discussed a bill designed to speed up the return of artworks looted during the colonial era to their countries of origin, officials said. If approved, the law would make it easier for the country to return cultural goods in France's national collection "originating from states that, due to illicit appropriation, were deprived of them" between 1815 and 1972, said the culture ministry.

It will cover works obtained through "theft, looting, transfer or donation obtained through coercion or violence, or from a person who was not entitled to dispose of them", the ministry added. The bill was presented during a cabinet meeting, a government spokeswoman told reporters. The Senate is due to discuss it September. Former colonial powers in

Europe have been slowly moving to send back some artworks obtained during their imperial conquests, but France is hindered by its current legislation.

The return of every item in the national collection must be voted on individually. Draft law is designed to simplify and streamline the process. France returned 26 formerly royal artefacts including a throne to Benin in 2021. They were part of the collection of the Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac museum in Paris, which holds the majority of the 90,000 African works estimated to be in French museums, according to an expert report commissioned by French President Emmanuel Macron in 2018. A "talking drum" that French colonial troops seized from the Ebrie tribe in 1916 was sent back to Ivory Coast earlier this year. In 2019, France's then

prime minister Edouard Philippe handed over a sword to the Senegalese president that was believed to have belonged to the 19th-century West African Islamic scholar and leader, Omar Tall. Other European states, including Germany and the Netherlands, have handed back a limited number of artefacts in recent years Britain faces multiple high-profile claims but has refused to return the Parthenon Marbles to Greece and the Kohinoor diamond to India, two of the best-known examples.

The French draft law is the third and final part of legislative efforts to speed up the removal and return of artworks held in France's national collection. Two other laws -- one to return property looted by the Nazis, and a second to return human remains -- were approved in 2023.

Poland says 32 people detained

WARSAW (AP): Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said authorities have detained 32 people suspected of coordinating with Russia to engage in acts of sabotage, according to Polish news agency PAP. One person has been con-

victed, while the others are in custody awaiting trial, PAP reported.

The group includes a Pole, Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, PAP reported, as well as a 27-year-old Colombian man who is accused of two

arson attacks in Poland last year at Russia's behest. The Polish Internal Security Agency in a statement said he faces up to 10 years to life in prison in connection with the arson attacks on two construction warehouses in May 2024.

Portugal, Spain fight wave of wildfires

EL ARENAL, Spain/AROUC, Portugal (Reuters): Thousands of firefighters struggled to put out a dozen wildfires raging in northern Portugal and central Spain, in the largest wave of blazes in the Iberian Peninsula so far this year after weeks of summer heat.

The largest wildfire has been burning in the wood-

ed, mountainous Arouca area - some 300 km (185 miles) north of Lisbon, leading to the closure of the scenic trails of Passadicos do Paiva, a popular tourist attraction. Some 800 firefighters and seven waterbombing aircraft tackled the blaze. "There was a huge effort during the night, so now we have a somewhat

calmer situation," Civil Protection Commander Helder Silva told reporters, cautioning that shifting strong winds and a difficult terrain meant their work was far from over. "It's a very large wildfire in areas with difficult access," he said. Further north, a blaze has been raging in the Peneda-Geres national park near the Spanish bor-

der, enveloping nearby villages in thick smoke that led to orders for residents to stay at home.

Portuguese firefighters managed to control two large fires that started in the central areas of Penamacor and Nisa. Authorities said the Penamacor blaze had destroyed 3,000 hectares (7,413 acres) of forest.

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Future path of Gulf-Iranian relations

SAUDI Arabia and the other Gulf Cooperation Council countries are pursuing a foreign policy that is focused on de-escalation across the Middle East, urging an end to current conflicts and preventing future ones. They believe that stability cannot be achieved through violence, but rather only through honest, direct dialogue and the establishment of lasting, solid political agreements. Each Gulf state upholds its sovereignty, distinct diplomatic stance and individual approach to regional affairs. Yet a strong sense of shared destiny unites them, reinforced by the recent conflict between Israel and Iran. This underscored the urgent need for the GCC to bolster its collective political engagement, security cooperation and economic integration.

The Iranian missile strikes against Al-Udeid air-base in Qatar in June were far from a fleeting military incident. They were a critical turning point that directly affects the region's security dynamics and raises a pressing question: Can Iran be trusted as a regional partner or will it continue to pose a persistent threat? The GCC states, led by Saudi Arabia, have long pursued an approach toward Tehran that is rooted in a policy of "positive balance," rather than confrontational alliances. The Kingdom's Vision 2030, an ambitious roadmap for national transformation, cannot achieve its full potential while wars and instability continue to plague the Middle East.

The Iranian strikes on Al-Udeid prompted a firm response from Saudi Arabia, which condemned the attack as "a blatant act of aggression against the state of Qatar," and "a clear violation of international law and the principles of good neighborliness - unacceptable and unjustifiable under any circumstances." Riyadh also reaffirmed its "full solidarity and unwavering support for Qatar," pledging to "mobilize all available resources to back any measures Qatar chooses to take in response." Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman spoke directly with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, reaffirming that "the Kingdom has fully mobilized its capabilities to stand by our brothers in Qatar, supporting all efforts to protect their security and preserve their sovereignty."

Saudi Arabia's firm stance in support of Qatar underscored a core Gulf principle: external threats are viewed as challenges to the collective security of all GCC member states, not just to one nation. This principle was clearly demonstrated during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, when all Arab Gulf states stood united against the regime of the late President Saddam Hussein, collaborating politically and militarily with the US and allied forces to achieve Kuwait's liberation. Regarding the targeting of Al-Udeid airbase, the Gulf's response, particularly from Saudi Arabia, was deliberate and composed, not driven by emotion. Riyadh chose not to break ties with Tehran or escalate tensions, but instead adopted a firm, cautious stance.

This approach reflects what can be described as "Saudi rationality," a strategic approach rooted not in reactive emotion, but in calculated, nationally driven interests. Deliberation, however, should not be mistaken for inaction. The Al-Udeid incident underscored the limits of trust that can be placed in Iran. The period following the strike will not mirror what came before, yet this shift does not imply a breakdown in relations. Rather, the Gulf perspective has grown more pragmatic: dialogue with Iran remains on the table, but its promises will no longer be taken at face value without a thorough assessment of its true intentions.

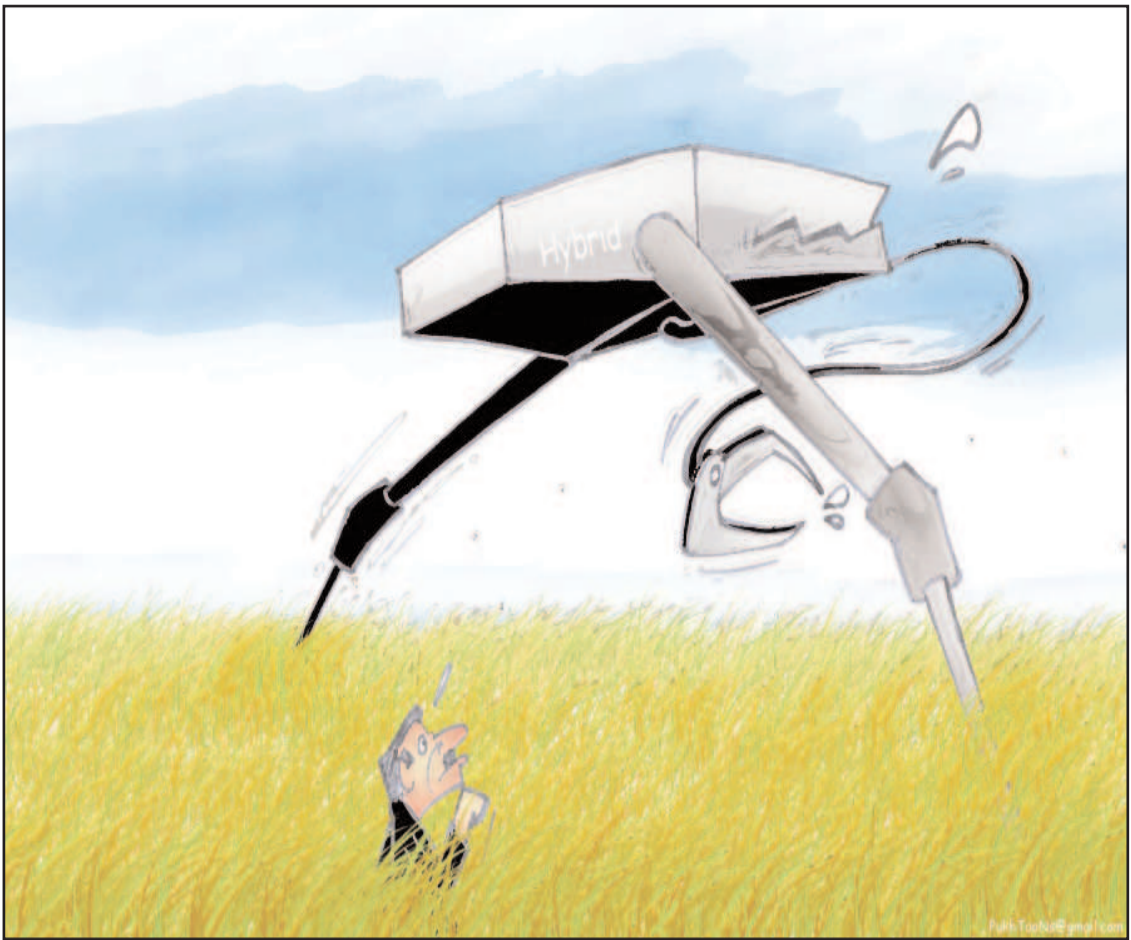
A key factor in de-escalating the situation was a phone call made by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Sheikh Tamim 48 hours after the attack. According to the Amiri Diwan, Pezeshkian conveyed his "regret to his highness the emir and to the brotherly Qatari people for the damage caused by the attack," clarifying that neither Qatar nor its people were the intended target. He emphasized that the strike did not constitute a threat to the state of Qatar, reaffirming that "Qatar will remain a neighboring, Muslim and sisterly nation." He also expressed his hope that "relations between the two countries would continue to be founded on mutual respect for sovereignty and the principles of good neighborliness."

This Iranian gesture helped sustain the cautious Gulf engagement with Tehran. On July 8, Saudi Arabia hosted Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and an accompanying delegation. During the visit, Araghchi met with the crown prince and held separate discussions with Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman and Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan. During their meeting, the crown prince expressed "Saudi Arabia's hope that the ceasefire agreement would lay the groundwork for greater security and stability across the region." He reaffirmed "the Kingdom's commitment to resolving conflicts through dialogue and diplomatic means." In turn, the Iranian foreign minister "thanked the Kingdom for its condemnation of Israeli aggression" and expressed his appreciation for "the crown prince's ongoing efforts to foster regional peace and stability."

The ongoing diplomatic engagement in the Gulf offers Iran a critical opportunity to rebuild trust, an essential pillar for fostering durable relations with its Arab neighbors. Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states remain focused on reinforcing regional stability and preventing a new confrontation between Tel Aviv and Tehran. For progress to be sustained, Iran must move beyond diplomatic rhetoric and demonstrate genuine, verifiable cooperation, first with Gulf capitals and then with the broader international community and UN institutions. If this approach succeeds, it could usher in a new era of positive balance, paving the way for meaningful economic, security and political collaboration. However, if tensions resurface or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its allied militias revert to hostile rhetoric and actions, the likely trajectory will be one of reinforced containment and strengthened joint defense among Gulf states, further isolating Tehran.

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What does Türkiye's acquisition of Eurofighter Typhoon signify?

ON July 23, during the 17th International Defense Industry Fair (IDEF 2025) in Istanbul, Turkish National Defense Minister Yasar Guler and UK Secretary of State for Defense John Healey signed a memorandum of understanding on Türkiye's procurement of Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jets.

This agreement marks a milestone in Türkiye's long-standing effort to secure an interim fighter solution. The need for such a stopgap measure emerged after Türkiye's removal from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program in 2019, aimed at preventing any loss of capability or deterrence until the National Combat Aircraft KAAAN enters service. In this context, efforts were initially focused on purchasing 40 F-16V aircraft from the US and upgrading 79 existing F-16s to the F-16V standard, though the package was later revised to cover only the acquisition of 40 new aircraft. At the same time, the Ozgur project - designed to equip Türkiye's current F-16 fleet with next-generation, indigenous mission systems - continues in parallel.

As KAAAN is projected to reach full operational capability in the 2030s, through phased development known as "blocks" and powered by an indigenous engine, and given the time required to field it in sufficient numbers to serve as a credible deterrent, modernization and new fighter plane procurement programs are indispensable. These initiatives are crucial to ensuring that the Turkish Air Force maintains its effectiveness and deterrent strength at a time when the strategic importance of air power has once again come sharply into focus. In this context, the Eurofighter Typhoon emerges as a critical component of the equation.

The Eurofighter Typhoon is a multinational, multi-phase defense aviation program initiated to address Europe's need for a next-generation combat aircraft during the final stages of the Cold War. In 1983, the air forces of the UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain defined a joint requirement for such an aircraft, which

was formalized in 1988 with the official launch of the Eurofighter program. France initially took part in the effort but withdrew in 1985 to develop its own independent fighter, the Rafale.

The prototype's first flight took place in 1994, with production approval granted in 1998. The German Air Force received the first aircraft in 2003, followed by other operators including Italy, Spain, Austria, and Saudi Arabia. Despite facing political and financial hurdles, the program has endured, and by 2024, more than 600 Eurofighter Typhoons had entered service worldwide.

It is noteworthy that Türkiye's path has intersected with the Eurofighter Typhoon multiple times over the past four decades. In the mid-1980s, during discussions to procure 40 Tornado aircraft from the UK, Ankara was offered equal participation in the then-emerging Eurofighter project, contingent on the deal's completion. Subsequently, in the early 2000s and again around 2010, the Typhoon - along with opportunities for industrial collaboration - was proposed to Türkiye on two separate occasions. However, for various reasons, these offers never came to fruition.

The Eurofighter Typhoon is a multirole fighter distinguished by its canard delta wing. Engineered with advanced aerodynamics and an innovative flight control system, it delivers exceptional agility and maneuverability. A standout capability is its ability to achieve supercruise - sustained supersonic flight without the use of afterburners. The Typhoon is available in both single-seat and twin-seat variants and is fully capable of executing a wide range of air-to-air and air-to-ground missions.

The Typhoon's mission systems feature the Captor-E active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar, the Defensive Aids Sub-System (DASS) for self-protection, an advanced mission computer, Link 16 datalink, and electro-optical sensors. Its self-defense capability is enhanced by electronic

warfare systems, flare and chaff dispensers, and radar warning receivers.

