

Plane crash in Spain

BARCELONA (AFP): Spanish emergency services on Sunday searched for two occupants of an acrobatic plane that went into the sea off the coast of Mallorca in the Balearic Islands, the civil guard said. Witnesses on a boat in the area said they saw the plane go down on Saturday evening just off the port of Soller, after performing a series of acrobatics just off the island's north coast.



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Pakistan, Iran keen to boost bilateral trade volume to \$10bn: PM



ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the leadership of Pakistan and Iran were keen to enhance the bilateral trade volume to the target of \$10 billion as soon as possible.

Addressing a joint press stakeout with President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, the prime minister said that today, both countries signed a number of documents to transform them into agreements and to realize the potential of \$10 bil-

lion trade target, adding that the respective delegations from the two sides would further hold detailed meetings to move forward in this regard.

He said during their bilateral meeting, both sides discussed the broad aspects of their bilateral ties, brotherhood relations, religious and cultural ties, and held comprehensive talks to further boost them.

The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to the Iranian president for his heartfelt message to the people of Pakistan.

He said in June, Israel without any rhyme or reason, unleashed aggression against Iran which was not only strongly condemned by the government of Pakistan but by the entire 240 million Pakistani people, as there was no reason for Israel to stoke war.

Prime Minister Sharif also expressed his condolences on the martyrdom of Iranian generals, scientists and the civilians during the conflict and prayed for the departed souls and for the injured for their early recovery.

He also lauded the Iranian leadership for showing bravery and wisdom during the Israeli aggression and said the Iranian forces and the people faced the aggression and exposed the Israeli defence system with volleys of retaliatory missile attacks.

The prime minister reiterated Pakistan's principled stance over Iran's right to a nuclear programme for peaceful purposes under the UN charter, saying that Pakistan would stand by its stance.

In the fight against terrorism, he said both sides shared views that it could not be tolerated at any cost. If anyone in Iran was affected by terrorism, it was akin to a victim of terror in Pakistan, he observed.

He further said the two brotherly countries would take effective measures to eliminate terrorism.

The prime minister further said that in Gaza, the worst kind of genocide of the people of Palestine continued unabated and appreciated the Iranian leadership for raising their voice for the rights of the Palestinian people.

Reaffirming Pakistan's support, he said they had always supported the Palestinian people, and recently, the deputy prime minister had effectively presented Pakistan's views at the UNSC forum on the grave situation in Gaza.

"The newly born kids are being slaughtered, mothers and youth are being killed; streets have turned into red with their blood, while food assistance routes are blocked, leading to deaths of innocent children. Such scenes are heart-wrenching and cannot be recalled," he regretted and stressed upon the entire Muslim Ummah and the world community to raise their solid voice and make efforts for permanent peace and ceasefire in Gaza, otherwise his-

tory would not forgive them.

The prime minister stressed upon taking of practical steps rather than mere verbal rhetoric. In the valley of illegally occupied Kashmir, he said the situation was not different from Gaza, where the innocent people were being killed, and thanked Iran for its support for the right of the freedom of Kashmiri people.

The prime minister, on behalf of the people and the government of Pakistan, welcomed the president on his maiden visit to Pakistan.

The deputy prime minister/foreign minister, speaker National Assembly, chairman Senate, members of the federal cabinet and members of the Iranian delegation were also present.

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, in his remarks, expressed gratitude for the position adopted by the parliament, government and the people of Pakistan for supporting Iran during 10-day Israeli aggression.

He said the bonds of affinities and affection between the two countries and nations were deeply rooted in religion, culture and history, citing poetic verses of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, in which he stressed upon unity among the Muslim coun-

tries.

Advancing the neighbourhood policy was among the priority of their foreign policy, and Pakistan was not only their neighbour but also a brotherly country, he added.

The president expressed his satisfaction that fortunately, serious and sincere efforts were being initiated by both sides for cooperation in diverse field, and to take their current trade volume of \$3 billion dollars to the projected target of 10 billion dollars.

He said today, important documents were also signed which would enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields.

President Pezeshkian said that they were determined to take steps to implement these agreements, while development of land, sea and air routes would facilitate trade.

Given the threats from terrorists in the border areas, both sides agreed to enhance the border security for the safety of the people of the two countries, he added.

The Iranian president underlined the need for development of trade and economic cooperation which would contribute to progress, prosperity, peace and stability in the region.

He also condemned the Israeli aggression and genocide in Gaza and steps to destabilise the region.

The Iranian president said the two sides believed that the association and cooperation among the Muslim countries were needed to take shape to counter expansionist designs of the Zionist's regime and ensure stability in the region.

Iran and Pakistan had asked the global bodies to leave the double standards, and stop spillover of war, violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries, he added.

He also expressed his pleasure to arrive in his second home; Pakistan and expressed his gratitude to the government of Pakistan and the prime minister for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to them.

Earlier, the Iranian president and the prime minister witnessed signing ceremony of 12 different agreements and MoUs to enhance cooperation in plants protection and quarantine, collaboration in science, technology and innovation, IT, exchange programme in culture, education, youth, health, science and research, model text of MoU on maritime security and fire extinguishing, MoU on judicial assistance, implementation programmes on products inspection and quality, tourism cooperation and joint ministerial statement on free trade agreement.

Six more die of hunger in Gaza as trucks reach border

CAIRO (Reuters): Six more people died of starvation and malnutrition in Gaza over the past 24 hours, its health ministry said, underlining the enclave's humanitarian emergency as Egyptian state TV said two trucks were set to make a rare delivery of fuel on Sunday.

The new deaths raised the toll of those dying from what international humanitarian agencies say may be an unfolding famine to 175, including 93 children, since the war began, the ministry said.

Egypt's state-affiliated Al Qahera News TV said two trucks carrying 107 tons of diesel were set to enter Gaza, months after Israel severely restricted aid access to the enclave before easing it somewhat as starvation began to spread.

Gaza's health ministry has said fuel shortages have severely impaired hospital services, forcing

doctors to focus on treating only critically ill or injured patients. There was no immediate confirmation whether the fuel trucks had indeed entered Gaza.

Fuel shipments have been rare since March, when Israel restricted the flow of aid and goods into the enclave in what it said was pressure on Hamas militants to free the remaining hostages they took in their October 2023 attack on Israel.

Israel blames Hamas for the suffering in Gaza but, in response to a rising international outcry, it announced steps last week to let more aid reach the population, including pausing fighting for part of the day in some areas, approving air drops and announcing protected routes for aid convoys.

United Nations agencies have said that aid drops of food are insufficient and that Israel must let in far more aid by land and open

up access to the war-devastated territory where starvation has been spreading.

COGAT, the Israeli military agency that coordinates aid, said 35 trucks have entered Gaza since June, nearly all of them in July.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said on Sunday that nearly 1,600 aid trucks had arrived since Israel eased restrictions late in July. However, witnesses and Hamas sources said many of those trucks have been looted by desperate displaced people and armed gangs.

More than 700 trucks of fuel entered the Gaza Strip in January and February during a ceasefire before Israel broke it in March in a dispute over terms for extending it and resumed its major offensive.

Palestinian local health authorities said at least 40 people had been killed by Israeli gunfire and

airstrikes across the coastal enclave on Sunday. Deaths included persons trying to make their way to aid distribution points in southern and central areas of Gaza, Palestinian medics said.

Among those killed was a staff member of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which said an Israeli strike at their headquarters in Khan Younis in southern Gaza ignited a fire on the first floor of the building.

The Gaza war began when Hamas killed more than 1,200 people and took 251 hostage in a cross-border attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, according to Israeli figures. Israel's air and ground war in densely populated Gaza has since killed more than 60,000 Palestinians, according to enclave health officials. According to Israeli officials, 50 hostages now remain in Gaza, only 20 of whom are believed to be alive.

PDMA issues alert for monsoon rains in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has directed district administrations and other relevant organizations to remain on high alert as Pakistan Meteorological Department forecasts more intermittent to heavy rains, wind, and thunderstorms across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from August 4 to August 7, 2025.

In a statement issued here Sunday by PDMA, the new weather system could lead to flash floods in upper and central districts, including Abbottabad, Mansehra, Swat, Chitral, Dir, Malakand, Kohistan, Buner, Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, D.I. Khan, and Waziristan.