The Typhoon offers an extensive weapons payload capacity, supporting a broad array of systems. It can carry advanced air-to-air missiles such as Meteor, AIM-120 AMRAAM, IRIS-T, and ASRAAM, alongside precision-guided munitions like Brimstone, Storm Shadow, and the Paveway series, as well as cruise missiles such as Taurus. The aircraft is also equipped with a 27mm Mauser BK-27 cannon. Notably, the Meteor stands out as one of the most sophisticated and capable air-to-air missiles in service today, featuring an extendable range, a two-way datalink, and a dual-pulse rocket motor for superior performance.

The aircraft is powered by two EJ200 turbofan engines, developed and manufactured by the EUROJET consortium. Each partner nation contributes by producing specific engine components, while final assembly takes place within their own facilities.

The Eurofighter is manufactured in progressive stages known as tranches. Tranche 1 focused on delivering core air superiority capabilities, while Tranche 2 introduced limited air-to-ground functionality. Tranche 3A expanded the platform into a true multirole fighter, featuring an advanced mission computer and broader weapons integration. Tranche 4 and 5 variants aim to deliver major upgrades, including AESA radar, next-generation digital avionics, and enhanced electronic warfare capabilities.

The Turkish Air Force currently fields around 240 F-16C/Ds and approximately 25 F-4E/2020s. While the F-4Es underwent extensive modernization in the early 2000s, they are now at the end of their operational life. The F-16C/D fleet, on the other hand, risks falling behind - particularly in radar and electronic warfare capabilities - compared to the advanced platforms entering service with regional air forces. Greece has acquired Rafale fighters from France and is upgrading its F-16s

to the F-16V. Israel, meanwhile, is on track to receive 75 F-35I fighters by 2028 (with 45 delivered as of June 2025), while also modernizing its F-15I fleet and preparing to procure the next-generation F-15IA. These developments underscore the growing technological and performance challenges facing the Turkish Air Force.

Recent developments in the region have demonstrated that having an air force significantly weaker than one's rivals is scarcely different from having no air power at all. Air power can be defined as the combined use of assets, forces, technologies, doctrines, and methods to secure the control of airspace for friendly operations while denying its use to the enemy. Within this framework, combat aircraft, air defense systems, support platforms such as early warning and tanker aircrafts, and precision long-range weapons are key components. Among these, combat aircraft represent the core of air power, making it imperative that the fleet remains continuously modernized in terms of technology, performance, and capability.

Türkiye is advancing a series of fully indigenous projects for its air force, including the national air superiority fighter KAAAN, the Anka 3 unmanned strike platform, and the Kizilelma unmanned multirole fighter, while continuing to effectively deploy armed UAVs such as Anka, Akungur, Bayraktar Akinci, and TB2. With the Kizilelma now in serial production and expected to enter service soon, Türkiye will become one of the first nations to operate manned and unmanned fighter aircraft in tandem. At the same time, the national jet fighter KAAAN stands out as the only next-generation fighter program in the Western world currently undergoing flight testing. These groundbreaking initiatives signal a new era for Turkish air power. However, as this phased roadmap progresses, preserving deterrence amid a region of intense military and technological challenges remains critical - positioning the Eurofighter Typhoon acquisition as a critical bridge.

Border clashes on rise as global system fails

Khaled Abou Zahr

THERE is an unshakable sentiment in the world today that something is loose. There is an unshakable feeling that the world is in a state of free-wheeling. This is not new but has been going on for the past decade. One indication of this situation is the undeniable fact that the frequency of military border clashes between countries is increasing. And this signals a period where issues could become bigger and more dangerous. While all eyes are locked on the Ukraine-Russia conflict, as well as Iran's proxies and Israel, other conflicts are sprouting up across the globe, but mainly in Asia.

Nothing comes out of a void and these conflicts have historical roots; clashes have taken place throughout previous decades. Yet, this time, and despite past skirmishes at the border, the evolution is less controlled. The most recent was the one between Thailand and Cambodia. There is now a real trend of countries taking matters into their own hands, as the existing global order seems unable to resolve issues decisively. If we dig into the history of this conflict, it was born, like so many other border conflicts, from lines being drawn on maps by former colonial powers such as France and Great Britain. They carved out territories and left issues to linger as modern states gained their independence. This situation and many others like it also show that the global institutions conceived at the end of the First World War and born after the Second World War are no longer capable of meeting the challenges of today's world. While states accepted the status quo for decades, there is now a clear willingness - or window of opportunity - to take matters into their own hands.

When it comes to the situation between Thailand and Cambodia, the border dispute was supposedly resolved with rulings from the International Court of Justice in 1962 and 2013. This should have ended the Preah Vihear temple dispute between Phnom Penh and Bangkok. But these rulings have been considered ambiguous because, while they confirmed Cambodia's sovereignty over the temple itself, they did not clearly define the surrounding territorial boundaries. In 1962, the court ruled that the temple belonged to Cambodia but did not specify who controlled the adjacent 4.6 sq. km of land, which Thailand continued to claim. In 2013, following renewed clashes, the International Court of Justice reaffirmed Cambodia's sovereignty over the temple and the land on which it stands. It also commanded Thailand to withdraw troops from the area. Nevertheless, it still did not provide a precise demarcation of the border or resolve the competing interpretations of colonial-era maps.

This is where the main issue probably lies: global institutions are only able to give broad and often vague decisions, leaving many issues on hold. It is a side note, but this is reminiscent of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon's ruling in the case

of the killing of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, which gave a half-guilty verdict and never brought the real culprit to justice. When it comes to Thailand and Cambodia, this legal vagueness has maintained both claims and this has, in turn, increased nationalist sentiments, leading to recurring tensions and military confrontations. Yet, even if this is not the first time the two countries have clashed, this time the tone is different, even as they agreed to a ceasefire. While there is clear agency from these countries, there is also a change in the world order, as well as proxy conflicts and proxy resolutions.

The deadly border conflict that erupted between Cambodia and Thailand was the most serious escalation in more than a decade. While the fighting began in late May near Chang Bok and intensified around the Prasat Ta Muen Thom and Preah Vihear temple areas, it escalated with the use of heavy artillery, as well as the deployment of Thai F-16 jets. This resulted in at least 43 deaths and displaced more than 300,000 people. A ceasefire was brokered on July 28 and has largely held, although the situation remains fragile. Further negotiations are scheduled for Aug. 4, as both sides seek a long-term resolution. Media reports have blamed recklessness by both political leaderships, with domestic issues having an impact. Yet, there is inherently a failure of the global system. There is also an undeniable undercurrent of shadow war between the US and China. Cambodia maintains close ties with Beijing. Like a growing number of countries in the region, China is its main investor as well as a key military partner. Phnom Penh has been historically close to Beijing for economic support and regional backing. On the other hand, Bangkok is a long-standing US ally. This is why America and China both intervened diplomatically during the crisis. While this resolution supports Association of Southeast Asian Nations-led peace efforts - the bloc promotes economic cooperation, political stability and peaceful dialogue among its members - there is little chance of this regional institution stepping in to palliate the global system's failure. At least not today.

The Cambodia-Thailand border conflict echoes that of Armenia-Azerbaijan, but with China and the US in the background instead of Russia and the US (via Türkiye).

While Azerbaijan's military dominance led to a rapid change in the regional balance in the South Caucasus, the situation in Southeast Asia is more uncertain. The global system's failure to resolve conflicts could lead to more frequent confrontations as regional powers test the emerging order. It is also clear that, as Russia remains stuck in Ukraine, China is increasingly replacing it on the global stage, with a shadow war emerging with the US. This situation worryingly resembles the end of the interwar period. It feels increasingly uncontrolled and with a domino effect in play.

Reimagining the future of sports with generative AI

JUST a few years ago, artificial intelligence in sports felt like a distant dream. Today, it's transforming every aspect of the industry, from fan experiences to team performance. In Saudi Arabia alone, the sports market has grown from \$6.4 billion in 2022 to \$7.2 billion in 2023, with projections reaching over \$22.4 billion by 2030. This rapid growth is reshaping how we play, watch, and understand sports.

It's no wonder AI is fueling innovation across the industry. The Saudi Formula One Grand Prix is a celebration of speed, engineering excellence, and as a powerful showcase of how technology and sport are converging. From the roar of the engines on the Jeddah Corniche Circuit to the cutting-edge AI tools running behind the scenes, the event revealed how AI's role in motorsports extends well beyond race day. It reflects a broader, long-term shift in the industry,

delivering more personalized content, powering predictive insights, and enhancing performance. Our multi-year partnership with Scuderia Ferrari HP highlights the pivotal role IBM is playing in this transformation and underscores how technology and professional sports have become inseparable.

As part of this partnership, IBM launched a fully redesigned Scuderia Ferrari HP mobile app, featuring an all-new Race Center and Racing Insights built with IBM watsonx. The app delivers a more immersive and personalized fan experience with interactive features such as fan messages, interactive live polls, and race summaries that highlight some of Ferrari's most iconic wins across the decades. For the first time, the app is now fully accessible to Ferrari's global tifosi in both English and Italian. This is more than just a technological upgrade; it's a bold reimagining of the digital fan experience. Through

Ayman Al-Rashed

AI-generated race summaries, post-race insights, dynamic data visualizations, and historical driver and team comparisons powered by large language models on watsonx, including IBM Granite, the app deepens the connection between tifosi, F1 fans, and the world's most renowned F1 racing team both during and outside race weekends. Additional features will be rolled out throughout the year 2025 onward. By applying IBM's deep AI and consulting expertise, we're helping clients like Ferrari, and enterprises across sectors, deliver smarter, more engaging experiences on a scale. IBM has long equipped sports organizations with AI-powered tools to elevate performance and deepen fan engagement. As a part of Wimbledon 2025, IBM has partnered with the All England Lawn Tennis Club to create Match Chat, an

interactive AI assistant that can answer fans' questions during live singles matches.

Built with technologies on watsonx Orchestrate, AI agents, and large language models, such as IBM Granite, Match Chat is trained on the Wimbledon editorial style and the language of tennis. Additionally, IBM has enhanced the "Likelihood to Win" tool, which generates AI-powered analysis of player statistics, expert opinion and match momentum. The tool leverages IBM technologies including Red Hat OpenShift.

In golf, IBM's Hole Insights 2.0 tool enhances The Masters experience with real-time shot analysis. The tournament also leverages watsonx Orchestrate to process increasingly granular predictive data and showcase top-tier player performance with unprecedented clarity. Across sports, these collaborations are reshaping how decisions are

made, how fans connect, and how teams compete. A 2024 IBM study found that 72 percent of top-performing CEOs believe competitive advantage depends on leading in generative AI. The sports world is no exception.

But at IBM, innovation doesn't come at the expense of responsibility. As AI continues to redefine the future of sports, we are committed to ensuring this transformation is not only smart and impactful, but also responsible. In an industry where trust and fairness are paramount, tools like watsonx.governance provide transparency, bias detection, and model explainability. They ensure that AI is deployed responsibly, preserving the integrity of sport while enabling progress. We believe the future of sports must balance cutting-edge technology with ethical values preserving the passion, fairness, and human element that make sports so powerful.

Saudi Arabia is emerging as a major player in global

sports, fueled by its Vision 2030 agenda and over \$2 billion invested into its sports infrastructure, talent, and major events. Since 2019, the Kingdom has hosted over 100 elite international events across 40 sports such as F1, the FIFA Club World Cup, and the World Athletics Championships, showing a clear commitment to becoming a premier destination for global sports. With over 75 years of presence in the Kingdom, IBM is proud to support this transformation. We are working closely with local institutions to bring advanced AI solutions into the heart of the growing sports ecosystem, enhancing performance, fan engagement, and operational excellence. At IBM, we believe the future of sports isn't just about speed or intelligence, it's about creating more connected, inclusive, and impactful experiences. And we're proud to help shape that future, both on and off the field.

Who will be the winners in AI revolution?

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

ARTIFICIAL intelligence is rapidly becoming a transformative force across every sector of the global economy. From automating manufacturing processes to revolutionizing how we diagnose diseases or make investment decisions, AI is fundamentally reshaping productivity, innovation and economic competitiveness.

According to estimates by the International Data Corporation, AI has the potential to boost the global economy by an astonishing \$19.9 trillion by 2030. This figure represents a seismic shift in economic potential, equivalent to more than the current size of China's economy. Experts project that AI could increase the annual growth rate of global gross domestic product by up to one full percentage point over the next decade, rivaling the levels of economic transformation seen during the Industrial Revolution.

This anticipated surge in economic growth is driven by several key factors: massive gains in productivity due to automation, the ability to generate and analyze vast datasets, and the creation of entirely new markets and services powered by AI. Industries are already seeing the early impacts of this transformation. In the finance sector, AI-driven algorithms are reshaping trading and risk analysis. In healthcare, AI is assisting in early diagnosis and personalized treatment plans. In logistics and manufacturing, autonomous systems are enhancing efficiency and lowering operational costs.

The scale and speed of change are unprecedented and AI is increasingly seen as a general-purpose technology - akin to electricity or the steam engine - with the power to permeate and uplift virtually every domain of economic activity. However, while the overall global economic impact of AI is expected to be vast, the distribution of this growth will likely be highly uneven. A handful of industries and countries are poised to capture the lion's share of AI's benefits, leaving others at risk of being left behind.

Nations that already have strong digital infrastructures, advanced research institutions, robust regulatory frameworks and large pools of investment capital are in the best position to lead. Countries that are dominating the AI race are doing so due to their early investments in machine learning research, large-scale computing power and highly skilled technical workforces. These nations are not only producing the most AI patents and startups but they are also setting the ethical and technological standards that others will have to follow. Within countries themselves, this dynamic is mirrored across sectors. High-tech industries such as finance, biotech, defense and cloud computing are poised to absorb and scale AI quickly. In contrast, lower-tech sectors - particularly those in developing economies or rural regions - face significant challenges in adoption. These include lack of infrastructure, limited access to high-speed internet, underdeveloped capital markets and a shortage of skilled labor.

As a result, AI's economic windfall is likely to accrue primarily to a relatively small number of players, exacerbating existing divisions between the Global North and Global South and between urban and rural, high-skilled and low-skilled, and capital-rich and capital-poor populations.

This raises a critical and urgent question: Does GDP, the standard metric used to measure a country's economic performance, adequately capture the real impact of AI? GDP was developed in the 20th century to track industrial production and consumption. While it remains useful for measuring overall output, it often fails to reflect the full social and economic implications of technological revolutions.

For example, GDP growth driven by AI may mask increasing inequality, job displacement or the erosion of traditional sectors. A country's GDP might grow robustly even as millions of workers in

routine or manual labor are made redundant by intelligent machines. Similarly, GDP cannot account for the ethical and psychological dimensions of AI, such as surveillance, algorithmic bias or mental health effects related to job insecurity. This disconnect raises important questions about how policymakers should assess economic well-being in an AI-powered world.