Heavy rainfall may cause water levels to rise in local streams, drains, and rivers, with a particular focus on the Chitral, Swat, Panjkora, and Kabul rivers. The mountainous regions face a risk of landslides, while urban areas could experience urban flooding.

The PDMA has warned that strong winds and thunderstorms may damage vulnerable structures such as houses, electricity poles, billboards, and solar panels.

In response, all district administrations have been instructed to take necessary precautions, including cleaning drainage systems and providing timely warnings to residents, tourists, and travellers.

Asif, Masoud discuss Iran, Pakistan ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran have reaffirmed their commitment to further broaden bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. Both sides emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral ties in wide-ranging and mutually beneficial areas.

This was discussed during a meeting between the visiting President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, and President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Sunday.

Welcoming President Pezeshkian, President Zardari said that Pakistan and Iran enjoy fraternal relations which are based on shared religion, culture and mutual respect. The

two leaders exchanged views on major regional and international developments and stressed the need for coordinated diplomatic efforts to prevent the escalation of conflicts and to promote peace, security, and stability in the region.

President Zardari appreciated Iran's principled positions on regional issues and acknowledged Tehran's consistent support for regional cooperation.

He expressed gratitude for Iran's solidarity during critical moments and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working closely with Iran for a peaceful and prosperous future. The President also thanked His Eminence, Syed Ali Khamenei, for his consis-

tent support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

President Zardari strongly condemned the unprovoked Israeli aggression against Iran and lauded the bravery and unity of the Iranian nation during the recent 12-day war. He expressed hope that President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian's visit would further solidify the brotherly relations between the two countries.

President Pezeshkian thanked the leadership and people of Pakistan for their support during the 12-day war and appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in advocating de-escalation, dialogue, and diplomacy for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Iranian President calls on Field Marshal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called on Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir in Islamabad on Sunday.

During the meeting, Army Chief welcomed Iranian President on his maiden visit to Pakistan. The meeting also discussed security issues between the two countries.

The meeting also dis-

cussed overall regional situation.

Earlier, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar called on President of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian in Islamabad on Sunday.

Welcoming the Iranian President, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's deep commitment to its historic and brotherly ties with Iran, emphasizing their strong foundations

in shared history, common cultural heritage, faith and mutual respect.

The Iranian President appreciated Pakistan's support and reaffirmed Iran's resolve to improving bilateral collaboration in various areas of shared interest.

He also looked forward to meaningful discussions with Pakistani leaders to further reinforce the political and economic ties between the two friendly nations.

Tens of thousands join pro-Palestinian march over Sydney Harbor Bridge



SYDNEY (Reuters): Tens of thousands of demonstrators braved pouring rain to march across Sydney's iconic Harbor Bridge on Sunday calling for peace and aid deliveries in the war-torn Gaza Strip, where a humanitarian crisis has been worsening.

Nearly two years into a war that Palestinian authorities say has killed more than 60,000 people in Gaza, governments and humanitarian organizations say a shortage of food is leading to widespread starvation.

Some of those attending the march, called by its organizers the 'March for Humanity', carried

pots and pans as symbols of the hunger.

"Enough is enough," said Doug, a man in his 60s with a shock of white hair. "When people from all over the world gather together and speak up, then evil can be overcome."

Marchers ranged from the elderly to families with young children. Among them was Wikileaks founder Julian Assange. Many carried umbrellas. Some waved Palestinian flags and chanted "We are all Palestinians."

New South Wales police said up to 90,000 people had attended, far more than expected. The

protest organizer, Palestine Action Group Sydney, said in a Facebook post as many as 300,000 people may have marched.

New South Wales police and the state's premier last week tried to block the march from taking place on the bridge, a city landmark and transport thoroughfare, saying the route could cause safety hazards and transport disruption. The state's Supreme Court ruled on Saturday that it could go ahead.

Acting Deputy Police Commissioner Peter McKenna said more than a thousand police were deployed and the size of the crowd had led to fears of a crush.

"No one was hurt," he told a press conference. "But gee whiz, I wouldn't like try and do this every Sunday at that short notice."

Police were also present in Melbourne, where a similar protest march took place.

Diplomatic pressure ramped up on Israel in recent weeks. France and Canada have said they

will recognize a Palestinian state, and Britain says it will follow suit unless Israel addresses the humanitarian crisis and reaches a ceasefire.

Israel has condemned these decisions as rewarding Hamas, the group that governs Gaza and whose attack on Israel in October 2023 began an Israeli offensive that has flattened much of the enclave.

Israel has also denied pursuing a policy of starvation and accused Hamas of stealing aid.

Australia's center-left Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said he supports a two-state solution and Israel's denial of aid and killing of civilians "cannot be defended or ignored," but has not recognized Palestine.

Therese Curtis, a marcher in her 80s, said she had the human right and privilege of good medical care in Australia. "But the people in Palestine are having their hospitals bombed, they're being denied a basic right of medical care and I'm marching specifically for that," she said.



ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, and President Asif Ali Zardari during a meeting at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Sunday.



Independence Day activities in full swing across Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Independence Day activities intensified across Punjab on the instructions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. This year celebrations would be marked with the theme "Marqa-e-Haq," to honor the nation's resilience and unity.

Independence Day activities also intensified in Gujranwala, Gujrat, Khanewal, Sahiwal, Khushab, Jhang, Vehari, Jhelum, Toba Tek Singh, Gujranwala, Chiniot, Sargodha and Chakwal.

In Jhelum, Punjab Chief Minister's Health Advisor Azhar Kayani attended an Independence Day ceremony, where

Pakistan's birthday cake was also cut. Kayani and others also attended a ceremony of a specially prepared multi-meter-long flag.

Likewise, special ceremonies to hoist the national flag on government buildings and decorate homes with flags and banners are also ongoing. Various ceremonies are also being held in schools. As Independence Day nears, youths are enthusiastic to purchase colourful national flags and portraits of national heroes for decorating their houses and vehicles.

Vendors, who have set up special stalls on the roadside, have expressed

happiness over an increase in sales as children throng to buy stuff. National flags could be seen hoisted on main roads including the highways of the provincial capital.

Furthermore, cultural and literary organizations have arranged special programs to celebrate Independence Day.

Children are busy collecting badges and also beautifying their bicycles with special stickers inscribed with messages of Independence Day.

Booksellers and shopkeepers say that this year, due to the special theme "Marqa-e-Haq," stickers are selling like hot cakes.

Students throng bookstores ahead of school opening

LAHORE (APP): There are only a few days left for schools to open before the start of new academic activities, due to which children and parents have turned to bookshops to buy stationery.

Children have already started preparing for school after the holidays. They have started buying school bags, geometry boxes and other items of their favorite characters, bags with pictures of Spider-Man and dolls.

Parents of junior grade students told APP that children mostly like to buy stationery made of their favorite characters. Shopkeepers said that there is more demand for cartoon bags and stationery instead of ordinary bags. They said that sales have decreased due to the 25 percent increase in the cost of books, copies and stationery. All businesses are affected by inflation. They urged the government to reduce taxes.

According to a study, students typically perform worse after summer vacation. This is all due to a lack of study during the summer vacation. As a result, even during the holidays, educationists recommend that children should not take a break from their studies.



KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Ministers Saeed Ghani taking to media after hoisting national flag at Quaid-e-Azam House in connection with Independence Day and Maraka-e-Haq.

Tessori hosts luncheon for Journalists

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori hosted a luncheon for the Journalists at Governor House Karachi to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ). The event was attended by prominent journalists from across the country. Federal Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, senior central leaders of MQM Pakistan Anis Qaimkhani, Dr. Farooq Sattar, Aminul Haq and others were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori described journalism as a sacred profession, stating that the pursuit of truth and voicing the concerns of the public are the core responsibilities of media professionals. He emphasized the media's vital role in

strengthening democracy, promoting social justice, and advancing national development.

Governor Kamran Tessori further stated that the Governor House, once reserved for the elite, has now been opened to the public in the spirit of public service. Highlighting Karachi's importance, he said, "This city is not only the largest in Pakistan but also the economic lifeline of the nation. Its ports, industries, trade activities, and unmatched talent make Karachi the engine of Pakistan's economic progress. Without its stability and prosperity, national development is incomplete."