If AI continues to drive enormous wealth creation while simultaneously fueling inequality, social unrest and economic dislocation, then governments, institutions and global bodies must act now. Countries that wish to share in AI's benefits and avoid being left on the sidelines must begin by investing in the foundational building blocks of an AI-ready economy. This includes not only physical infrastructure - such as data centers and broadband access - but also legal and institutional infrastructure to promote innovation, regulate ethical risks and foster global cooperation. Countries without these ingredients risk becoming consumers rather than producers of AI, missing out on the wealth and geopolitical influence that comes with leadership in this domain.

At the same time, education systems must undergo a profound transformation to prepare the workforce for a future where AI is ubiquitous. Traditional education focused on rote memorization and static technical skills will no longer suffice. Nations must implement lifelong learning systems that teach adaptable skills such as critical thinking, data literacy, ethics and problem-solving - abilities that complement rather than compete with machines. Furthermore, targeted reskilling programs must be developed to support those displaced by AI. These programs must not merely teach coding or technical skills but also create pathways into emerging sectors like AI ethics, data stewardship, human-centered design and interdisciplinary AI

applications.

Investment also plays a central role. Governments need to provide incentives for both private and public sector investment in inclusive AI innovation. This includes funding AI startups, supporting open-source platforms and ensuring that AI applications address real-world problems such as climate change, food security, education and healthcare access in underserved communities. Tax incentives, public-private partnerships and inclusive procurement policies can help channel innovation toward socially beneficial ends. Without such intervention, market forces alone will likely prioritize profit-maximizing applications, further entrenching inequality and ignoring broader human needs. Moreover, international cooperation is indispensable. AI is a global technology and its benefits and risks cross borders. Collaborative efforts to establish shared standards, address data privacy and cybersecurity, and coordinate AI governance are vital. Equally important is the need for wealthier nations to support capacity-building in the Global South, ensuring that the developing world has a fair opportunity to access and shape the future of AI. Otherwise, AI risks becoming yet another tool of global dominance, deepening rather than bridging the digital divide.

In conclusion, as AI stands at the frontier of a new era in global economic history, it holds the power to lift productivity, unlock innovation and catalyze trillions of dollars in new economic value. But it also threatens to leave behind those who are not prepared - intensifying inequality both within and among nations. The challenge ahead is not just to harness AI for growth but to ensure that this growth is inclusive, sustainable and aligned with human values. The decisions made today - about policy, education, investment and international collaboration - will shape not only the trajectory of global GDP but also the kind of world we build for future generations.

Trump's global tariffs 'victory' may well come at a high price

IN April Donald Anthony Zurcher & Dharshini David Trump stunned the world by announcing sweeping new import tariffs - only to put most on hold amid the resulting global financial panic. Four months later, the US president is touting what he claims are a series of victories, having unveiled a handful of deals with trading partners and unilaterally imposed tariffs on others, all without the kind of massive disruptions to the financial markets that his spring attempt triggered.

At least, so far. Having worked to reorder America's place in the global economy, Trump is now promising that the US will reap the benefits of new revenue, rekindle domestic manufacturing, and generate hundreds of billions of dollars in foreign investment and purchases. Whether that turns out to be the case - and whether these actions will have negative consequences - is still very much in doubt. What is clear so far, however, is that a tide that was (gently) turning on free trade, even ahead of Trump's second term, has become a wave crashing across the globe. And while it is reshaping the economic landscape, it hasn't left the kind of wreckage in its wake that some might have predicted - though of course there is often a lag before impact is fully seen. What's more, for many countries, this has all served as a wake up call - a need to remain alive to fresh alliances.

And so, while the short term result might be - as Trump sees it - a victory, the impact on his overarching goals is far less certain. As are the long-term repercussions, which could well pan out rather differently for Trump - or the America he leaves behind after his current term. For all the wrong reasons, 1 August had been ringed on international policymakers' calendars. Agree new trading terms with the US by then, they'd been warned - or face potentially ruinous tariffs. While White House trade adviser Peter Navarro predicted "90 deals in 90 days" and Trump offered an optimistic outlook on reaching agreements, the deadline always appeared to be a tall order. And it was. By the time the end of July rolled around, Trump had only announced about a dozen trade deals - some no more than a page or two long, without the kind of detailed provisions standard in past negotiations.

The UK was first off the blocks, perhaps inevitably. Trump's biggest bugbear is, after all, America's trade deficit, and trade is in broad balance when it comes to the UK. While the baseline 10% applied to most British goods may initially have raised eyebrows, it provided a hint of what was to follow - and in the end came as a relief compared to the 15% rate applied to other trading partners such as the EU and Japan, with whom the US has larger deficits; \$240bn and \$70bn respectively last year alone. And even those agreements came with strings attached. Those countries that weren't able to commit to, say, buying more American goods, often faced higher tariffs. South Korea, Cambodia, Pakistan - as the list grew, and tariff letters were fired off elsewhere, the bulk of American imports are now covered by either an agreement or a presidential decree concluded with a curt "thank you for your attention to this matter". Much has been revealed as a result of this. First, the good news. The wrangling of the last few months means the most painful of tariffs, and recession warnings, have been dodged.

The worst fears - in terms of tariff levels and potential economic fallout (for the US and elsewhere) - have not been realised. Second, the agreement of tariff terms, however unpalatable, reduced much of the uncertainty (itself wielded by Trump as a powerful economic weapon) for better - and for worse. For better, in the sense that businesses are able to make plans, investment and hiring decisions that had been paused may now be resumed. Most exporters know what size tariffs their goods face - and can figure out how to accommodate or pass on the cost to consumers. That growing sense of certainty

underpins a more relaxed mood in financial markets, with shares in the US notably gaining.

But it's for the worse, in the sense that the typical tariff for selling into the US is higher than before - and more extreme than analysts predicted just six months ago. Trump may have hailed the size of the agreement of the US with the EU - but these are not the tariff-busting deals we equated with tearing down trade barriers in previous decades. The greatest fears, the warnings of potential disaster, have receded. But Ben May, Director of global macro forecasting at Oxford Economics, says that US tariffs had the capacity to "damage" the global economy in several ways. "They are obviously raising prices in the US and squeezing household incomes," he says, adding that the policies would also reduce demand around the world if the world's largest economy ends up importing fewer goods. It's not just about the size of tariff, but

year to total about \$300bn. By comparison, federal income taxes bring in around \$2.5tn a year. American shoppers remain in the front line, and have yet to see higher prices passed on in full. But as consumer goods giants such as Unilever and Adidas start to put numbers on the cost increases involved, some sticker shock, price rises, loom - potentially enough to delay Trump's desired rate cut - and possibly a dent to consumer spending. Forecasts are always uncertain, of course, but this represents a very real political threat for a president who promised to lower consumer prices, not take actions that would raise them. Trump and other White House officials have floated the idea of providing rebate checks to lower-income Americans - the kinds of blue-collar voters who have fuelled the president's political success - that would offset some of the pocketbook pain.

Such an effort could be unwieldy, and it would require congressional

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the scale of trading relationship with the US. So while India potentially faces tariffs of over 25% on its exports to the US, economists at Capital Economics reckon that, with US demand accounting for just 2% of that nation's gross domestic product, the immediate impact on growth could be minor. The news is not so good for Germany, though, where the 15% tariffs could knock more than half a percentage point off growth this year, compared to what was expected earlier in the year.

That's due to the size of its automotive sector - unhelpful for an economy that may be teetering on the brink of recession. Meanwhile, India became the top source of smartphones sold in the US in the last few months, after fears of what may lie in store for China prompted Apple to shift production. On the other hand, India will be mindful that the likes of Vietnam and the Philippines - which face lower tariffs when selling to the US - may become relatively more attractive suppliers in other industries. Across the board, however, there's relief that the blow, at least, is likely to be less extensive than might have been. But what has been decided already points to longer-term ramifications for global trading patterns and alliances elsewhere.

And the element of jeopardy introduced into a long-established major relationship with the US, lent added momentum to the UK's pursuit of closer ties with the EU - and getting a trade deal with India over the line. For many countries, this has served as a wake up call - a need to remain alive to fresh alliances. As details are nailed down, the implications for the US economy become clearer too. Growth in the late spring there actually benefited from a flurry of export sales, as businesses rushed to beat any higher tariffs imposed on American goods. Economists expect that growth to lose momentum over the rest of the year.

Tariffs that have increased from an average of 2% at the beginning of the year to around 17% now have had a notable impact on US government revenue - one of the stated goals of Trump's trade policy. Import duties have brought in more than \$100bn so far this year - about 5% of US federal revenue, compared to around 2% in past years. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said he expected

approval. It's also a tacit acknowledgment that simply boasting of new federal revenue to offset current spending and tax cuts, and holding out the prospect of future domestic job and wealth creation is politically perilous for a Republican party that will have to face voters in next year's midterm state and congressional midterm elections. Complicating all this is the fact that there are many places where a deal is yet to be hammered out - most notably Canada and Taiwan.

The US administration has yet to pronounce its decisions for the pharmaceuticals and steel industry. The colossal issue of China, subject to a different deadline, remains unresolved. Trump agreed to a negotiating extension with Mexico, another major US trading partner, on Thursday morning. Many of the deals that have been struck have been verbal, as yet unsigned. Moreover it is uncertain if and how the strings attached to Trump's agreements - more money to be spent purchasing American energy or invested in America - will actually be delivered on. In some cases, foreign leaders have denied the existence of provisions touted by the president.

When it comes to assessing tariff agreements between the White House and various countries, says Mr May, the "devil is in the detail" - and the details are light.

It's clear, however, that the world has shifted back from the brink of a ruinous trade war. Now, as nations grapple with a new set of trade barriers, Trump aims to call the shots. But history tells us that his overarching aim - to return production and jobs to America - may meet with very limited success. And America's long-time trading partners, like Canada and the EU, could start looking to form economic and political connections that bypass what they no longer view as a reliable economic ally. Trump may be benefitting from the leverage afforded by America's unique position at the centre of a global trading order that it spent more than half a century establishing. If the current tariffs trigger a foundational realignment, however, the results may not ultimately break in favour of the US. Those questions will be answered over years, not weeks or months. In the meantime, Trump's own voters may still have to pick up the tab - through higher prices, less choice and slower growth.

BBC

Türkiye and UK could shape Europe's new defense axis

Jurgen Klaus

‘At the crossroads between the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa, Turkey (sic) is imperative to UK security interests across Europe and on NATO's flanks ...’ - quoted from the British National Security Strategy 2025. Was this statement mere rhetoric aimed at the bilateral audience before Foreign Secretary David Lammy's visit to Türkiye, or does it reflect a genuine basis for closer relations?

The National Security Strategy 2025 as presented to Parliament by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer in June lays out the UK's strategic context as well as a strategic framework. In a nutshell: London argues it has to navigate an era of radical uncertainty. The prime minister would not mince his words either by declaring "Russian aggression menaces our continent" and refers to Moscow's leader as "tyrants like Putin." Nevertheless, the policy paper sets out less confrontational goals in great detail and a fair number of those are a very good starting point to expand on existing - and normally rather positive - relations between London and Ankara. On the one hand London plans to increase its sovereign nation state strengths whilst on the other suggests that exactly those sovereign states are strongest when they are bound together by a shared vision and purpose. Contradictory? We shall return to that question below

in this piece.

Coming back to the introductory observation made in the beginning, that official British government paper states that 'at the crossroads between the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa, Turkey (sic) is imperative to UK security interests across Europe and on NATO flanks and remains a key NATO and bilateral partner for the UK, with strong military integration and defense industrial collaboration.' Now let's add what Lammy said to the press in London on the eve of his departure for Ankara: "In an increasingly volatile world, the UK and Turkey (sic) remain the closest of friends and partners as we work together to find peaceful solutions to conflict in the Middle East and Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Ours is a relationship which delivers directly for Turkish and British citizens at home - trade between our nations is responsible for thousands of jobs, while our security and defense links help keep our people safe" [1].

For example, the agreed exports of Eurofighter Typhoons to Türkiye is a concrete result of these efforts, as the defense chiefs of both countries signed a new agreement in Istanbul just weeks after Lammy's visit. According to the UK government, this agreement strengthens NATO's collective deterrence and builds on years of

defense cooperation and growing industrial ties between the UK and Türkiye. The Typhoon program alone supports 20,000 jobs in the UK, with exports expected to secure thousands more, delivering on the government's Plan for Change. UK Defense Secretary John Healey and Turkish National Defense Minister Yasar Güler signed the memorandum of understanding at this month's International Defense Industry Fair (IDEF) in Istanbul.

But limiting our reflections to defense only would not allow to see the wider picture: bilateral trade in all sectors amounted to a staggering £28 billion in 2024 (\$37.57 billion) with Turkish exports to Britain reaching \$15.29 in 2024 out of that overall figure. One might argue, an almost balanced export import volume between both nations. Thus said, Türkiye has since long and ever more so since early in the New Millennium shelved the unmerited image of being a manufacturer of "cheap parts" by turning itself into a globally recognized and admired top-class, highest quality producer of end products. The UK-Türkiye trade balance speaks positive volumes in this context.

Top-end products and services in almost all industry sectors, plus an ever-increasing domestic defense sector production capacity - it is not impossible to say that one

day soon out of an expected \$8 billion domestic defense and aerospace exports from Türkiye to many foreign countries (2024 figures: \$7.154 billion which already represents an increase of 29% when compared with 2023), the UK could become a key buyer as well. We mentioned the Typhoon deal adding or safeguarding 20,000 much-needed jobs in Britain; Türkiye's defense sector currently employs just about 100,000 staff, too, with 3,500 companies active in the sector [2].

How will this impact Europe's principal security and defense policies, and perhaps even Türkiye's decades-overdue admission to the EU? Bilateral relations often pave the way for a broader continental policy making picture. Ankara and London are ready. Playing to the gallery as asked in our teaser? Far from it - Realpolitik 2.0 with two friendly nations embracing each other, their cultures, values, traditions and their unwavering commitment to peace and security far beyond their own borders.

And last but not least the contradictory remark from above: can sovereign states truly cooperate without compromising independence? Yes - if they engage as equals, grounded in mutual respect. A powerful UK outside the EU but with close ties, a powerful Türkiye one day within the EU, plus close ties with the UK - no better political and defense triangle possible one would suggest.

Laura Paddison

IRAN'S capital Tehran could be weeks away from "day zero," experts say - the day when taps run dry for large parts of the city - as the country suffers a severe water crisis. Key reservoirs are shrinking, authorities are scrambling to reduce water consumption and residents are desperately trying to conserve it to stave off catastrophe. "If we do not make urgent decisions today, we will face a situation in the future that cannot be solved," President Masoud Pezeshkian said at a cabinet meeting Monday.

Water is inherently short in supply in this arid nation. The difference is this crisis is hitting the capital, said Kaveh Madani, director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health. Tehran, home to around 10 million people, could run out of water altogether if consumption levels are not reduced, experts fear. "We are talking about a possible day zero within weeks," said Madani, who previously served as the deputy head of Iran's Department of Environment.