President Karachi Union of Journalists (KUJ), Tahir Hassan, lauded the Governor's public welfare initiatives, calling him a model leader for other

provinces. PFUJ General Secretary Arshad Ansari praised the decision to open the Governor House to the public and conferred upon Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori the title of "People's Governor."

Senior MQM leader Dr. Farooq Sattar commended PFUJ's ongoing efforts for the welfare of journalists, calling them exemplary.

PFUJ President Afzal Butt expressed hope that Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori would support initiatives to provide journalists with modern IT and digital skills training, enabling them to keep pace with the evolving media landscape. He also appreciated the IT classes launched under the Governor Sindh's leadership and expressed a desire that similar opportunities be made available to the journalist community.

Crackdown on counterfeit agricultural medicines

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government has launched a major crackdown against sellers of counterfeit agricultural medicines and fertilizers in Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar, Golarchi, and Sajawal, seizing 5,318 bags of fake agricultural products.

The provincial team of the Agriculture Department conducted raids and collected 59 suspicious samples of agricultural medicines and fertilizers from various districts, which were then sent to the laboratory for analysis.

According to a spokesperson for the Agriculture Department,

the purpose of these operations is to protect farmers from the harmful effects of fake and substandard agricultural products.

The spokesperson reported that 400 bags of Hapo Granules and 68 bags of Vertaco agricultural products were seized from an unregistered dealer's shop in Sajawal. Meanwhile, in Shaheed Fazil Rahu area of Golarchi, thousands of suspicious bags from FMC United Private Limited were confiscated, including 1,000 bags of counterfeit Fertira Granules.

Imran Ali, spokesperson for the Agriculture Department, stated that

over 40 samples of fertilizers and pesticides were collected from Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad, which have been sent to the laboratory for testing.

Agriculture Minister Sardar Muhammad Bakhs Mahar emphasized that strict legal action is being taken against those involved in the sale of fake and substandard agricultural products to ensure the economic protection of the province's farmers.

The Agriculture Department spokesperson further revealed that all the seized counterfeit agricultural medicines were intended for use in rice crops to eliminate pests.

Murtaza inaugurates New Fish Food Street

KARACHI (PPI): Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab today inaugurated the Keamari Fish Food Street.

The project is a Karachi Metropolitan Corporation initiative designed to offer a distinctive recreational area for residents. The launch event was attended by Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad, Sindh Assembly members Asif Khan and Liaquat Askani, and other officials.

Addressing the attendees, Mayor Wahab described the Fish Food Street as a new hub for entertainment and dining. Decorated with vibrant umbrellas and lights, the space aims to attract both residents and visitors. The street features diverse food options, including seafood, barbecue, and traditional fare, with comfortable seating arrangements for families.

Mayor Wahab detailed the extensive development work undertaken, including paving, tiling, installation of Victorian-style poles, sewerage lines, entrance gates, patchwork, and kerb stones. Beautification efforts and the addition of colorful umbrellas further enhance the area's appeal.

The mayor emphasized that this venture, fulfilling a long-standing community desire, provides a modern and unique space where aesthetics and convenience blend. He stated that such endeavors would continue to improve Karachi's appeal and offer better amenities to its inhabitants.

Mayor Wahab attributed the project's realization to the Pakistan Peoples Party's leadership and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision, highlighting the ongoing development work across Karachi. He contrasted this with previous administrations, alleging unfulfilled promises and ineffective slogans of change.

He further announced the redirection of heavy traffic away from the city center through Shahrah-e-Bhutto to Kathore, with the Kathore segment to be inaugurated by Chairman Bhutto Zardari on December 31, 2025. He also mentioned the restoration of key bridges like Netty Jetty, Jinnah, and ICI under the PPP's leadership.

In line with Independence Day celebrations, Mayor Wahab revealed plans for a new

canal from Hub Dam, set for completion within ten months and inauguration on August 14, 2025.

This 100 MGD canal will supplement Karachi's water supply, particularly benefiting western districts and Keamari.

Other developments include the TP-3 sewage treatment plant in Mauripur to support local fishermen, a new SICVD satellite center in Baldia Town for cardiac care, and two substantial sports complexes in Mauripur and Baldia.

Mayor Wahab affirmed his commitment to Karachi, highlighting its diverse population and lamenting the divisive mindset that has hindered the city's progress. He criticized the federal government's neglect of Keamari, while emphasizing his own dedication to the area's development.

He also announced plans to restore six historic markets, aiming to preserve Karachi's cultural heritage. He called for collaboration among all political parties to address the city's challenges through a Charter of Karachi, stressing the importance of unity for the city's overall betterment.

CSS exam schedule announced

LAHORE (APP): The CSS exam schedule 2026 has been announced. The FPSC has issued an advance public notice of CSS 2026 schedule. The public notice for online applications for Multiple Choice Preliminary Test will be issued on August 10, 2025.

The FPSC says that applications for MPT will be received from August 11 to 25; applications for written examination will be submitted from December 15 to 30, 2025, adding the written examination will be held on February 4, 2026.

Proclaimed offenders, nabbed

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Police have arrested 83,571 proclaimed offenders (POs) and 33,905 court fugitives this year in a sustained province-wide crackdown against individuals wanted in serious crimes.

The large-scale operation, launched on the directives of Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar continues with full force across all districts.

According to spokesperson, Of the 83,571 proclaimed offenders arrested so far, 28,794 belonged to

Category A, which includes individuals wanted in heinous crimes such as murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, and kidnapping, while 54,777 were from Category B. Simultaneously, 7,376 court fugitives from Category A and 26,529 from Category B were also apprehended.

Punjab Police also arrested 17,580 habitual criminals, including 6,785 in Category A and 10,795 in Category B, as part of efforts to disrupt repeat offenders and improve public safety.

In Lahore alone, police

teams have arrested 18,053 proclaimed offenders, 13,540 court fugitives, and 7,395 habitual criminals, reflecting the intensity and effectiveness of operations in the provincial capital.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar appreciated the efforts of police teams and directed all Regional and District Police Officers to further intensify the campaign. He stressed that such action must continue relentlessly to ensure the rule of law, protect citizens, and uphold justice across Punjab.



LAHORE: Women select old books from a roadside stall on Mall Road. —APP Photo

Strict crackdown on begging

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Home Department has decided to launch a strict crackdown to control the growing trend of begging and the crimes related to it.

According to the Home Department sources, a high-level committee has been formed to crack down on begging, with Secretary Social Welfare Javed Akhtar Mahmood as the head of the committee.

DIG Special Branch, MD Safe City, CTO will be members, DG Social Welfare, Additional Secretary Home, Additional Secretary Prosecution are also members, DG Child Protection Bureau, DG FIA representative will also be included in the committee.

This committee will give suggestions to eliminate begging in Punjab including Lahore within 15 days. A meeting of the Anti-Begging Committee is convened in the Home Department on Monday (tomorrow).

It is worth mentioning here that in a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Punjab home department in February this year, set up beggary barracks in every jilly across the province, increasing the total capacity to 10,000 beggars with spaces for women and children as well.

In Lahore's two jails, the department has designated barracks to keep 1,000 beggars while others will be accommodated in the jails of Kasur, Sheikhupura, Multan, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Narowal.

Three suspects involved in gang rape killed

LAHORE (INP): Three suspects allegedly involved in the gang rape of a newly married woman in front of her husband in Lahore's Chuhng area were killed in an alleged police encounter with the Crime Control Department (CCD).

Police said a search operation is underway to arrest the last suspect. The CCD, a special unit of the Punjab Police established on February 26, 2025, under the directive of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, is tasked with combating serious and organized crime across the province.

According to a CCD spokesperson, the four suspects had abducted and repeatedly assaulted a newly married woman in front of her husband. The attackers also stripped and beat the husband, and recorded video footage of the crime before fleeing the scene.

Police conducted raids on two different locations to arrest the suspects, and CCD personnel came under fire from the suspects.

During the exchange of gunfire, three suspects, Owais, Irshad and Zahid were killed reportedly by fire from their own accomplices. A fourth suspect managed to escape under the cover of darkness. Police have launched a manhunt to track him down.

The bodies were shifted to the city morgue for post-mortem examination. Police sources revealed that the killed suspects had prior criminal records and were known for committing sexual assaults during robberies.



PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud presenting cash prize to a special student Sudais Ahmed for getting high marks in Matric examinations.

High-level meeting finalizes anti-polio action plan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting was held at the Civil Secretariat Peshawar, chaired by Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, to finalize the district-level action plans for Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu divisions for the period of August to December 2025.

The two-day session focused on comprehensive discussions regarding anti-

polio efforts in the southern districts of the province. Deputy Commissioners, District Health Officers, and representatives of District Emergency Operation Centres from D.I. Khan and Bannu divisions, along with all relevant stakeholders, participated in the meeting.

The discussions centered on aligning district-level strategies with the broader provincial strategy.

During the session, dis-

trict teams presented their operational plans, which included modern micro-planning methods, detailed analysis of gaps, and targeted strategies to overcome challenges in high-risk areas vulnerable to poliovirus.

The finalized plan will serve as a comprehensive framework for all polio campaigns to be conducted between August and December 2025 and will also guide future interven-

tions beyond the scheduled campaigns.

The meeting was also attended by the National Emergency Operations Centre Coordinator, the Additional Secretary Health/Coordinator of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa EOC, team leads from UNICEF and WHO, technical focal persons of the Polio Eradication Initiative, and other senior members from both the national and provincial EOCs.

Governor flays Bannu terror attack

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Fath Khel police check post in Bannu.

In a statement, he paid tribute to the police for eliminating the Indian-backed terrorists and lauded their courage and professionalism in the line of

duty.

The Governor expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of a police officer in the attack and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

He prayed for the elevation of the martyr's rank in Jannat and patience for the grieving relatives.

Governor Kundi also conveyed his best wishes for the speedy recovery of

the injured police personnel.

He saluted the bravery and sacrifice of the martyred officer, emphasizing that the police force has made tremendous sacrifices in the fight against terrorism.

He reaffirmed that the sacrifices of police personnel will not go in vain and will contribute to lasting peace in the province.

PTI's protest is nothing but a political spectacle: Humayun

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary General of the Pakistan People's Party, Muhammad Humayun Khan, has said that PTI's August 5 protest is nothing but a political spectacle and will yield no results.

Responding to the announcement of the protest, he stated that this is yet another failed attempt to mislead the public. He emphasized that the protest is a futile exercise and will not achieve anything.

Humayun Khan said the country currently needs unity, stability, and progress—not protests that serve no purpose beyond political point-scoring. He asserted that the solution to public issues lies only within the framework of Parliament, the Constitution, and the law.

He further said that PTI's past is filled with false promises, blame games, and confrontations with institutions. He termed the August 5 protest as a continuation of that same negative politics, whose only objective is to mislead the public and exert pressure on national institutions.

He added that the Pakistan People's Party has always sought solutions to national issues through democracy, the Constitution, and Parliament—and will continue to guide the people with the same democratic vision in the future.

Kundi condoles with journalist

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday expressed deep sorrow over the demise of the mother of senior journalist and BOL News Bureau Chief, Syed Zahir Shah Shirazi. In his condolence message, the Governor prayed for the departed soul of her in eternal peace and grant courage to bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Govt preserves heritage sites

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Department of Archaeology and Museums Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Abdul Samad here Sunday said that the scientific restoration and preservation of two important historical sites of Kafirkot and Rehman Dheri was underway in DI Khan districts. In a statement issued by the department on Sunday, he said that the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is taking serious steps to preserve the historical significance and cultural heritage of Dera Ismail Khan.

The price of Muslim blood in a hypocritical world

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

IN a world where campaigns to save endangered species and protests against animal cruelty gather global support within hours, the irony grows unbearable when one observes the persistent silence on the merciless slaughter of Muslims—whether in Bosnia in the 1990s or in Gaza today. The same societies that champion animal rights with moral fervour seem numb when Muslim bodies pile up, when their cities are reduced to ashes, or when their women cry out in despair. The hypocrisy is not subtle; it is institutionalised. This double standard has become so entrenched that it no longer stirs conscience or shame.

Human rights activists in Europe and the West mobilise instantly when a whale is beached, a dog is abused, or a circus mistreats its elephants. But when Muslim men are summarily executed, children mutilated by airstrikes, or women subjected to systemic abuse, the outrage evaporates. The guardians of global morality fall curiously silent. It is this selective empathy that exposes the deepest cracks in the edifice of international human rights.

The atrocities committed against the Bosnian Muslims between April 1992 and December 1995 remain among the darkest chapters in post-World War II history. With the collapse of Yugoslavia, Serb nationalist forces embarked on a systematic campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against Bosniak Muslims. Towns like Prijedor, Foča, Zvornik, and above all, Srebrenica, became killing fields. Over 100,000 Bosnians were murdered—most of them Muslims. In the notorious genocide of Srebrenica, more than 8,372 Muslim men and boys were executed in July 1995 while under the so-called protection of United Nations peacekeepers. The Dutch UN forces stationed there, ill-equipped and politically shackled, watched helplessly as the massacre unfolded.

But the horrors were not limited to killings. An estimated 50,000 women, many held in detention camps such as Omarska and Trnopolje, were subjected to rape and sexual slavery as weapons of war. These were not rogue incidents—they were coordinated strategies to destroy a people physically, mentally, and spiritually. And yet, human rights organizations at the time refrained from labeling it genocide until years later, choosing to call it a civil war. The UN passed resolutions, NATO debated intervention, but the bloodshed continued until Bosnia was shattered.

Fast forward to Gaza. The war that began in October 2023 has become the longest and deadliest assault on the Palestinian people in recent memory. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), by mid-2025, more than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed—over 70% of them women and children. More than 80,000 have been wounded. The Israeli bombing campaign has targeted not only Hamas infrastructure but also hospitals, schools, UN shelters, and residential towers. The al-Ahli Baptist Hospital bombing alone claimed nearly 500 lives. The Rafah crossing, Gaza's only lifeline for aid and evacuation, has been bombed multiple times, turning humanitarian relief into a gamble with death.

Entire neighborhoods—Shuja'iyya, Jabalia, Khan Younis—have been flattened. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have admitted to using "bunker-busting" bombs and white phosphorus, whose use in densely populated areas may constitute war crimes under international law. The World Health Organization has reported that Gaza's health system has collapsed. Over 1.9 million Gazans—85% of the population—have been displaced, many of them multiple times. They now live in makeshift tents, without access to clean water, medicine, or basic food supplies.

And yet, despite this scale of devastation, there has been no credible international intervention. Like Bosnia, the United Nations has condemned, appealed, and failed. The International Criminal Court has opened investigations into potential war crimes, but global power dynamics, particularly the use of the veto in the UN Security Council, have prevented any meaningful pressure or action.

But what is more shameful—and difficult to ignore—is the eerie silence of the Muslim world itself. Despite being home to over fifty nations and vast wealth and political influence, the Muslim world has remained largely passive. This silence stems from internal disunity, dependency on Western economies, fear of diplomatic isolation, and political fragility. Many Muslim governments are either entangled in internal crises or are reluctant to jeopardise ties with Western powers that provide security, aid, and legitimacy to their regimes. Some have even normalised relations with Israel or chosen to remain neutral in exchange for economic benefits. Their silence is not of helplessness, but of compromise—of choosing comfort over conscience.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), representing nearly two billion Muslims, has issued statements, held conferences, and proposed resolutions—but it has failed to translate these into unified diplomatic or economic pressure. In both Bosnia and Gaza, Muslims suffered not only from external aggression but also from the absence of genuine, courageous solidarity from their own brethren.

The parallels are stark. In both Bosnia and Gaza, the aggressors were given space by the world's hesitation, by its fear of offending powerful lobbies, or by its deep-seated Islamophobia. In Bosnia, it was Serb nationalism allowed to fester unchecked. In Gaza, it is Zionist expansionism hiding behind the excuse of security. In both cases, Muslim identity itself was marked as a threat—dehumanised, delegitimised, and demonised.

What adds insult to injury is the post-conflict whitewashing. Bosnia, after its devastation, was handed the Dayton Accords, which cemented ethnic divisions and rewarded aggression with territory. The international community sent aid, but not justice. Gaza, too, may someday receive reconstruction funds, but at the price of its political voice. The dead will not rise again. The orphans will not forget. And the world will move on, unchanged and unapologetic.