The roots of the crisis lie in a tangle of factors including what engineers describe as decades of poor water management and an increasing imbalance between supply and demand. It's all compounded by climate change. Iran is experiencing one of its worst droughts on record, and its fifth consecutive

year of drought. The country is also baking under brutal heat. Temperatures spiked above 122 degrees Fahrenheit in parts of the country this month, according to climatologist and weather historian Maximiliano Herrera. "Iran seems almost perennially in a record-heat status," he told CNN.

In response to the crisis, authorities have reduced water pressure in Tehran by almost half, affecting around 80% of households, the governor of Tehran Province Mohammad Sadegh Motamedian said Monday. For people living in tall apartment buildings, that can mean no water supply at all. One man who lives on the 14th floor in Tehran says his taps often run dry.

Water is being delivered to the capital by tankers, and residents who can afford it are rushing to install storage tanks, Madani said. "We have never had a situation like this... this is new to Tehran." Last week, the Iranian government declared a one-day public holiday in Tehran Province, as well as other regions across the country, in an effort to save water and electricity. It's now considering giving people in Tehran a week's public holiday, government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said in a press briefing Monday, in hopes people will temporarily leave the city, cutting water demand. Water experts point to mismanagement as a big factor

in the crisis.

Human activities, including excessive groundwater pumping, inefficient farming practices and unchecked urban water use have pushed the region "toward what can only be described as water bankruptcy," said Amir AghaKouchak, a professor of civil and environmental engineering and Earth system science at the University of California, Irvine. Madani echoes this. It is "water bankruptcy, because it's not a crisis anymore... (it's) a situation where some of the damages are irreversible," he said. In Tehran, so much water has been pumped from aquifers to support its increasing population that parts of the city are sinking, sometimes by more than 10 inches a year.

The capital is "grappling with a systemic, long-term imbalance that threatens the very foundations of water security for its residents," AghaKouchak told CNN. Climate change is making a bad situation much worse. Iran has seen a more than 40% decrease in rainfall this year compared to the long-term average, and the Tehran Regional Water Company says dams that supply the capital are at about 21% of their capacity, according to Iran's semi-official Mehr News Agency. All but one of Iran's 31 provinces are experiencing water stress, said Iran's energy minister

Abbas Aliabadi, as reported by Mehr News. When asked about the possibility of water rationing, he said: "I hope this does not happen." Experts say there are no easy answers to this crisis.

The government is opting for "band aid" measures, such as new water transfer projects, Madani said. Technical solutions such as desalination and wastewater recycling must be part of picture, he added, but "these address the symptoms for a while without curing the cause." He advocates for a wholesale overhaul of the economy to move away from water-intensive agriculture - which currently accounts for about 90% of Iran's water use - toward services and industry with a much lighter water footprint. This kind of reform is likely to be painful and costly, both economically and politically, and highly unlikely under the current government and given the sanctions imposed on Iran by the US and others, he said.

Ultimately, the roots of the crisis are not just environmental or technical but "deeply political and systemic," AghaKouchak said. "Iran's water crisis cannot be separated from its broader governance crisis." For now, the country is waiting for the fall and hoping it will bring rain. "If Tehran survives until the end of September then there is hope for avoiding day zero," Madani said.

CNN



Pakistan, Romania eye stronger trade cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Romanian Ambassador Dan Stoenescu held a productive meeting in Islamabad, discussing enhanced cooperation in trade, logistics, defense, energy, and culture.

Ambassador Stoenescu proposed using Romania's Constanța Port as a direct trade route for Pakistani exports into Europe via the Black Sea and Danube River. The Minister welcomed this as a viable step toward diversifying Pakistan's export logistics, said a release issued here on Saturday.

Both sides discussed boosting agri-trade, meat exports, and potential cooperation in pharmaceuticals, surgical goods, fans, and green energy.

On energy, Romania expressed readiness to support Pakistan's shift to green energy, offering technology in solar and wind power. Romania acknowledged Pakistan's competitive edge in several sectors and expressed interest in deeper industrial collaboration.

The Commerce Minister apprised the Ambassador that Government of Pakistan has started reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

riers.

This offers lucrative incentives for Romanian companies to invest in Pakistan through JVs.

Ambassador Stoenescu acknowledged the remarkable growth of Pakistan's IT industry and commended the talent and capabilities of Pakistani professionals in this sector.

He noted that Romania offers significant opportunities for Pakistani tech professionals and expressed willingness to facilitate such exchanges.

The Commerce Minister highlighted the policy initiatives undertaken by the Government to promote the

IT sector, emphasizing that Pakistani professionals are successfully competing with their regional peers and possessing the expertise to deliver world-class services to international clients.

Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the technology sector.

Cultural diplomacy and community integration were also addressed, with calls to improve connectivity and visa facilitation.

The meeting ended on a positive note, with both sides committed to strengthening ties through follow-up engagements and trade exhibitions.



MULTAN: Visitors taking keen interest in different variety of mangoes displayed on stall during 9th Mango Festival organized.

Untold chapter of Bravery: 4th Aug Police Martyrs' Day



(In memory of the great martyr of Sindh Police, Sub-Inspector Muhammad Shahid)

Syed Saad Ali

Once again, a name echoes in our hearts and minds. Sub-Inspector Muhammad Shahid-a valiant officer whose ultimate sacrifice illuminated the legacy of the Sindh Police.

This tale of courage begins on the morning of June 29, 2020 when the Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi the heartbeat of the national economy-was targeted.

It was a Monday morning, the beginning of the workweek. The sun had just risen, casting its golden rays across the city. Meanwhile, Sub Inspector-Muhammad Shahid, carrying warm memories of time spent with his children, dressed in his uniform, slung his rifle across his shoulder, and headed to his duty post. He may have been thinking about his wife's smile, his children's innocent chatter, and upcoming vacation plans-but at 10:02 AM, fate took a grim turn. A white Toyota Corolla stopped at the gate. Within seconds, hell was unleashed.

Four heavily armed terrorists launched a surprise attack, throwing grenades and firing indiscriminately with Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers and other weapons. Their mission:

massive destruction of lives and to paralyze the nation's economic center But what they didn't anticipate was the unwavering courage of Sindh Police's warriors. Without hesitation, Muhammad Shahid stepped forward. The very first sounds of gunfire were met with his bold resistance. Without a thought for his own safety, he confronted the attackers, buying crucial moments for his fellow officers to take position.

The Rapid Response Force (RRF) quickly mobilized. Some officers took defensive positions; others climbed rooftops while snipers locked onto their targets. Including SI Muhammad Shahid, the police successfully prevented the terrorists from entering the building. Just eight minutes. That was all it took to shatter the enemy's evil designs. The entire operation was completed in twenty minutes. With lightning-fast reflexes and unmatched professionalism, Sindh Police averted what could have been a devastating tragedy.

But this victory came at a heartbreaking cost. Sub-Inspector Muhammad Shahid laid down his life in the line of duty. Alongside him, security guards and innocent civilians were also martyred, while seven others were injured.

Shahid's bravery not only saved countless lives but set a timeless example of selflessness. His elder son, Tanveer, recalled: "Sir, even after his martyrdom, my father fulfilled a dream he once set aside for retirement. He wanted to build our own home. That dream was realized after his martyrdom, thanks to the support of the Sindh Government. I thank Sindh Police for honoring my

father."

In recognition of his courage, the Inspector General of Sindh Police announced a reward of two million rupees for Shahid's family. The Governor of Sindh honored the families of the martyrs with awards and financial compensation. Six brave soldiers of the RRF, including Constable Muhammad Rafiq Soomro, were also decorated with special honors.

Chief Minister Sindh, Murad Ali Shah, hailed the operation as a living testament to the training, valor, and sacrifice of the Sindh Police. This act of heroism became a moment of pride not only for the force, but for the entire nation.

The attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange was a vile act of terrorism. But officer like Muhammad Shahid proved that Pakistan's protectors consider the safety of their homeland above all else-even life itself. His sacrifice is a call for us all to stand united against terrorism.

As we commemorate August 4 - Police Martyrs' Day, we pay heartfelt tribute to those police officers who gave their lives for the peace, honor and security of this province and our country. Their sacrifices continue to breathe life into this noble service. This police service is a sacred trust-bathed in the blood of martyrs and its spirit of sacrifice shall never fade.

Martyrs never truly die; they live forever in the hearts of the nation. May Allah grant eternal peace to all our martyrs and give strength to their families, Ameen.

(The writer is Director Press to Inspector General of Police Sindh)

'Issues of industries in Saggian must be resolved'

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Saturday called for immediate resolution of industrial issues in Saggian and its adjoining areas.

The President Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Mian Abuzar Shad and former president Muhammad Ali Mian made this demand during a meeting with a 25-member delegation of the Saggian Industries Owners Association led by Shafiq-uz-Zaman here at Lahore Chamber.

The delegation also included former Executive Committee Member Wasim Chawla, Rana Muhammad Nadeem, Ali Shiraz, Mian Usman Advocate, Haji Liaqat, Malik Usman and others.

During the meeting, Shafiq-uz-Zaman briefed the LCCI leadership about the challenges being faced by industries in the Saggian region. He emphasized that the business community has no other platform to raise its voice except the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI).

He demanded either a significant reduction in the DC rate or a decrease in the commercial fee from 20 percent to 5 percent, as the current rates are unbearable for industrialists.

The delegation said that doing business in the current economic climate is already difficult and RUDA's imposition of additional financial burdens on industrial units located around the Saggian bridge has placed the future of industrial activity in jeopardy.

President Mian Abuzar Shad and former president Muhammad Ali Mian noted that there are over 1,000 small and large industrial units operating in and around the Saggian Bridge area, playing a significant role in the national economy. However, in RUDA-administered zones, the DC rates being imposed are nearly ten times higher than standard market rates, making them completely unaffordable for local industries.

They made an urgent appeal to the Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, to intervene and direct the concerned departments to revise the DC rates in line with ground realities.

Arbabi proposes setup of joint border free zone

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level Iranian delegation led by Reza Masrour, Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade, Industrial and Special Economic Zones on Saturday visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and held a productive meeting with ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi to explore avenues for deepening economic cooperation between the two brotherly nations.

The Iranian delegation included Mohammad Said Arbabi, Managing Director of the Chamber of Free Zones; Saeed Rabieci, Deputy Secretary of Free Zones; Ali Reza Khayyami, Director; Zahra Qadyanlo, Commercial Counsellor; Asif Ghias, Managing Director Zenith; and Ms. Faiza Hussaini.

The ICCI side was represented by Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman

Siddiqui, Chairman Founder Group Shaikh Tariq Sadiq, Executive Members Mohammad Imran Minhas, Waseem Chaudhry, and Advisor to the ICCI President, Naem Siddiqui.

Both sides agreed to foster collaboration in trade, joint ventures, investment, and industrial cooperation, emphasizing the need for mutually beneficial economic initiatives.

Reza Masrour showcased the vast potential of Iran's free trade zones, especially the Chabahar Free Zone, and invited Pakistani businessmen for a visit to explore investment prospects.

Highlighting a major proposal, Mohammad Said Arbabi suggested the establishment of a joint border free zone between Iran and Pakistan.

He revealed that Iran has already allocated a significant tract of land for this purpose and urged Pakistan

to take the next step toward materializing this initiative.

He further recommended a formal partnership through MoU between the Chabahar Free Zone and ICCI to facilitate joint expos and business cooperation.

Welcoming the delegation, ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi underlined the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and Iran and emphasized the importance of expanding bilateral trade, organizing joint exhibitions, and enhancing people-to-people and business-to-business linkages.

He said Pakistan's pharmaceutical, surgical and sports goods, minerals, pink salt, and IT services hold great potential for exports to Iran. He vowed ICCI's active support for value addition, border trade, and cultural exchanges.

President Qureshi also extended an invitation to the Iranian side to participate in ICCI's upcoming

International Industrial Exhibition scheduled for September, encouraging them to showcase their industrial and cultural strengths.

Chairman Founder Group, Shaikh Tariq Sadiq, and Executive Members Imran Minhas and Waseem Chaudhry echoed the sentiments, reiterating the need for stronger economic bonds and greater engagement between the two countries.

Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui appreciated the efforts of the Iranian diplomatic mission in Islamabad for fostering bilateral trade ties. He also expressed heartfelt solidarity with the families of Iranian martyrs affected by recent Israeli aggression.

The meeting concluded on a positive note with a shared resolve to accelerate bilateral trade, facilitate investment, and work jointly towards regional economic integration.

Second phase of CPEC industrial development cooperation discussed

BEIJING (INP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, met the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong in Beijing.

Vice Minister Sun Weidong warmly received Minister Ahsan Iqbal upon his arrival. During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest with a particular focus on the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), especially industrial development and business-to-business cooperation.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal conveyed the message of goodwill from Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the Chinese leadership. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations. The Minister remarked that during Sun Weidong's diplomatic tenure in Pakistan, we transformed the CPEC journey from a paper plan into a multi-billion-dollar reality.

Minister Iqbal appreciated China's unwavering support for Pakistan during recent regional tension and said, The people of Pakistan take pride in the everlasting friendship with the leadership and people of China. Minister Iqbal praised China's leadership

for playing a constructive role in global peace.

He added, "Pakistan-China friendship continues to grow stronger with every passing day and changing circumstances."

He remarked that China's development model remains a source of inspiration for Pakistan. Learning from China's experience, Pakistan is moving toward building an export-oriented and technology-driven economy, he added. He further stated that the Five Es framework under the URAAN Pakistan initiative is fully aligned with the vision of CPEC Phase II.

"The core objective of URAAN Pakistan is to ensure economic, social, and institutional stability through people-centric reforms," the Minister said. He emphasized that industrial and technological sectors will be key pillars in the second phase of CPEC. He further added that Our top priority is to develop a skilled, educated, and capable workforce.

Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong reaffirmed China's strong commitment to enhancing cooperation with Pakistan across various sectors.

He said that Pakistan's Five Es framework offers a promising path toward economic stability and self-reliance.

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"The core objective of URAAN Pakistan is to

WCCIS VP attends UMT Sialkot's 13th Degree show

SIALKOT (APP): The Vice President of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Rubina Naveed, along with Nadia Qaisar, Chairperson of the Trade and Delegation Committee, attended the

13th Degree Show at UMT, here on Saturday.

According to a spokesperson, the event was a vibrant showcase of innovation, creativity and talent, featuring outstanding final-year projects by

students from Graphic Design, Fashion Design and other creative disciplines. Visitors were inspired by the high level of artistic excellence and originality on display.

Rubina Naveed and

Nadia Qaisar extended their heartfelt congratulations to the students and faculty for organizing a successful and impactful event. They also expressed their best wishes for the students' future endeavors.