What are we left with, then? A pattern of global silence when Muslims are massacred. A system of international law that selectively applies justice. A media narrative that calls resistance "terrorism" and calls bombardment "self-defense." We are left with the bitter truth that the value of a Muslim life, in the eyes of the global order—and shamefully, even among some Muslim leaders—is less than that of an animal in the West.

When we look at the ruins of Gaza and the graves of Bosnia, we are not merely witnessing past and present tragedies—we are witnessing the failure of modern civilisation. It is not the bombs or bullets alone that destroy nations—it is the silence of those who could have stopped them.

25 years old girl battling liver disease — desperate father's plea for help

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A heartbroken father from Peshawar's Nothia Jadeed area, Munir Ahmed, has made a heartfelt appeal to philanthropists and the general public to help save the life of his 25-year-old daughter, who has been suffering from a severe liver disease for the past five years.

According to medical experts, her survival now depends on an urgent liver transplant, which is estimat-

ed to cost around 6 million rupees (PKR 6,000,000) — an amount far beyond the family's means.

Speaking to *The Frontier Post*, Munir Ahmed shared the painful journey of his daughter's illness. She has been admitted to several leading hospitals over the past few years, including Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar, Khyber Teaching Hospital, and the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Islamabad. After thorough

examinations and detailed medical reports, doctors unanimously recommended that the only remaining option to save her life is a liver transplant, to be conducted at Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical Institute (Zardari Hospital) Karachi. Munir, who lives in a rented house, says he has already spent all his life savings on her treatment and is now left with nothing. He has no stable source of income and feels helpless in the face of this crisis. With

deep sorrow and desperation, he is appealing to kind-hearted individuals and charitable organizations to step forward and assist him in covering the cost of the surgery.

He further stated that all medical documents, test reports, and doctors' recommendations are available and can be presented upon request. He earnestly requests anyone who can help to reach out on the contact number below 0301-8861396

Gandhara Hindko Board appeals for funding

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A literary and cultural organization, Gandhara Hindko Board, has appealed to the chief ministers of all provinces to provide financial support from their discretionary funds to help continue its mission of promoting regional languages.

In a statement, Muhammad Ziauddin, General Secretary of the board, pointed out that the organization was launched in Peshawar in 1993 to work for the promotion of the Hindko language and its associated culture. Later, he recalled, the work was expanded to include several other languages spoken in the province and other regions of the country.

"The Gandhara Hindko Academy, operating under the Gandhara Hindko Board for the past 10 years, has been working for the promotion of Hindko as well as other languages spoken in different parts of the country," explained Ziauddin, a research scholar of the Hindko language and a doc-

umentation expert by profession.

He said the board and the academy had worked on languages including Hindko, Pashto, Gojri, Kohistani, Khowar, Dameli, Ushhoj, Kalkoti, Gawarbati, and Yidgha in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Punjabi, Saraiki, and Pothohari in Punjab; Sindhi and Urdu in Sindh; Balochi, Brahui, and Pashto in Balochistan; Shina, Balti, and Wakhi in Gilgit-Baltistan; and Kashmiri and Pahari in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Ziauddin said the Hindko board and academy had successfully organized seven international Hindko conferences and nine regional language conferences, where researchers from various linguistic backgrounds presented academic papers.

"These papers were not only archived by the Academy but also published in book form," he elaborated. Discussing the work further, he said the academy was publishing over 15 literary journals in

different languages, which had received appreciation at regional, national, and international levels while books and publications by the literary bodies had crossed the 500 mark.

He recalled that the then chairman of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, Dr. Yousuf Khushk, during his visit to the Gandhara Hindko Academy in Peshawar, had praised its work and termed it a "state-of-the-art" institution. The Pakistan Academy of Letters has also provided modest annual grants to the board.

However, Ziauddin lamented that although the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had previously allocated funds for the academy in its Annual Development Programme twice, it had not provided any funding over the past three years.

"As a result, the Academy is facing a severe financial crisis," he said, lamenting that no finances had been provided by the KP government since June 30, 2022.

Patriotism meets creativity Independence Day lights up designers' world

PESHAWAR (APP): In the heart of Peshawar's ancient Qissa Khwani Bazaar where history echoes through narrow alleys and age-old customs still hold firm—one young graphic designer is quietly revolutionizing her life through hard work.

Samina Bibi, a graduate of the University of Peshawar, is not a typical job seeker. She chose not to pursue a coveted government position or chase scholarships abroad.

Instead, she picked up her tools, rolled up her sleeves, and stitched her future into something entirely her own—a thriving graphic design business born from hardship, but built on courage.

"When my father was diagnosed with kidney failure and we needed urgent funds for a transplant, I knew waiting for a job wasn't an option," Samina shares, her voice firm but reflective.

"My mother sold our 5-marla plot, and with that seed money, I launched a small design center."

Today, that center doesn't just support her family but also employs three workers and delivers large-scale design orders, includ-

ing thousands of national flags and badges ahead of this year's Jashn-e-Azadi celebrations.

"I work day and night to fulfill these Jashn e Azadi orders with bulk received from Govt departments, NGOs, educational Institutions, farmers and civil society," she says with a tired smile. "But it's worth it. I am building something I believe in for Pakistan."

Dozens of graphic designers at Qissa Khwani and Jhangli Mohallah were working till late night to complete the Jashn e Azadi orders. These bazaars were beautifully decorated with national flags and photos of heroes of Pakistan movement looks festive.

"I came from Nowshera to buy national flags and Jashn e Azadi accessories to celebrate independence day with befitting manners" Rehbar Khan (14) who was hoisting national flag on his motorbike at Qissa Khwani told APP.

Across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and increasingly, throughout Pakistan stories like Samina's are becoming more common due to Federal Govt youth empowerment projects. The traditional allure of secure, long-term government jobs

is gradually giving way to a new wave of self-starters, especially among women and youth.

For decades, employment in the public sector was viewed as the ultimate goal, particularly in KP's conservative communities. But technical education, combined with entrepreneurial spirit, is now offering an alternative path that one rooted in independence and innovation.

"Women's entrepreneurship is no longer just a symbol of social progress but an economic necessity," says Dr. Naeem Khattak, former Chairman of the Economics Department at the University of Peshawar.

"To unlock the true potential of our economy and provide jobs to millions of youth, we must provide women better access to credit, training, and mobility especially in marginalized areas."

The federal government's ambitious economic reform plan, Uraan Pakistan, launched under Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, seeks to turn this vision into reality. Spanning five years, the initiative aims to promote exports, e-commerce, sustainability, and infrastruc-

ture, with a strong emphasis on empowering women and youth.

"Uraan is not just another policy file gathering dust," Dr. Naeem insists. "It's an opportunity map for young people especially women from remote areas. But its success depends on complementary investments in rural development: roads, schools, clean water, and training facilities."

In regions like KP, where the urban-rural divide is stark, such investment is essential. Lack of employment and inadequate infrastructure push residents from tribal districts to overcrowded cities, where opportunities are few and services are stretched.

"Without building local economies, we risk leaving rural women behind," Dr. Naeem warns. "But entrepreneurship in these areas could be a game-changer."

Recognizing this potential, multiple organizations are stepping in. One notable effort is the Women Entrepreneurs Booster Package, a joint initiative by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).



In brief

Dental health vital F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Speakers at a function were of the view that timely dental care is not only essential for oral hygiene but also plays a crucial role in preventing heart diseases, diabetes, digestive disorders, and other health complications. The function was organized by local health professionals at Nasafa Talash bazaar here on Sunday Dental surgeon Dr. Saifullah, Tehsil Chairman Timergara, Mufti Irfanuddin, former provincial finance minister Muzaffar Syed Advocate, former tehsil nazim Riaz Muhammad Advocate, former district councilors Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Malik Barkat Khan and others addressed the event. Speakers emphasized that dental issues, if left untreated, could contribute to serious health conditions such as heart disease and stomach disorders.