Misdiagnosing terror: When the cure became the disease

Shamim Shahid

The world has witnessed a war waged not only with weapons but with dangerous assumptions, a war that, for over two decades, promised to eradicate terror. Yet instead of delivering security and stability, it left behind shattered nations, broken societies, and a growing disillusionment with the very idea of peace.

Whether in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Somalia, the so-called "War on Terror" has spent trillions of dollars, toppled entire regimes, and claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. But terrorism has not disappeared. It has mutated, adapted, and in many places, grown stronger. Why? Because the problem was fundamentally misdiagnosed and the treatment often made the disease worse.

Rather than confronting the root causes of extrem-

ism, deprivation, marginalization, poverty, political exclusion, foreign occupation, and ideological manipulation, the global response focused obsessively on military raids, airstrikes, and mass surveillance. But extremism is rarely a random eruption of violence. It is often the final symptom of deeper wounds: social despair, psychological trauma, and generational hopelessness.

The war in Afghanistan was launched under the banner of fighting terrorism and bringing security. Yet tens of thousands of Afghan civilians lost their lives in US and NATO airstrikes. Entire villages were reduced to rubble. Those killed were often hastily labeled as "militants," a term that blurred the line between combatant and innocent. What was hailed as precision warfare often turned, in Afghan eyes, into a campaign of indiscrimi-

nate destruction.

The long-term outcome of foreign intervention in Afghanistan was not the peace that had been promised, but deep and lasting trauma. Entire communities became radicalized as a result of prolonged conflict and disillusionment. Many Afghans who were once portrayed as beneficiaries of Western protection began to see foreign troops not as liberators, but as destructive forces, arriving with promises of freedom and departing with little more than ashes and grief left behind. This enduring sense of betrayal, more than any narrative of democracy or counterterrorism, continues to define how many Afghans remember the war.

Those who once justified bombing villages in the name of counterterrorism did not eliminate ideological hatred, but fertilized it. Each airstrike that

killed a child, every home reduced to rubble, every funeral misidentified as a militant gathering became a seed of resentment sown deep in the heart of a community.

Hatred did not die under drone fire; it multiplied in the dust of destroyed homes and the silence surrounding unacknowledged grief. The strategy of using force to eradicate extremism failed to grasp the nature of ideological struggle, one that feeds not merely on propaganda, but on real, lived injustice. They tried to bomb their way to peace, but instead carved a legacy of bloodshed and generational rage.

This flawed strategy was compounded by the dangerous oversimplification of complex realities. The world was told this was a war between good and evil, civilization and barbarism, a narrative that left no room for nuance.

Binary thinking erased the legitimacy of local grievances and alienated the very populations whose support was essential. Many of the groups hastily labeled as terrorists were, at their origin, resistance movements born out of occupation, exclusion, or national humiliation. By refusing to distinguish between resistance and extremism and between terrorism and terrorism, the international response helped fulfill its own worst prophecy: those seeking justice through peaceful means were criminalized, marginalized, and, in some cases, pushed toward radicalization.

Worse still, the global War on Terror was repeatedly exploited by regional powers to pursue their own strategic interests. Under the banner of counterterrorism, some states selectively supported military operations while simultaneously

enabling non-state actors aligned with their geopolitical goals. Afghanistan became a theater of proxy conflict, where the language of "security" masked decades of interference and manipulation.

Across the broader region, this war was repackaged under different names, doctrines, and visions, but its essence remained a misdiagnosed illness. The ideological battlefield was neglected. Extremism does not only thrive on the frontlines; it spreads quietly, through classrooms, pulpits, prisons, and digital spaces, wherever unaddressed grievances meet manipulative narratives.

Yet instead of investing in inclusive education, critical thinking, and responsible religious discourse, many states restricted dialogue, silenced reformist voices, and allowed regressive

institutions to operate unchecked. Perhaps most damaging was the normalization of collective suspicion. Entire ethnic and refugee communities were viewed as security threats, profiled, surveilled, and, in many cases, dehumanized. From drone strike lists to digital blacklists, the presumption of guilt deepened fragile social divides.

But radicalization does not emerge in isolation. It thrives wherever identity is criminalized. When people are taught directly or indirectly that their faith, ethnicity, or background makes them inherently suspect, they lose trust in the system, and eventually, faith in the very idea of justice.

True and lasting security cannot be built on fear. It must be rooted in dignity, fairness, and inclusion. That demands far more than military operations; it requires moral clarity, his-

torical honesty, and structural reform. Terror is not just a battlefield problem, it is a symptom of deeper political failures, economic injustices, and broken social contracts.

If the goal is truly to eliminate terror, then both the world and the region must stop treating it solely as a military challenge and start addressing it as a human crisis. The cost of failing to do so has already been unbearable. But it is not too late to rethink the strategy, reframe the mindset, and abandon the reckless habit of killing people while labeling them as terrorists, enemies, or agents of instability without due process. Defeating terror requires more than eliminating armed groups. It means dismantling the grievances, illusions, and inequalities that give those groups purpose, recruits, and reason to exist.



In brief

Pakistan outboxes India
K A R A C H I (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's big victory in sports diplomacy against India as Pakistan has been elected as a member of the Board of Directors of the Asian Boxing Federation by defeating India. Pakistan's Khalid Mahmood defeated India's Ajay Singh by 18 votes to 9. The election took place at the Asian Boxing Congress meeting in Thailand. Khalid Mahmood is also the Secretary General of the Pakistan Olympic Association. Pakistan Boxing Federation President Lt. Col. (ret'd) Nasir congratulated Khalid Mahmood. He said success against India is a source of pride for Pakistan. Pakistan Boxing Federation President said Confidence in Pakistan's sports leadership increased at Asian level. He said Pakistan's inclusion in Asian Boxing Board will promote cooperation in the region, he added. He added that Pakistan is gaining a strong position in sports at the international level and Khalid Mahmood's election is a success of Pakistan's positive image and sports diplomacy.

Bumrah likely to miss Asia Cup

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Indian fast bowling ace Jasprit Bumrah is reportedly set to miss the upcoming Asia Cup 2025, scheduled to be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 9 to 28, due to workload management. According to sources close to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Bumrah's participation in the Asia Cup remains unlikely, especially after he featured in only three Tests of the ongoing Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, which India is playing as part of the World Test Championship cycle. The decision to rest him is being seen as a strategic move to manage his workload and preserve his fitness for the busy international calendar ahead. Despite playing just three matches in the high-stakes Test series, Bumrah has remained at the forefront of India's bowling unit. He bowled an exhausting 119.4 overs and claimed 14 wickets. Insiders have indicated that Bumrah's increasing focus on Test cricket could be a major factor in his expected absence from the Asia Cup. India is scheduled to host the West Indies for a two-match Test series, beginning on October 2, just two days after the conclusion of the continental tournament.

Ledecky beats McIntosh

SINGAPORE (AFP): American great Katie Ledecky beat Summer McIntosh to win a thrilling 800m freestyle title on Saturday and said her rule for the event is simple -- "I don't lose 800s". Ledecky won her seventh career gold in the event but she was challenged all the way, touching the wall in a championship-record 8min 05.62sec -- a fingertip ahead of Australia's Lani Pallister (8:05.98) and McIntosh (8:07.29). The race was billed as a potential changing of the guard between the 28-year-old Ledecky and McIntosh, a decade her junior and in red-hot form in Singapore. Pallister made sure she inserted her own name into the conversation but Ledecky had the final word, winning gold again in an event she has dominated for over a decade. "This is my favourite event, it was my first gold," said Ledecky, who made her international breakthrough in the event when she won at the London Olympics as a 15-year-old.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi to host Asia Cup 2025, Pak-India clash set for Sept 14

DUBAI (Monitoring Desk): President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), Mohsin Naqvi, has officially unveiled the venues and match schedule for the highly anticipated T20I Asia Cup 2025, which will be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 9 to 28.

In a post shared on his official X (formerly Twitter) account, Naqvi wrote: "ACC T20 Asia Cup venues and match timings are out! Looking forward to packed stadiums and some truly breathtaking encounters!"

As per the announced venues, the highly anticipated match between Pakistan and India will be held at the Dubai Cricket Stadium. All three matches of the Pakistan cricket team are scheduled to be played in Dubai.

Dubai International Cricket Stadium will host 11 matches, including the final, while eight matches will be played at Abu Dhabi's Zayed Cricket Stadium.

ACC T20 Asia Cup venues and match timings are out! Looking forward to packed stadiums and some

truly breathtaking encounters!

Earlier on July 26, the ACC officially released the schedule for the Asia Cup 2025, placing arch-rivals Pakistan and India in the same group.

The Asia Cup 2025 is set to be held in the T20I format from September 9 to 28 in the United Arab Emirates.

The tournament will feature eight teams divided into two groups, according to a post by ACC President Mohsin Naqvi on X.

Group A includes Pakistan, India, Oman, and

the United Arab Emirates, while Group B comprises Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Hong Kong.

The tournament will kick off on September 9 with Afghanistan facing Hong Kong in the opening match. The much-anticipated clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India is scheduled for September 14 at Dubai.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the Super Four stage, with the top two from that stage competing in the final on September 28.

Jaiswal ton puts India in control, leaves England chasing Oval record

LONDON (AFP): India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal's sparkling hundred in the fifth and deciding Test at the Oval on Saturday left England needing to break a record that has stood for over a hundred years in their quest for a 3-1 series win.

India were dismissed for 396 in their second innings on the third day in south London as the tourists set England a target of 374 to win with just over two days' play remaining.

No side, however, have made more to win in the fourth innings of a Test at the Oval than England's 263 in a celebrated one-wicket victory over arch-rivals Australia back in 1902.

Jaiswal was out shortly before tea for 118, his second hundred of the series after the 23-year-old left-hander's 101 in the first Test at Headingley. He received superb support from Akash Deep in a third-wicket partnership of 107, with the paceman belying his status as a night-watchman with an accomplished 66 - his maiden Test fifty.

Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar, both fresh from hundreds in the drawn fourth Test at Old Trafford, kept the runs coming with contrasting fifties. Sundar launched a brutal assault after a depleted England took the new ball. England, a bowler down after Chris Woakes suffered a shoulder injury diving in the field on Thursday, were too often wayward and further harmed their own cause by dropping six catches in the innings, with Jaiswal relieved three times.

India had resumed on 75-2, with Woakes' absence increasing the pressure on England's three remaining fast bowlers -- Gus Atkinson, Josh Tongue and Jamie Overton.

Punched the air Deep had made 21 when he edged Tongue only for Zak Crawley, diving across to his left from third slip, to floor the two-handed catch.

Deep went to fifty when he pulled Atkinson for a ninth four in just 70 balls faced. The 28-year-old, appearing in his 10th Test, punched the air in

celebration before being embraced by Jaiswal. But just when it seemed India would bat through the morning session without losing a wicket, Deep got a leading edge to backward point as the recalled Overton took his first wicket of the match.

Shubman Gill, who has enjoyed a remarkable debut series as India captain, fell to the very first ball after lunch when lbw to Atkinson for 11.

His exit left Gill just 20 runs shy of opening great Sunil Gavaskar's 54-year-old record for the most runs by an India cricketer in a Test series of 744 against the West Indies.

Gill compiled 754 runs at a superb average of 75, including four hundreds. Jaiswal's quick single off Atkinson saw the elated batsman to a 127-ball century, including 12 fours and two sixes. England dropped a sixth catch when, having set a trap to have Jaiswal taken at leg gully, the batsman duly obliged, only for Ben Duckett to put him down off Overton.

Sevastova topples Pegula to book date with Osaka

MONTREAL (AFP): Anastasiya Sevastova stunned two-time defending champion Jessica Pegula 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 on Friday to book a fourth-round clash with Naomi Osaka at the WTA Canadian Open.

Sevastova, a former world No. 11 now ranked 386th, snapped fourth-ranked Pegula's 11-match WTA Canada win streak, the longest since Serena Williams reeled off 14 consecutive wins in 2011, 2013 and 2014.

She will try to extend her Montreal run in a round of 16 meeting with Osaka, a four-time Grand Slam champion from Japan who ousted another Latvian, 22nd seed Jelena Ostapenko, 6-2, 6-4.

"Somehow, I was down 2-0 in the second set and started to play better and better," Sevastova said. "Third set I played really good. Just trying to stay on the court as long as possible," added Sevastova, who has dealt with injury since returning from maternity leave in February 2024.

In the night session, second-seeded Iga Swiatek -- playing her first tournament since winning Wimbledon -- raced into the fourth round with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Germany's Eva Lys. Swiatek next faces



Denmark's Clara Tauson, who beat Yuliia Starodubtseva 6-3, 6-0.

Pegula, last year's US Open runner-up in her best Slam showing, was the first woman to win back to back Canadian Open titles since Martina Hingis in 1999-2000. But she has struggled in recent months, dropping her openers at Wimbledon and at Washington last week.

The American broke to open the match and again at love to claim the first set.

But she couldn't maintain an early break in the second, with Sevastova breaking for a 5-4 lead and denying Pegula on three break chances before holding in the final game to force a third set in which she seized a 4-1 lead on the way to victory.

'Weird match'

"It was a weird match for me," Pegula said. "I felt like I had total control and then I just played a couple of terrible games for, like, three games."

"That totally flipped the momentum of the match, and I went from being up a set and 2-0 to being down very quickly."

"I don't really feel like I'm playing great tennis," Pegula admitted. "At times I am, but I feel very up and down, kind of sloppy, which I don't like. I've got to figure it out."

Osaka, twice a winner at both the US and Australian Opens, is one match away from her first quarter-final run at either a Grand Slam or WTA 1000 event since she returned from maternity leave at the start of 2024.

Pakistan's home series against Ireland postponed to 2027

KARACHI: Pakistan's home series against Ireland has been postponed to 2027 due to scheduling concerns. The white-ball series, which comprises three T20Is and three ODIs, will no longer be held in its current September-October window. While it was initially expected to be moved further out in the season, ESPNcricinfo has learned it will instead be removed from this home season altogether, and moved to the next one, with both boards looking at alternate dates in 2027.

The series, which would have been Ireland men's first visit to Pakistan was initially announced in May 2024. At the time, it was expected to take place in the early part of Pakistan's home season in 2025. When the PCB released its official season schedule, the series against Ireland was slotted in for September-October. At the time of writing, that remains the official schedule for the series on the PCB website.

However, that window has become increasingly congested for Pakistan, who are currently playing a white-ball series against West Indies. At the end of this month, they take part in a tri-series involving UAE and Afghanistan.

More significantly, the Asia Cup, the schedule and status of which was increasingly uncertain following a brief skirmish between India and Pakistan in May, was announced last week; it runs from September 9 to 28. With South Africa touring Pakistan for two Tests in early October, the window for the series against Ireland shrunk untenably.

"We wanted to balance content and planning better across the two seasons," PCB's international cricket department told ESPNcricinfo. "It made more sense for us both to spread the fixtures further out as we already have substantial content leading into Asia Cup and then the

World Cup."

Pakistan have a busy white-ball schedule this season with the T20 World Cup early next year. They have made little secret of their desire to play as much T20 cricket as possible, initially increasing the number of T20Is to a home series against Bangladesh at the expense of ODIs, before scheduling concerns resulted in their scrapping.

They were also understood to be keen to turn the ongoing series against West Indies to be T20-only, though ESPNcricinfo understands there were other considerations behind that move. In addition, the T20I series against Afghanistan will now be a tri-series, adding further short-form fixtures to their calendar.

Ireland do not have a fixture clash around the time the series was set to be played, though ESPNcricinfo understands the decision to postpone is mutual. —cricinfo

Ferrand-Prevot wins penultimate stage to take lead



SAINT-FRANÇOIS-LONGCHAMP (Agencies): Pauline Ferrand-Prevot claimed the leader's yellow jersey on the penultimate stage of the Tour de France Femmes with a stunning Niewiadoma-Phinney and Vollering were both within 31 seconds of the lead. Le Court suffered a crash on a descent and lost around one minute to the peloton earlier in the day, but managed to catch the main group with more than 45km to go.

Following that recovery, rather than riding to protect the yellow jersey she claimed in winning stage five on Wednesday, Le Court pushed the pace on the Col de la Madeleine to set up an attack by teammate Sarah Gigante.

However, Ferrand-Prevot was able to follow Gigante and launched a counter-attack to make her way to the front of the race 7km from the summit.

Only Fisher-Black and Yara Kastelijn remained from the day's breakaway and Ferrand-Prevot soon proved too strong as she powered clear to the finish. On a gruelling final ascent of the hors categorie Col de la Madeleine, lasting 18.6km at an average gradient of 8.1%, the 33-year-old, who rode to victory solo at Paris-Roubaix in April, put herself in a dominant position with one day of racing left. Sunday's concluding stage offers a final opportunity for the riders to improve their standing, with another mountainous

124.1km route from Praz-sur-Arly to Châtel featuring more than 2,800m of ascent.

Stage eight results

Pauline Ferrand-Prevot (Fra/Visma-Lease a Bike) 3hrs 47mins 24secs

Sarah Gigante (Aus/AG Insurance-Soudal) +1min 45secs

Niamh Fisher-black (Nzl/Lidl-Trek) +2mins 15secs

Demi Vollering (Ned/FDJ-Suez) +3mins 3secs

Yara Kastelijn (Ned/Fenix-Deceuninck) +3mins 3secs

Cedrine Kerbaol (Fra/EF Education-Oatly) +3mins 18secs

Dominika Włodarczyk (Pol/UAE Team ADQ) +3mins 22secs

Katarzyna Niewiadoma-Phinney (Pol/Canyon-Sram-ZondaCrypto) +3mins 26secs

Pauliena Rooijackers (Ned/Fenix-Deceuninck) +3mins 38secs

Marion Bunel (Fra/Visma-Lease a Bike) +4mins 31secs

General classification after stage eight

Pauline Ferrand-Prevot (Fra/Visma-Lease a Bike) 26hrs 16mins 11secs

Sarah Gigante (Aus/AG Insurance-Soudal) +2mins 37secs

Demi Vollering (Ned/FDJ-Suez) +3mins 18secs

Katarzyna Niewiadoma-Phinney (Pol/Canyon-Sram-ZondaCrypto) +3mins 40secs

Cedrine Kerbaol (Fra/EF Education-Oatly) +4mins 11secs

Pauliena Rooijackers (Ned/Fenix-Deceuninck) +4mins 26secs

Dominika Włodarczyk (Pol/UAE Team ADQ) +5mins 2secs

Niamh Fisher-black (Nzl/Lidl-Trek) +5mins 52secs

Evita Muzic (Fra/FDJ-Suez) +5mins 58secs

Juliette Labous (Fra/FDJ-Suez) +7mins 14secs.

Fearless Wallabies stun weary Lions to win third Test 22-12

SYDNEY (AFP): A fearless Australia stunned the British and Irish Lions 22-12 in a chaotic third Test interrupted by lightning Saturday to deny the touring side a 3-0 series whitewash.

In bouts of torrential rain at Sydney's Stadium Australia, the hosts went to the break with an 8-0 lead after an eighth-minute try before showing steely nerve to finish the job. Dylan Pietsch and Max Jorgensen both dotted down to put them 15-0 clear.

The Wallabies had thrown away an 18-point advantage to lose the second Test in heart-breaking fashion last week, but learned their lesson. They largely controlled the contest in front of 80,312 fans, swift at the break-down and with plenty of attacking flair despite atrocious conditions. "It was a disappointing week after such a tough loss," Wallabies captain Harry Wilson said. "To bounce back the way we did, I'm so proud of everyone. To get the win was so special."

There was a lot of collateral damage, with Lions skipper Maro Itoje and Australia's Tom Lynagh both failing concussion tests and Lions lock James Ryan

stretchered off after being knocked out making a tackle.

The teams were forced from the field two minutes into the second half because of a lightning warning, with play suspended for 35 minutes. "We spoke about that before the game, that it could happen," Wilson said. "We had a few plans in place. We just wanted this game so badly, whatever we had to do we were going to do."

Victory ensured the Lions' six-week visit ended in disappointment after winning all eight previous tour games. "Our goal before the series was to try to win 3-0," said Dan Sheehan, who was the Lions acting captain after Itoje went off concussed. "We gave it everything under harsh circumstances. The Wallabies have been in every Test and I thought they deserved the win. "It was a bit disappointing on our end to finish with this." The Lions won the first Test comfortably 27-19 in Brisbane before clinching a controversial 29-26 series-winning victory in the last minute last week in Melbourne.

That loss was gut-wrenching

for Joe Schmidt's Australia, the head coach rallied his injury-hit troops to bank the biggest win of his tenure.

Lightning break In doing so, they denied the Lions a first unbeaten series since 1974 and gained some much-needed confidence heading into the Rugby Championship this month.

Lions coach Andy Farrell resisted resting any of his big guns despite the Test being, on paper at least, a dead rubber.

In contrast, Australia made five changes, four of them because of injuries to Rob Valetini, Allan Alaalatoa, David Porecki and Harry Potter. Australia were playing for pride and as the rain belted down they were full of intent, crossing for an early try and an important psychological boost. Following a period of pressure on the Lions line, they went wide on a penalty advantage with Joseph-Aukuso Suaalii flicking a pass to wing Pietsch who dived over in the corner.

With the packs slipping and sliding in the grim conditions, the Lions were frustrated, unable



to launch any sustained attacks with Australia winning a host of turnovers to keep the pressure on. Scrum-half Nic White, in his final Test before retiring, was everywhere, leading the line as Australia pressed for another try.

After failing to breach the Lions defence, they finally opted for three points with Lynagh

nailing a simple penalty kick.

Australia picked up where they left off after the lightning break, with Jorgensen gathering and streaking clear when Bundee Aki fumbled the ball on 54 minutes.

Ben Donaldson converted to stretch their lead to 15-0, but the Lions woke up and

Welshman Jac Morgan crashed over for a converted try to pile the pressure back on.

A yellow card to Ronan Kelleher with 12 minutes deflated the Lions and the Wallabies pounced again with Tate McDermott crossing to seal the win before Will Stuart's late consolation for the visitors.



In brief

PFA discards adulterated milk

RAWALPINDI (APP): To ensure the availability of safe and healthy milk, the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) launched a pre-dawn crackdown on adulterated milk being supplied to Rawalpindi. According to a PFA spokesperson, PFA teams set up surprise checkpoints at Mandra, Chakwal Road, and Rawat early Saturday morning. Teams inspected 20 milk trucks, which carried a total of 89,000 liters of milk. During the inspections, PFA found 4,200 liters of milk had been diluted with water and immediately destroyed on the spot. In addition, PFA also imposed fine totaling Rs 225,000 on those supplying substandard milk to the city. PFA spokesperson said that such checks are being conducted regularly to ensure safe and healthy milk supply to consumers. Citizens have been asked to report any complaints related to food safety by calling the PFA helpline at 1223.

Two members of theft gang arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, through coordinated efforts by Koral Police Station and the Women Police Station, arrested two suspects—one of them a woman—allegedly involved in multiple theft incidents across the federal capital. A police spokesperson told APP on Saturday that the arrested individuals, identified as Waqas and Allah Rakhi, were apprehended through effective use of technical surveillance and human intelligence. Police recovered valuable stolen items from their possession, including mobile phones and a laptop. Separate cases have been registered against the suspects, and further investigations are underway. He said that the ICT Police, under the supervision of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq, are carrying out indiscriminate operations across the city to eliminate criminal elements and curb theft-related offenses. DIG Tariq emphasized that the safety of citizens and protection of their property is a top priority. "No criminal elements will be allowed to disturb public peace," he stated.

1,318 road accidents reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): In the month of July, Rescue 1122 Rawalpindi responded to 1,318 road traffic accidents across the district. A total of 1,490 people were affected in these incidents. According to spokesman Rescue 1122, timely rescue operations were carried out in all cases, with teams maintaining their average response time. As many as 17 people lost their lives during road accidents, 677 were seriously injured, while 796 slightly injured. Most of the accidents were reported of vehicles and motorcycle riders. Among the victims were 1,214 men and 276 women. The majority of those injured or killed were aged between 11 and 40 years. The common causes of these accidents include speeding, reckless driving, wrong turns, tire bursts, and other negligence. Rescue Emergency service is not only providing emergency assistance but is also making efforts to reduce the number of road accidents through awareness and prevention campaigns, spokesman added and urged the public to follow traffic rules strictly, to prevent fatal road accidents. Meanwhile, 84 fire incidents were reported to Rescue 1122 Rawalpindi. Rescue teams reached these incidents on time and carried out rescue operations. A total of 92 people were injured in these fire incidents. Rescue firefighters controlled these fire incidents on time.

Ahsan Iqbal meets Chinese vice FM Sun Weidong



ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, met the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong in Beijing. Vice Minister Sun Weidong warmly received Minister Ahsan Iqbal upon his arrival, said a press release issued here on Saturday. During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest with a particular focus on the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC), especially industrial development and business-to-business cooperation.

Ahsan Iqbal conveyed the message of goodwill from Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the Chinese leadership. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations. The minister remarked that during Sun Weidong's diplomatic tenure in Pakistan, we transformed the CPEC journey from a paper plan into a multi-billion-dollar reality. The minister appreciated China's unwavering support

for Pakistan during recent regional tension and said, The people of Pakistan take pride in the everlasting friendship with the leadership and people of China. Ahsan Iqbal praised China's leadership for playing a constructive role in global peace.

He added, "Pakistan-China friendship continues to grow stronger with every passing day and changing circumstances." He remarked that China's development model remains a source of inspiration for Pakistan. Learning from China's experience, Pakistan

is moving toward building an export-oriented and technology-driven economy, he added. He further stated that the Five Es framework under the URAAN Pakistan initiative is fully aligned with the vision of CPEC Phase II. "The core objective of URAAN Pakistan is to ensure economic, social, and institutional stability through people-centric reforms," the minister said. He emphasized that industrial and technological sectors will be key pillars in the second phase of CPEC.

He further added that our top priority is to develop a skilled, educated, and capable workforce.

He added that business-to-business cooperation will help further expand the scope of CPEC. Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong reaffirmed China's strong commitment to enhancing cooperation with Pakistan across various sectors. He said that Pakistan's Five Es framework offers a promising path toward economic stability and self-reliance. He further stated that Minister Ahsan Iqbal is highly respected in China for his leadership and vital role in the execution of CPEC projects.

ANF seizes narcotics worth over Rs. 21.5 million

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) have conducted series of successful operations against drug traffickers across the country.

In nine different raids, ANF arrested 11 drug smugglers and the recovery of more than 107 kilograms of various narcotics, valued at over Rs. 21.5 million.

During the operations, ANF recovered 84 grams of liquid cannabis from a parcel at a courier office located in Chaklala garrison, Rawalpindi. The package had arrived from the United Kingdom and was intercepted before delivery.

Near Harappa Toll Plaza in Sahiwal, ANF officials

seized 4 kilograms of opium, 2 kilograms of hashish, and 500 grams of ice from a vehicle, arresting three suspects.

Near Saranan Road in the Pishin area, 45 kilograms of opium were recovered from a car, and the accused was arrested on the spot. In Tarnol, Islamabad, ANF officials seized 25 kilograms of opium and 22.8 kilograms of hashish from a truck and arrested a smuggler.

Near the Indus Highway in Kohat, 2 kilograms of opium were recovered from a motorcyclist. At Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, two separate operations were carried out one leading to the recovery of 2 kilograms of

ice from a bus passenger, and another where 1.8 kilograms of heroin were found in a suspect's bag.

In another operation near Ring Road in Peshawar, 1.3 kilograms of heroin were seized from a vehicle and the accused was taken into custody. In a similar action near Burhan Toll Plaza in Attock, 710 grams of opium were recovered from a passenger in public transport.

All cases have been registered under the Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) Act, and investigations are ongoing. The ANF reaffirmed its resolve to continue operations across the country to eliminate drug trafficking and ensure public safety.

Aleem Khan visits Islamabad-Murree Expressway, reviews construction activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Saturday conducted a detailed visit of the Islamabad-Murree Expressway and reviewed the ongoing developmental and construction activities being carried out there. During the visit, he issued important directives to officials of the National Highway Authority (NHA), said a press release.

Federal Minister for Communications emphasized that the construction of the Murree Expressway should be completed at the earliest and in line with international standards in order to provide citizens and tourists safe, uninterrupted and comfortable travelling facilities.

He pointed out that the installation of aesthetically pleasing lighting along the Expressway has been completed while construction of rest

areas and emergency stopping spots is in progress, swiftly.

While inspecting the under-construction rest areas, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan directed the concerned authorities to accelerate the pace of work, ensure the provision of essential facilities and complete all tasks within the set deadlines.

Talking on this occasion, Abdul Aleem Khan reiterated that providing top-quality travel facilities for tourists is a key priority of the National Highway Authority. He also stated that the construction and beautification of commemorative walls on both sides of the Expressway will be completed soon.

He issued clear instructions that no illegal constructions would be permitted within the designated boundaries along the Expressway and emphasized that strict action must be

taken against encroachments.

He expressed satisfaction over the implementation of the E-Tag system at the Murree toll plaza and the subsequent elimination of long queues, terming it a step forward in facilitating the public and improving traffic flow.

Tourists and the general public expressed gratitude to Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan for the improving measures taken on the Murree-Islamabad Expressway, stating that upgrading this vital route to a high-quality, well-equipped standard is a commendable initiative by the NHA.