VEGETABLE MARKET INAUGURATED: A new fruit and vegetable market established under the Tehsil Municipal Administration Timergara, was formally inaugurated on Sunday at Qila Khoongi, just one kilometer from Timergara city, along the GT Road. While briefing the media, President of the Market Committee Daud Shah, Vice President Haji Abdul Qayyum, and others stated that all basic facilities had been arranged for wholesalers and traders to ensure a smooth start to operations. They said the market spans 40 kanals and includes designated areas for loading and unloading, spacious parking, a mosque, and modern restrooms to facilitate vendors and customers. They urged fruit and vegetable vendors to confirm their stall and shop bookings in a timely manner to help streamline the launch of market activities. For further information, interested parties can contact 0308-5745542.

Public outrage against police F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Widespread public outrage is brewing in Hafizabad as local residents accuse the traffic police of excessive misconduct and unjustified fines, prompting many to direct their frustration at Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Citizens claim that instead of facilitating the smooth flow of traffic, the traffic police have turned the city into a "Challanistan", a place where unjustified challans (fines) have become the norm rather than the exception. Protesters allege that the traffic police, rather than performing their core duty of maintaining traffic discipline, have been setting up frequent and arbitrary checkpoints across the city. These checkpoints, they claim, serve less to improve public safety and more to generate revenue through fines, often targeting the poorest segments of society. One disgruntled citizen shared that he had only stepped out to buy a kilogram of onions but was slapped with a hefty fine of Rs. 2,000/- before he could return home. Another local man, visibly distressed, said he went to a pharmacy to buy medicine for his ailing child but ended up being fined the same amount, Rs. 2,000/- despite struggling to feed his family. Residents further allege that traffic police officials are under pressure from their superiors to demonstrate performance through the number of challans issued, not through actual traffic regulation or public service.

University teachers flay violence on peaceful protest

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: The All Public Universities BPS Teachers Association (APUBTA) on Sunday condemned the KP government's crackdown on peaceful protesters in front of the assembly. The employees were demanding a raise in Disparity Reduction Allowances (DRA) and other benefits, consistent with federal government notifications.

Talking to local journalists at Chakdara, the

APUBTA general secretary Prof Imtiaz Ahmad said that despite a surplus budget, the KP government denied employees their rightful benefits, including university employees. "We urge the government to resolve issues through negotiations with representatives of AGEGA and university associations," he added.

He told the KP government should investigate why DRA hasn't been paid to employees and why peaceful protests were met

with violence. It's unjust that some departments have received significant salary increases, while university teachers and employees in certain departments are forced to protest for minimal increases.

"We request the federal government to intervene and facilitate a settlement through negotiations, without discrimination among employees. If the situation remains unresolved, it may lead to further protests, which could have severe consequences," he said.

Independence Day celebrated at SMBBMU

Allah Dad Chandio

LARKANA: Under the special instructions of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SMBBMU) Larkana Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah, various activities have started in the university, under which the flag is hoisted in all the colleges affiliated to the university and a grand ceremony was held by the Institute of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation in which speeches were made by students and faculty.

The speakers said that "August 14 is not just history, but the day of our identity, for which our elders gave their blood. They said that Pakistan is not just a piece of land, it is the name

of our hopes, dreams and sacrifices. Director Institute of Physiotherapy Dr. Mukesh said in his address that the youth will have to learn lessons from the past, be serious about the present, and have insight into the future to become the destiny of the country and he further said that whoever loves Pakistan, Peace, hope and respect are the loves of the people.

In his address, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University Larkana Registrar Professor Dr. Fahad Jibrin Siyal said that the freedom of the nations will remain in the hands of those who have books and pens and today's youth are the guarantee of a bright Pakistan. At the end of the ceremony,

students, faculty and officers also planted saplings in connection with the Independence Day tree planting campaign of the Chandka Medical College Larkana admin.

Saplings were planted by Registrar Professor Dr. Fahad Jibrin Siyal, Director Physiotherapy Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Vice Principal Chandka Medical College Dr. Fawzia Chandio and it was announced that saplings will be planted in all the institutions under the management of the university on a daily basis till the 14th. Chief Security Officer Sultan Ahmed Bhutto and Chandka Medical College Admin Waheed Zaman were also present on the occasion.

Overloading of transport raises safety concerns

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Widespread violations of transport laws continue across Dera Ismail Khan, as public transport vehicles particularly coasters and flying coaches, operate with illegally installed extra seats, causing severe discomfort to passengers. The unchecked practice persists under the watch of the district administration and Regional Transport Authority (RTA), drawing criticism from citizens and commuters alike.

These violations are commonly observed on routes from General Bus Stand, Bannu Adda, Tank Adda, Paroa Adda, and adjoining areas such as Paharpur and Kulachi.

Transporters, in a bid to increase profits, have modified vehicles to carry more passengers than permitted, often cramming individuals into tightly packed and unsafe conditions.

Passengers travelling on these routes voiced their frustrations. "We are packed like goods. There's hardly any space to sit or even breathe properly," said Asad Imran, a daily commuter from Rangpur.

Another passenger, Kubra Bibi, travelling with her children, stated, "The heat, lack of space, and prolonged travel in these conditions is unbearable. It's especially dangerous for women and children."

Commuters criticized the authorities for turning a

blind eye. "Where are the transport inspectors? Why is no one stopping these violations?" asked Malik Saleem, a traveler from Paroa.

Civil society members have also expressed alarm, urging the district administration and RTA to launch a sustained and transparent crackdown. They emphasized that ignoring the issue not only endangers lives but also undermines public trust in government institutions.

The public has demanded immediate and effective enforcement of transport laws, regular inspections, and strict penalties for violators to ensure safe, legal, and respectful travel conditions for all passengers.

‘Movement to continue till restoration of democracy’

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Advocate has asked the people, especially the party workers, to be part of the real freedom movement against the system of oppression imposed on the country as per the message of party leader Imran Khan from Adiala Jail to all Pakistanis so that we can truly become a free nation. If we fight together, this system of oppression will definitely be razed to the ground, he added. He further said that the movement to be started on August 5, will continue until the restoration of real democracy in the country.

This he said while addressing a corner meet-

ing held in connection with the Imran Khan's August 5 Call in Togh Bala Kohat. The Minister said, now the people have become fearless, every idol of fear has been broken - after August 5, adding that the August 5, is also the most important in this regard. On August 14, 1947, we achieved freedom from external slavery and now we are facing an even worse situation of slavery where all the institutions have been crippled and all the fundamental rights have been suspended, he asserted.

Aftab Alam said that just as our ancestors achieved freedom by struggling against the British, we also have to get free from this corrupt system and reject slavery. Now the PPP and the PML-N have become

puppet parties, their role is no more of a political party and corruption are also continuing under this guise, he said. He furthered, after 77 years, a few institutions had been established in Pakistan with difficulty, but now these institutions have also been destroyed one by one.

The Minister continued, first, the people's votes were stolen by committing electoral fraud and democracy was abolished by imposing thieves on the country furthering, then the media was strangled, the worst censorship was imposed in the country and now the judiciary has been made a government institution by the 26th constitutional amendment. At present, the judiciary in the country is completely paralyzed, he continued.



MULTAN: A farmer is busy plucking fresh dates from a palm tree.



DARGAI: Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Science and Information Technology, addressing people at his constituency.

Peshawar Millennium School excel in Matric exams F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda has once again proved its academic excellence by achieving consistently outstanding results in the 2024 and 2025 Matriculation Examinations conducted under the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Peshawar. The school earned the prestigious distinction of securing 2nd position in the Girls' category and 3rd position in the Boys' category at the Peshawar Board level.

Speaking to the media, the Director of Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda, Khawaja Shiraz Nasir, and the Principal, Ms. Nusrat Nazir, stated that the institution has remained committed to its 19-year-long mission of promoting quality, purposeful, and modern education. They emphasized that every year, the school has advanced toward even greater academic milestones.

A comparative analysis of the 2024 and 2025 annual results shows consistent improvement. The performance trajectory reflects not only stability but remarkable growth. The renaming of the institution to Peshawar Millennium School brought a visible boost in academic performance. Students not only earned places in the Top 10 and Top 20 merit lists of the board, but also displayed exceptional overall success.

In the 10th grade, 249 out of 252 students secured A-1 grades, while 3 achieved A grades. In the 9th grade, 243 out of 251 students obtained A-1 grades, with the remaining 8 achieving A grades.

They clarified that the recent renaming from Peshawar Model School to Peshawar Millennium School had no adverse effect on either student performance or academic quality.