On this occasion, Federal Secretary for Communications and senior NHA officials also provided the Federal Minister with a detailed briefing on ongoing development projects.

Patriotic apparel sees sales boom as Independence Day nears

ISLAMABAD (APP): With Independence Day approaching, online retailers are seeing a rise in sales for dresses that reflect national pride, offering everything from traditional shalwar kameez to contemporary fusion styles, all featuring the national flag or its colors, with dupattas inscribed with national songs also in high demand.

As Independence Day draws near, online stores are seeing a significant rise in demand for clothing that embodies patriotism. From timeless kurtas to fashionable modern designs, many collections now prominently feature the national flag and its colors, a report from the state news channel stated.

Retailers are offering a wide range of options, from traditional kurtas to trendy

modern designs, all adorned with the national flag and its colors, said a online retailer. Online shoppers have also expressed excitement, with many commenting on the personalized touches, such as shirts featuring names of children, which make the outfits more meaningful.

"I got my kids' names printed on their shirts for the 14th of August which is a special way to celebrate our pride," said one shopper. Dupattas with patriotic poetry lines or verses from national songs are also flying off the shelves, adding an emotional touch to the attire. "The dupatta with the lines from 'Tarana-e-Milli' is perfect for this year's celebrations," shared another customer.

Retailers, too, are noting

the increased interest in flag-themed and personalized products. "We have seen a huge spike in sales for items featuring the national flag, and the customizations, like adding names or patriotic lines, are becoming a popular trend," said a spokesperson from one leading online store.

Many are also offering Pakistan Day-themed pictures on t-shirts, providing an additional way for customers to display their patriotism. As 14th August draws closer, it is clear that the combination of tradition, personalization, and patriotism is winning hearts across the nation.

"Our personalized dupattas, especially those with lines from national songs, have been flying off the shelves," another seller

shared. "It's heartwarming to see how people are connecting emotionally to the products." Another seller highlighted the creative designs that shoppers are gravitating towards this year. "We have noticed a trend where people are opting for Pakistan Day-themed images on t-shirts it is a great way to show off your pride in a fun and unique way," they said. "People want to wear something that tells a story, whether it is the lines of a national song or a picture representing Pakistan's history."

This surge in customized patriotic fashion has not only boosted sales but also brought a new level of excitement and personal connection to the 14th August celebrations, said a citizen of Islamabad.

IG Rizvi reviews law & order

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Saturday chaired a high-level meeting with all DIGs, SSPs, and SPs at the Central Police Office to review law and order and police performance.

A police spokesperson told APP that the IGP assessed ongoing efforts to curb crime, strengthen Red Zone security, and improve coordination for safeguarding sensitive installations.

He directed officers to enhance patrolling and checkpoints using modern technology and intelligence-based operations to ensure citizen safety. IG Rizvi also reviewed the performance of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), especially its intelligence work, threat assessments, and preventive actions against terrorism.

The meeting evaluated police station performance, internal management practices, and the public complaint redressal system.



ISLAMABAD: Roads adorned with billboards and flags, extending a warm welcome to Iran's President of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian.

PIMS denies negligence in snakebite child's treatment

ISLAMABAD (DNA): The Executive Director of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Dr. Imran Sikandar, has refuted the allegations circulating on social media related to the treatment of a snakebite victim, calling them baseless and misleading.

In an official statement, Dr. Sikandar confirmed that the child, who was brought to PIMS on the morning of July 31 at 8:35 AM, was given prompt and proper medical attention.

"The child was examined within 17 minutes and samples were sent for tests. He was administered 10 anti-venom vaccine injections immediately, and additional

medication was also initiated," said Dr. Sikandar. As the child's condition deteriorated, another 10 anti-venom injections were administered.

A senior physician and ICU team were also involved in the case during the vaccination process. Due to severe breathing difficulties, doctors decided the patient needed to be placed on a ventilator.

"At that time, all ventilators at PIMS were already occupied," Dr. Sikandar clarified. "We contacted Polyclinic Hospital, but no ventilator was available there either. The child was referred to a private hospital after confirming ventilator availability." He added

that no negligence occurred, and all necessary steps were taken to save the child's life. "We provided the child with complete treatment. The referral was made only after ensuring ventilator availability at the private facility," he noted.

PIMS also shared the child's electronic medical record to verify the facts and stressed that over 700 vials of anti-venom vaccine are currently available in the hospital's stock. Dr. Sikandar urged the public not to believe or spread misinformation. "The viral content on social media misrepresents the situation and undermines the dedicated efforts of our medical staff," he concluded.

AIOU admissions continue for all programs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Admissions for all academic programs from Matriculation to PhD are now open at Allama Iqbal Open University for the Autumn Semester 2025.

According to the AIOU, this is a golden opportunity for students across the country to benefit from modern and quality education while staying at home. All interested students can obtain the online admission form and prospectus from the University's official website www.aiou.edu.pk.

Details about all programs, admission criteria and other guidance can be obtained by contacting the university's helpline at

051-111-112-468. In addition, complete information and assistance can also be availed from nearby regional campuses.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has strictly instructed all regional offices to ensure complete guidance and maximum facilitation for students so that no aspiring learner is deprived of this educational opportunity.

He has also directed regional coordinators to effectively promote the admission campaign at the grassroots level to convey the message of education to every segment of society.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood expressed the hope that students from across the

country would take maximum advantage of this opportunity and resume their educational journey toward a brighter future. He further instructed that students who are unable to pay fees due to financial constraints should be provided fee concessions so that underprivileged and deserving children are not deprived of education.

This initiative of Allama Iqbal Open University will prove to be an important milestone in promoting education and ensuring access for every segment of society. Whether you are a student or a parent, seize this opportunity today and secure a bright future by enrolling now.

Stray dog population raises alarm, CDA responds to concerns

ISLAMABAD (APP): Residents of G-8/1 and G-8 Markaz are urging the authorities concerned of CDA to expand on-ground operations, ensure safer streets, and launch awareness campaigns to prevent pet abandonment.

Talking to APP here on Friday, residents of Sector G-8/1 have raised serious concerns over the growing number of stray dogs in their neighbourhood, urging the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to take immediate and humane action. Shumyla Noreen, a local resident, warned that the unchecked presence of

stray dogs is becoming a daily threat, especially for children and the elderly. "It's becoming risky for people to move around freely, particularly during early morning and late evening hours," she said.

Another resident, Sanum, echoed the concern, highlighting the difficulties faced by pedestrians. "Many people are afraid to walk on certain streets due to the fear of being chased or bitten," she said. In response, when a senior official from CDA was contacted, he negated the impression and said that the civic body was taking all possi-

ble measures to effectively tackle the issue.

"The public is welcome to visit the center and observe the care and treatment being provided to these animals," the official stated. The CDA had inaugurated Islamabad's first dedicated facility for stray dog management in September 2022, with a capacity to house 500 dogs, he said.

The center aims to implement humane, non-lethal methods such as sterilization and vaccination under the World Health Organization's Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release (TNVR) model, he added.

Two children drowned

NEILI (Pajhwok): Two children have been drowned and lost their lives in the Helmand River in Shahrstan district of central Daikundi province, an official said on Saturday. Police spokesman Ghulam Ali Javed told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident occurred on Friday afternoon in the Patazar Pul-i-Pay Ashkarabad area of the district. According to Javed, the victims were 10-year-old Fereshta and 9-year-old Nariman.

Child rescued in Helmand

LASHKARGAH (Pajhwok): A child has been rescued from kidnappers in Musa Qala district of Helmand, an official said on Saturday. Police spokesman Mullah Izatullah Haqqani said the child was rescued during an operation by security forces in Toghi area of the district on Friday. He said one individual had been arrested in connection with case. He added the child had been handed over to his family and the detainee would be referred to judicial organs after preliminary investigations.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Safar 08, 1447 — Sunday, August 03, 2025

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

\$10b MoU signed to produce 10,000MW electricity

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) and Azizi Group Energy Investment Company have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the production, transmission and distribution of 10,000 megawatts of electricity in Afghanistan, backed by a \$10 billion investment.

The signing ceremony took place today (Saturday) at the Government Information and Media Center in the presence of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, along with other officials of the Islamic Emirate.

The MoU was signed by the Acting Minister of Water and Energy and the Director General of Azizi Group.

Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor, Acting Minister of Water and Energy, stated

that the \$10 billion investment was aimed at producing 10,000 megawatts of electricity. He described the day as a historic milestone and a major achievement for the country.

Mansoor emphasized that electricity was a fundamental necessity for every citizen and industrial sector in today's world.

He noted that considerable efforts had been made over the past four years to improve the energy sector.

Highlighting Afghanistan's rich potential in renewable energy sources—including water, wind, solar, and gas—he stressed that these resources required substantial investment and development. He assured MoEW was fully prepared to collaborate with investors in this field.

The Acting Minister also pointed out the need for

building substations to store and distribute electricity effectively across the country.

He added that technical teams from both parties would coordinate plans and that the Islamic Emirate would ensure the security of these projects.

Mirwais Azizi, Director General of Azizi Group, called the MoU a turning point in opening Afghanistan's economic gateway, describing it as a historic day for the nation.

He stated that despite Afghanistan's vast natural resources, they have been underutilized due to more than 30 years of conflict.

Azizi underscored the critical role electricity plays in powering nations and affirmed that Afghanistan urgently needs at least 10,000 megawatts of electricity. Of this, 4,000 megawatts would be pro-

vided 24/7 electricity to the population, while the remaining 6,000 megawatts would be allocated to the industrial sector.

He announced that surveying and design work would commence immediately after the signing of the MoU, creating job opportunities for thousands of Afghan citizens. With the implementation of these projects, various sectors of the economy are expected to grow, and government revenues will increase through the establishment of new factories.

Azizi further stated that technical teams from the MoEW and Azizi Energy would begin site visits to start the project design and survey processes. The design phase is expected to be completed within six months, after which employment opportunities for 100,000 to 150,000 peo-



ple will be created.

He also announced the establishment of a training center to equip Afghan

workers with the necessary skills for the initial phases of project implementation.

In conclusion, Azizi remarked: "I'm not a political figure seeking a ministry, premiership, or pres-

idency. That's not who I am. Whatever I do, I do it sincerely and for the good of this nation."

Germany renews push to deport Afghans and Syrians

KABUL (TOLONews): The Prime Minister of Germany's Bavaria state has once again emphasized the deportation of foreign criminals, including nationals from Afghanistan and Syria.

Markus Söder stated that Germany has reformed its immigration policy, making it clear that all criminals and human traffickers should understand they will be arrested and deported more swiftly in Bavaria than elsewhere.

Bavarian Premier Markus Söder said: "Law and order prevail in Bavaria. Foreign criminals must be decisively deported—even to Afghanistan and Syria.

Overall, we have brought a shift in migration policy. The principle is: more people should be deported, and fewer should be accepted."

Meanwhile, some Afghans in Germany claim the German government has tightened its stance toward foreign nationals, especially Afghans.

According to them, the federal government has granted more authority to state governments in the deportation of foreigners considered criminals under German law.

Political analyst Najib Rahman Shamal said: "Germany has recently imposed stricter restrictions

on refugees involved in criminal activities. These countries have reinforced their borders and imposed severe limitations."

Refugee rights activist Alireza Karimi also commented, saying that Söder's remarks reflect a harsh treatment of refugees in Germany. He added that insisting on the deportation of Syrian and Afghan refugees indicates a significant legal shift in German state policy.

Germany's renewed push to deport foreign nationals comes as the country deported 81 Afghans to Kabul for the second time this solar year on July 17.

1st pressure cooker making factory opens in Jawzjan

S H I B E R G H A N (Pajhwok): The first ever pressure cooker manufacturing factory, with a \$500,000 investment, has started operating in Shiberghan, the capital of northern Jawzjan province.

This industrial factory, named "Mansour Hashimi," was officially inaugurated in the presence of government officials, tribal elders, and religious scholars and has begun its activities in the production of steam boilers.

Sayed Zabihullah Hashimi, head of the "Mansour Hashimi" manufacturing factory, told Pajhwok Afghan News that this factory, established with an investment of 500,000 US dollars, will produce between 300 to 1,000 pressure cookers daily.

He said the factory was created to generate employment opportunities to prevent the migration of young people abroad.

He said one hundred young people are employed in various departments of the factory.

Meanwhile, Qari Abdulhai Omar Mokhtar, head of the Jawzjan Environmental Protection Department, called the opening of this factory an effective step toward economic growth and reducing unemployment among the youth.

At the same time, several workers at the company expressed happiness that job opportunities have been provided to them in this factory.

Month-long volleyball tourney concluded

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A month-long volleyball tournament, featuring 10 teams, has concluded in the capital of southern Ghazni province, with Haidar Karrar team emerging victorious, an official said on Saturday.

Director of Sports and Physical Training Bilal Mujahid told Pajhwok Afghan News the tournament was organized by the Volleyball Federation in cooperation with his department.

He said Haidar Karrar and Ariana teams found their way to the final of the event, where Haidar Karrar won the title after defeating their opposition.

Director of Sports and Physical Training Bilal Mujahid said the event was aimed at promoting volleyball game in the province, encouraging youth participation, strengthening the spirit of friendship, protecting young people from social harm and identifying new talents.

Meanwhile, participants expressed their satisfaction with the successful organization of the tournament in the province.

One participant, Sher Ali, told Pajhwok that such tournaments could enhance athletes' experience and urged that facilities should be provided to athletes in various areas.

Kabul drivers complain about rising fuel prices in local market

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of drivers in Kabul are complaining about the rising prices of fuel and gas in local markets. In recent days, the fuel and gas markets in the country have seen serious fluctuations.

Drivers in the capital say that despite the decline in the value of the US dollar against the Afghan currency, the prices of fuel and gas have instead increased.

Driver Dawood said: "When fuel and gas prices rise, they go up by 7 or 8 Afghanis at once, but when they fall, they only drop by

one or one and a half Afghanis."

Another driver, Zia Khan, added: "They've increased the price of gas by 10 Afghanis per kilo and the price of fuel by 10 Afghanis. The dollar has dropped, but they're not lowering their prices."

Some drivers say that due to the fuel price hikes at filling stations, they are facing serious challenges and can no longer cover their basic expenses.

These drivers are urging officials to seriously control fuel prices in the mar-

kets.

Driver Khair Mohammad stated: "The government must monitor and control this—whether it's the municipality or another institution. When the dollar drops, why don't fuel prices decrease?"

Given the growing complaints about rising fuel prices in the country, some experts are calling for investment in exploring and extracting Afghanistan's domestic oil sources.

Economic analyst Mohammad Asif Stanekzai said: "If we look at the

Amu Darya oil basin, some recent contracts—implemented by the Islamic Emirate—are positive steps. Delays occurred because there was reluctance to refine the oil inside the country. There was a push to refine it abroad, which led to violations of agreements and shifted job opportunities to other countries."

This comes as Afghanistan currently imports nearly 90% of its fuel and gas from Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

Severe drought uproots over 200 families in Kandahar

KANDAHAR CITY (Pajhwok): More than 200 families have left their homes and moved to other areas in southern Kandahar province due to severe drought. The displaced families are now asking the government provide them with urgent assistance, an official said on Monday.

Nasrullah, a resident of Ghozang village in Nish district, who has moved to Shah Walikot district, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "I can see my dried-up gardens with my own eyes. These gardens were our entire life. Our village has dried up. Now we are forced to move to Shah Walikot".

Previously, groundwater was found up to 60 meters deep in their area, but now the level has dropped to 120 meters, making it impossible for them to afford to dig such deep wells and purchase solar panels to extract water, he added.

Mir Mohammad, another resident, explained: "We are unable to dig deep wells. We drilled one well, it dried up, we drilled another, it did not produce water. We are no longer able to farm and live in our area".

Abdul Rauf, a resident of Pir Qadam area of Ghorak district, is among those who have been forced to leave their area due to severe drought.

"There was no water, our fig and other tree gardens dried up, we had to walk for three hours to get drinking water, there was nothing else to live on there": he claimed.

According to him, many of the people remaining there are still facing the problem of water shortage and want to move to other areas, but due to economic problems, they cannot leave their homes.

They asked the government to ensure proper water management, build dams, and provide emergency assistance to the displaced

families.

Mohammad Hamid, a professor at Kandahar University and an environmental protection expert, said that Kandahar's economy is based on agriculture and that if water is not managed properly, an economic crisis will occur.

If the situation continues like this and serious measures are not taken for water management, not only Ghorak and Nish districts but the entire Kandahar province will face drought, Hamid explained.

Their department is working with other institutions to build dams in districts to control water and prevent drought, spokesman for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Department Mohammad Hanif Haqmal said.

"Nearly 40 percent of residents of the Mianko, Wachi Kandi, Landi Kandi, Kholgai, Kochne Karezi, Chargombat, and Ghozang areas of Nish district are facing severe drought.

Some gardens there have also dried up, and many families have been forced to leave their areas".

He said there were no exact figures, but more than 200 families from Nish and Ghorak districts had migrated to other areas due to the drought.

Climate change, its impacts on Afghanistan

The Earth's climate is changing rapidly; global warming is causing drought in some areas, but severe storms, rains, and floods in others.

Afghanistan is one of the countries with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions (0.19 percent), but is reported to be the fourth most vulnerable to climate change. This situation has severely affected the country's agricultural sector, which is still the main source of livelihood for nearly 80 percent of Afghans. Unseasonal rains and floods linked to climate change are also causing crop failures.

80 youth provided vocational training in Samangan province

AIBAK (Pajhwok): Vocational training has been provided to nearly 80 individuals in northern Samangan province, an official announced on Saturday.

However, the participants urged the caretaker government to pay more attention to creating long-term employment opportunities.

Labour and Social Affairs Director Maulvi Faiz Mohammad Raihan told Pajhwok Afghan News the participants were trained in areas such as furniture and upholstery, mobile phone repair, packaging, motorcycle repair and tailoring.

According to him, the programme ran for six months, during which participants received both theoretical and practical training in their respective trades.

Several young people who joined the programme expressed satisfaction with the opportunity but urged the government to take serious steps toward ensuring sustainable job creation.

Mohammad Idrees, one of the participants enrolled



in the tailoring and upholstery sections, said: "I was previously unemployed and facing many challenges. Now I'm happy that I've been given the opportunity to learn a profession."

He added that the government and aid organisa-

tions should create long-term job opportunities for youth in various sectors to help address the problem of unemployment.

Samiullah, another participant in the training programme, shared a similar view and also called for

sustainable employment opportunities.

In recent years, similar vocational training programmes have been held in Samangan and hundreds of young people have received completion certificates upon graduation.

Afghan athletes win 100 medals in int'l events



KABUL (Pajhwok): National Olympic Committee Director Maulvi Ahmadullah Wasiq says Afghan athletes had won 100 medals in various international competitions this year so far.

Speaking at a ceremony held to honour winners of the Asian Wushu Championships hosted by China, Wasiq said that sports in Afghanistan had made notable progress this year.

He added that it was a matter of great pride and joy that Afghan athletes had succeeded in winning medals at the Asian championships.

"This year, Afghan ath-

letes secured more than 100 medals at different international events," Wasiq stated.

Also speaking on the occasion, Bul Bal Shah Khalid, head of the Wushu Federation, said the 12th edition of the Asian Wushu Championships was held from 22nd to 31st July in Shanghai, China, with participation from all Asian countries.

He noted that the competitions were held across three categories—juniors, youth, and adults—and Afghanistan was represented by five athletes.

In the junior category, Afghan athlete Taha won a

gold medal and a silver medal in two separate Wushu routines.

According to Khalid, another Afghan athlete, Ahmad Naveed Akbari, defeated his Turkmen opponent in the combat category and secured a bronze medal.

Taha, a member of Afghanistan's national Wushu team and winner of both gold and silver medals, told Pajhwok Afghan News that he was delighted with his achievements at the championships. He said he had practiced and prepared thoroughly for the competition, which enabled him to win the two medals.

Sugar, tea prices down

KABUL (Pajhwok): Sugar and black tea prices declined while that of cooking oil, petrol and liquid gas increased during the outgoing week in Kabul, market sources said on Saturday.

Food items

Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders' Association, said the price of a 16-litre bottle of Malaysian cooking oil surged from 1,550 to 1,600 afghanis due to an increase in its price in global markets.

He said the price of a 49-kilogram bag of Indian sugar fell from 2,500 to 2,450 afghanis and the rate of a kilogram of African black tea dropped from 400 to 380 afghanis.

He linked the decline in sugar price to an increase in imports of the community

from India and fall in the US dollar's rate against the afghani.

However, he added the prices of other essential food items remained unchanged compared to the last week.

The price of a 49-kilogram sack of Kazakh flour cost 1,450afs, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice stayed stable at 2,600afs and one kilogram of 400afs Indonesian green tea at 350afs.

Hamid Sufizada, a retailer at Dahna-i-Bagh market, put the retail price of a 49-kg bag of Kazakh flour at 1,500 afs, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice at 2,650afs and a 49-kg sack of Indian sugar at 2,500afs.

A 16-litre bottle of cooking oil accounted for 1,650afs, one kilogram of

black tea for 430afs and the same quantity of green tea for 400afs, he added.

Fuel prices

A worker at the Ahmadyar pump station told Pajhwok the price of one litre of petrol surged from 64 to 67 afs.

However, he said the price of diesel remained unchanged at 65afs.

Gold prices up

Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold stayed stable at 5,950afs and the same amount of the Russian variety at 4,700afs.

Haji Mohammad Hussain, owner of the Sadaqat Money Exchange Service, said one US dollar traded at 68.80afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees at 235afs.



MULTAN: Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir shaking hands with members of academia during induction ceremony of the Z-10ME attack helicopter.

US envoy meets Israeli hostage families in Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV (AFP): US envoy Steve Witkoff on Saturday met the anguished families of Israeli hostages still held in Gaza, as fears for the captives' survival mounted almost 22 months into the war sparked by Hamas's October 2023 attack.

Witkoff was greeted with some applause and pleas for assistance from hundreds of protesters gathered in Tel Aviv, before going into a closed meeting with the families. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum confirmed the meeting was underway and videos shared online showed Witkoff arriving as families chanted "Bring them home!" and "We need your help."

The visit came one day after Witkoff visited a US-backed aid station in Gaza, to inspect efforts to get food into the devastated Palestinian territory. Yotam Cohen, brother of 21-year-old hostage Nimrod Cohen, told AFP in the square: "The war needs to end. The Israeli government will not end it willingly. It has refused to do so."

"The Israeli government must be stopped. For our sakes, for our soldiers' sakes, for our hostages' sakes, for our sons and for the future generations of everybody in the Middle East." After the meeting, the Forum released a statement saying that Witkoff had given them a personal commitment that he and US President Donald Trump would work to return the remaining hostages.

The United States, along with Egypt and Qatar, had been mediating ceasefire talks between Hamas and Israel that would allow the hostages to be released and humanitarian aid to flow more freely. But talks broke down last month and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government is under increasing domestic pressure to come up with another way to secure the missing hostages, alive and dead.

He is also facing international calls to open Gaza's borders to more food aid, after UN and humanitarian agencies warned that more than two million Palestinian civilians are facing starvation. But Israel's top general warned that there would be no respite in fighting in Gaza if the hostages were not released.

"I estimate that in the coming days we will know whether we can reach an agreement for the release of our hostages," said army chief of staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, according to a military statement. "If not, the combat will continue without rest," he said, during remarks to officers inside Gaza on Friday. Of the 251 people who were kidnapped from Israel during Hamas's attack in October 2023, 49 remain in Gaza, 27 of them dead, according to the military.

Palestinian armed groups this week released two videos of hostages looking emaciated and weak. Zamir denied that there was widespread starvation in Gaza. "The current campaign of false accusations of intentional starvation is a deliberate, timed, and deceitful attempt to accuse the IDF (Israeli military), a moral army, of war crimes," he said.

"The ones responsible for the killing and suffering of the residents in the Gaza Strip is Hamas," Hamas's 2023 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, mostly civilians, according to a tally based on official figures. A total of 898 Israeli soldiers have also been killed, according to the military.

Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed at least 60,332 people, mostly civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry, deemed reliable by the UN. Gaza's civil defense agency said Israeli strikes killed 21 people in the territory on Saturday. Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal said two people were killed and another 26 injured after an Israeli strike on a central Gaza area where Palestinians had gathered before a food distribution point run by the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF).

He added that Saturday's bombings mostly targeted the areas near the southern city of Khan Yunis and Gaza City in the north. Witkoff visited another GHF site for five hours on Friday, promising that Trump would come up with a plan to better feed civilians. Adnan Abu Hasna, of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, told AFP that the agency had "approximately 6,000 trucks ready for the Gaza Strip, but the crossings are closed by political decision. There are five land crossings into the Strip through which 1,000 trucks can enter daily."

The UN human rights office in the Palestinian territories on Friday said at least 1,373 Palestinians seeking aid in Gaza had been killed since May 27, most of them by the Israeli military. Israel's military insist that soldiers never deliberately target civilians and accuses Hamas fighters of looting UN and humanitarian aid trucks.

PHC halts deployment of Rangers at Tobacco units

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has stopped the deployment of Rangers and other law enforcement officers in tobacco processing Industrial units, which was ordered by the Revenue Department for monitoring operations.

PHC divisional bench comprising of Justices Ijaz Anwar and Khurshid Iqbal, heard a petition filed by Mujeeb-ur-Rehman. The petitioner, represented by lawyers Shamail Ahmed Butt and Khizar Bilal Khan, argued that their registered tobacco unit in Mardan, which supplies raw tobacco for cigarettes and employs hundreds, is being harassed by the government despite paying taxes. Under Section 45 of the Federal Excise Act 2025, Inland Revenue officers were placed in these units to monitor production, sales, stock, and records. The government also ordered CCTV installation in green leaf threshing units on July 10, 2025, for monitoring access, the lawyers stated.

The petitioner claimed that existing monitoring systems are sufficient, and the presence of armed Rangers creates fear, causing employees to quit and business losses, especially during the threshing season. The additional costs of food and lodging for security personnel are also burdensome. PHC issued notices to the Revenue Department, Federal Interior Secretary, FBR, and others, asking for their response, and halted the deployment of security personnel until further orders.

Court issues written verdict regarding by-election on NA-1: Peshawar High Court

(PHC) has issued a written verdict on a writ petition challenging the issuance of an election schedule for NA-1 Chitral following the disqualification of elected Member National Assembly, Abdul Latif Chitrali.

In the written judgment, the court restrained the Election Commission from taking further action on the notification dated July 29 regarding NA-1 Chitral and issued notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan, the Election Commission, and other parties involved. According to the written order of the division bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal, a trial court in Islamabad sentenced the petitioner and other accused to 10 years imprisonment on May 30. The petitioner stated that the sentences of the other accused were overturned by the Islamabad High Court, while his appeal is still pending in the Islamabad High Court.

However, the Speaker of the National Assembly sent a reference to the Election Commission, which hastily issued a decision declaring the petitioner disqualified. The order further states that the Election Commission issued a disqualification notification under Article 63-A(H). The petitioner argued in the writ petition that the sentence is not yet final, as his appeal is pending in the Islamabad High Court, and the Election Commission's decision is premature and against the law. Therefore, notices have been issued to the Attorney General of Pakistan and the Election Commission, and the Election Commission has been directed to refrain from taking further action on the July 29 notification regarding NA-1 Chitral.

Imran's sons have applied for both Nicop and visa

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: PTI founder Imran Khan's sister, Aleema Khanum, clarified on Saturday that his sons have applied for National Identity Cards for Overseas Pakistanis (Nicops) as well as visas to visit Pakistan.

Clarifying the matter on Saturday while speaking to reporters at Adiala Jail, she said: "The Nicop of one [of the brothers] is missing and the other can't find his card so they've submitted two applications: one to issue their Nicop, which is valid for the next six to seven years ... and they have also applied for the visa which can be issued within an hour."

"It's their choice. They have Nicop, they have British passports. So what issue do they (the interior ministry) have in issuing a visa?" She stated that she had access to tracking numbers for the applications, challenging claims that the applications were not received.

KP Jirga proposes dialogue with Afghanistan for peace in region

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Following the All Parties Conference hosted by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a series of regional jirgas aimed at addressing peace and security issues has officially begun. The first of these regional consultative jirgas was held on Saturday at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar.

Tribal elders and elected representatives from Khyber and Orakzai districts, as well as from the tribal sub-divisions of Darra Adam Khel and Hassan Khel, participated in the gathering. The jirga was attended by 150 tribal elders and leaders, six members of the provincial assembly, three members of the national assembly,

and one senator. Senior government officials including Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, and Inspector General of Police Zulfikar Hameed were present at the event, alongside relevant commissioners, deputy commissioners, and senior police officers.

The jirga put forward the following unanimous recommendations: There is complete unity among all stakeholders in the fight against terrorism and terrorists for the restoration of peace. Military operations and the displacement of local populations under any circumstances are not acceptable. Development is linked to peace, and once peace is restored, the pace of development must accelerate. No one has demanded, received, or will be granted control over any of the province's resources, including minerals.

The tribal elders recommended that the federal government arrange for a delegation comprising representatives of the provincial government and tribal elders—to engage in dialogue with Afghanistan. The jirga should be provided with all necessary support and resources to facilitate this process. It was also announced that the next regional jirga will focus on the Mohmand and Bajaur districts, followed by a third jirga covering North and South Waziristan (Upper and Lower), and the final regional jirga will be held for Kurram district.



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