In fact, the new identity served as a motivational force, helping the school progress more confidently in the academic domain.

They added, "This success is not just in the name - it is a living example of vision, hard work, dedication, and teamwork."

Behind this achievement lies the unwavering trust of parents, the tireless efforts of our faculty, and the dedication of our students."

The administration also stated that the school operates under a clear educational philosophy - not merely to achieve high marks, but to nurture responsible, capable, and ethical individuals.

They reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining high academic standards while adapting to modern educational trends to continue guiding their students toward excellence.

In conclusion, they extended heartfelt congratulations to all students, parents, teachers, and staff.

Cath Lab inaugurated at Mardan Medical Complex

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The newly established Catheterization laboratory (Cath Lab) at Mardan Medical Complex (MMC) hospital was inaugurated by Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on health here on Sunday.

Advisor to the Chief Minister on Health Advocate Ihtisham Ali inaugurated the Cath Lab in a ceremony held on the premises of MMC. Dean and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Medical Teaching Institution (MTI) Mardan Professor Dr. Amjad Ali, Hospital Director Prof. Dr. Muhammad Fazil, Medical Director Prof. Dr. Rahman Uddin, Assistant Professor Dr. Shafiq Alam and other health and hospital officials were also present on the occasion.

Addressing participants of the ceremony, Advisor on Health Mr. Ihtisham Ali termed establishment of Cath Lab in MMC a significant development for the residents of Mardan and catchment areas.

The Advisor on health, stated that with setting up of a cath lab here, the people of Mardan will now avail treatment for their heart complications at their doorstep.

"Now the latest diagnostics and treatments, including angiography and angioplasty are available in

Mardan," he remarked. He said that patients from Mardan and its adjoining districts will no longer need to be referred to Peshawar, adding 50% reduction in heart patients being referred to Peshawar was expected after availability of this vital facility here.

Dean/ CEO MTI Mardan Prof Dr Amjad Ali said that it was a proud moment for the Board of Governors (BoG), management and all staff of MMC that a much needed state-of-the-art Cath Lab had started functioning at the health facility.

He said that accomplishment of this remarkable milestone required long tiring efforts. "I thank and appreciate the efforts of all those who played their part in helping and making it possible," he remarked.

He said that it was the long standing demand of the people of Mardan and need of the hour to have a Cath Lab in Mardan. "It was the long awaited project, which is now made functional," he added.

He said that establishing a sophisticated Cath Lab was a much needed project keeping in mind the inconvenience for patients with cardiovascular complications in Mardan who had to travel to other cities, previously.

Hospital Director Professor Dr Muhammad Fazil said that establishing

the Cath Lab and making it functional was not an easy task. "Starting from scratch and completing it was a gigantic task" he said.

Dr Fazil said that the current BoG under the Chairmanship of Prof Dr Arshad Javaid spearheaded the efforts and played an important role in making this vital facility functional.

"The current Board under his supervision took this project as its top priority and removed all the obstacles and did all in their power to address all the shortcomings and fulfilled all the requirements that have been causing delay in the functioning of this important project," he went on to say.

In-charge Cardiology Department MMC Assistant Prof Dr Noorul Hadi said that it was a long awaited project. "On behalf of the Cardiology Department, I am thankful to previous and current BoGs, management, faculty members and all staff who played their role in making this project possible," he said.

He said that MMC has plans to continue investing in its cardiac care program and expanding its services to meet the growing needs of patients in the region. "With this milestone, we reaffirm our commitment to providing innovative and compassionate care to our patients," he added.

Mandokhail underscores need for good governance

QUETTA, Aug 03 (APP): Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, has emphasized that good governance was essential for improving citizens' quality of life and strengthening democratic institutions.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he called for enhanced coordination and cooperation between the federal and provincial governments, describing it as a critical step toward fostering harmonious inter-governmental relations.

Governor Mandokhail highlighted that active civic participation is the cornerstone of effective governance.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to

involving citizens in policy formulation and decision-making processes at both national and provincial levels. "Policies and development initiatives must reflect the public's needs and aspirations. Sustainable progress is only possible when public opinion is genuinely integrated," he said.

Stressing the importance of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, the governor noted that these principles were vital for building public trust.

"Implementing people-centric policies and ensuring accountable governance will help restore confidence in the system and create a model that truly serves the people," he

added.

He also advocated for the establishment of efficient grievance redressal mechanisms at the union council level to address citizens' concerns promptly. Furthermore, he urged political workers and media professionals to actively promote awareness of civic rights and responsibilities.

Governor Mandokhail concluded by emphasizing the role of civic education in empowering citizens and reinforcing democratic values. "Inclusive governance, rooted in transparency and public engagement, is key to sustainable development and a resilient democratic framework in the country," he said.

Shafqat vows to deliver IK's message to everyone

F.P. Report

DARGAI: A consultative meeting regarding the upcoming 5th August protest was held at the Hujra of Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Science and Information Technology, in Kot, Dargai.

The meeting saw significant participation from local elders, community leaders, and youth, all of whom reaffirmed their dedication to founder PTI Imran Khan's vision and vowed full participation in the scheduled protest aimed at securing his release and restoring genuine democracy in Pakistan.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz

addressed the gathering, stating that the 5th August protest is a national call for justice, freedom, and dignity.

He highlighted that the people of Malakand Division are ready to stand up once again for the constitutional rights of every Pakistani citizen.

He emphasized that, under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the provincial government is committed to ensure that Imran Khan's message of justice, transparency, and national sovereignty reaches every household.

This movement, he said, is not just political but a moral responsibility of every patriotic citizen. Dr. Ayaz also appre-

ciated the unity and discipline shown by the participants and urged the youth to remain peaceful and organized.

He noted that the peaceful nature of the protest will reflect the strength, determination, and democratic spirit of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In his concluding remarks, he said that history is being written, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will continue to lead the way in the struggle for a truly free and just Pakistan.

In his concluding remarks, he said that history is being written, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will continue to lead the way in the struggle for a truly free and just Pakistan.



The US said it had no choice but to deport them to a third country. Then it sent them home

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The Trump administration says that some serious criminals need to be deported to third countries because even their home countries won't accept them. But a review of recent cases shows that at least five men threatened with such a fate were sent to their native countries within weeks.

President Donald Trump aims to deport millions of immigrants in the U.S. illegally and his administration has sought to ramp up removals to third countries, including sending convicted criminals to South Sudan and Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland, two sub-Saharan African nations.

Immigrants convicted of crimes typically first serve their U.S. sentences before being deported. This appeared to be the case with the eight men deported to South Sudan and five to Eswatini, although some had been released years earlier.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said in June that third-country deportations allow them to deport people "so uniquely barbaric that their own countries won't take them back." Critics have countered that it's not clear the U.S. tried to return the men deported to South Sudan

and Eswatini to their home countries and that the deportations were unnecessarily cruel.

Reuters found that at least five men threatened with deportation to Libya in May were sent to their home countries weeks later, according to interviews with two of the men, a family member and attorneys. After a U.S. judge blocked the Trump administration from sending them to Libya, two men from Vietnam, two men from Laos and a man from Mexico were all deported to their home nations. The deportations have not previously been reported.

DHS did not comment on the removals. Reuters could not determine if their home countries initially refused to take them or why the U.S. tried to send them to Libya.

DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin contested that the home countries of criminals deported to third countries were willing to take them back, but did not provide details on any attempts to return the five men home before they were threatened with deportation to Libya.

"If you come to our country illegally and break our laws, you could end up in CECOT, Alligator Alcatraz, Guantanamo Bay, or South Sudan or another

third country," McLaughlin said in a statement, referencing El Salvador's maximum-security prison and a detention center in the subtropical Florida Everglades. DHS did not respond to a request for the number of third-country deportations since Trump took office on January 20, although there have been thousands to Mexico and hundreds to other countries.

The eight men sent to South Sudan were from Cuba, Laos, Mexico, Myanmar, South Sudan and Vietnam, according to DHS. The man DHS said was from South Sudan had a deportation order to Sudan, according to a court filing. The five men sent to Eswatini were from Cuba, Jamaica, Laos, Vietnam and Yemen, according to DHS.

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said the men deported to South Sudan and Eswatini were "the worst of the worst" and included people convicted in the United States of child sex abuse and murder. "American communities are safer with these heinous illegal criminals gone," Jackson said in a statement.

The Laos government did not respond to requests for comment regarding the men threatened with depor-

tation to Libya and those deported to South Sudan and Eswatini. Vietnam's foreign ministry spokesperson said on July 17 that the government was verifying information regarding the South Sudan deportation but did not provide additional comment to Reuters.

The government of Mexico did not comment.

The Trump administration acknowledged in a May 22 court filing that the man from Myanmar had valid travel documents to return to his home country but he was deported to South Sudan anyway. DHS said the man had been convicted of sexual assault involving a victim mentally and physically incapable of resisting.

Eswatini's government said on Tuesday that it was still holding the five migrants sent there in isolated prison units under the deal with the Trump administration.

The Supreme Court in June allowed the Trump administration to deport migrants to third countries without giving them a chance to show they could be harmed. But the legality of the removals is still being contested in a federal lawsuit in Boston, a case that could potentially wind its way back to the conservative-leaning high court.

Critics say the removals aim to stoke fear among migrants and encourage them to "self deport" to their home countries rather than be sent to distant countries they have no connection with.

"This is a message that you may end up with a very random outcome that you're going to like a lot less than if you elect to leave under your own steam," said Michelle Mittelstadt, communications director for the non-partisan Migration Policy Institute. Internal U.S. immigration enforcement guidance issued in July said migrants could be deported to countries that had not provided diplomatic assurances of their safety in as little as six hours.

While the administration has highlighted the deportations of convicted criminals to African countries, it has also sent asylum-seeking Afghans, Russians and others to Panama and Costa Rica.

The Trump administration deported more than 200 Venezuelans accused of being gang members to El Salvador in March, where they were held in the country's CECOT prison without access to attorneys until they were released in a prisoner swap last month.

More than 5,700 non-Mexican migrants have

been deported to Mexico since Trump took office, according to Mexican government data, continuing a policy that began under former President Joe Biden.

The fact that one Mexican man was deported to South Sudan and another threatened with deportation to Libya suggests that the Trump administration did not try to send them to their home countries, according to Trina Realmuto, executive director at the pro-immigrant National Immigration Litigation Alliance.

"Mexico historically accepts back its own citizens," said Realmuto, one of the attorneys representing migrants in the lawsuit contesting third-country deportations.

The eight men deported to South Sudan included Mexican national Jesus Munoz Gutierrez, who had served a sentence in the U.S. for second-degree murder and was directly taken into federal immigration custody afterward, according to Realmuto. Court records show Munoz stabbed and killed a roommate during a fight in 2004.

When the Trump administration first initiated the deportation in late May, Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum said

her government had not been informed.

"If he does want to be repatriated, then the United States would have to bring him to Mexico," Sheinbaum said at the time.

His sister, Guadalupe Gutierrez, said in an interview that she didn't understand why he was sent to South Sudan, where he is currently in custody. She said Mexico is trying to get her brother home.

"Mexico never rejected my brother," Gutierrez said.

Immigration hardliners see the third-country removals as a way to deal with immigration offenders who can't easily be deported and could pose a threat to the U.S. public.

"The Trump administration is prioritizing the safety of American communities over the comfort of these deportees," said Jessica Vaughan, policy director at the Center for Immigration Studies, which supports lower levels of immigration.

The Trump administration in July pressed other African nations to take migrants and has asked the Pacific Islands nation of Palau, among others.

Under U.S. law, federal immigration officials can deport someone to a country other than their place of citizenship when all other

efforts are "impracticable, inadvisable or impossible."

Immigration officials must first try to send an immigrant back to their home country, and if they fail, then to a country with which they have a connection, such as where they lived or were born.

For a Lao man who was almost deported to Libya in early May, hearing about the renewed third-country deportations took him back to his own close call. In an interview from Laos granted on condition of anonymity because of fears for his safety, he asked why the U.S. was "using us as a pawn?"

His attorney said the man had served a prison sentence for a felony. Reuters could not establish what he was convicted of.

He recalled officials telling him to sign his deportation order to Libya, which he refused, telling them he wanted to be sent to Laos instead. They told him he would be deported to Libya regardless of whether he signed or not, he said. DHS did not comment on the allegations.

The man, who came to the United States in the early 1980s as a refugee when he was four years old, said he was now trying to learn the Lao language and adapt to his new life, "taking it day by day."

Armed groups attack security force personnel in Syria's Sweida

DAMASCUS (Reuters): Armed groups attacked personnel from Syria's internal security forces in Sweida, killing one member and wounding others, and fired shells at several villages in the violence-hit southern province, state-run Ekhbaryia TV reported on Sunday.

The report cited a security source as saying the armed groups had violated

the ceasefire agreed in the predominantly Druze region, where factional bloodshed killed hundreds of people last month.

Violence in Sweida erupted on July 13 between tribal fighters and Druze factions. Government forces were sent to quell the fighting, but the bloodshed worsened, and Israel carried out strikes on Syrian troops in the name

of the Druze.

The Druze are a minority offshoot of Islam with followers in Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Sweida province is predominantly Druze but is also home to Sunni tribes, and the communities have had long-standing tensions over land and other resources. A U.S.-brokered truce ended the fighting, which had raged in Sweida

city and surrounding towns for nearly a week. Syria said it would investigate the clashes, setting up a committee to investigate the attacks. The Sweida bloodshed last month was a major test for interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa, after a wave of sectarian violence in March that killed hundreds of Alawite citizens in the coastal region.



ROME: Pope Leo XIV leads the Sunday Mass for the Jubilee of Youth as young people and pilgrims gather in the Tor Vergata neighborhood in Rome, Italy, on Sunday.

Three of five trapped workers at Codelco's El Teniente mine found dead

SANTIAGO (Reuters): Three of five trapped workers at Codelco's El Teniente copper mine have been found dead, the company said, as rescue teams work to clear underground passages that collapsed in a strong tremor last week.

One person also died at the time of the incident on Thursday evening, bringing the total death toll to four.

Codelco discovered the first trapped worker on Saturday and another two early Sunday.

"We deeply regret the discovery of two other colleagues who were found deceased," the miner said in a statement. "We stand with the families and the entire community in the anguish this situation causes."

As of Sunday morning, rescue teams had cleared 24 meters of blocked passages, out of 90 meters that Codelco officials previously said could be necessary to reach the trapped workers, in the new Andesita section of the mine.

The collapse occurred on Thursday around 5:30 p.m. local time, caused by one of the largest tremors ever recorded at El Teniente with the impact of a 4.2 magnitude quake. Codelco is investigating whether the cause was mining activity or natural tectonic shifts in the earthquake-prone country.

How one Gaza family dedicates each day to finding enough food to survive

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP): Every morning, Abeer and Fadi Sobh wake up in their tent in the Gaza Strip to the same question: How will they find food for themselves and their six young children?

The couple has three options: Maybe a charity kitchen will be open and they can get a pot of watery lentils. Or they can try jostling through crowds to get some flour from a passing aid truck. The last resort is begging.

If those all fail, they simply don't eat. It happens more and more these days, as hunger saps their energy, strength and hope.

The predicament of the Sobhs, who live in a seaside refugee camp west of Gaza City after being displaced multiple times, is the same for families throughout the war-ravaged territory.

Hunger has grown throughout the past 22 months of war because of aid restrictions, humanitarian workers say. But food experts warned earlier this week the "worst-case scenario of famine is currently playing out in Gaza."

Israel enforced a complete blockade on food and other supplies for 2½ months beginning in March. It said its objective was to increase pressure on Hamas to release dozens of hostages it has held since its attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Though the flow of aid resumed in May, the amount is a fraction of

what aid organizations say is needed.

A breakdown of law and order has also made it nearly impossible to safely deliver food. Much of the aid that does get in is hoarded or sold in markets at exorbitant prices.

Here is a look at a day in the life of the Sobh family: The family wakes up in their tent, which Fadi Sobh, a 30-year-old street vendor, says is unbearably hot in the summer.

With fresh water hard to come by, his wife Abeer, 29, fetches water from the sea.

One by one, the children stand in a metal basin and scrub themselves as their mother pours the salt-water over their heads. Nine-month-old Hala cries as it stings her eyes. The other children are more stoic. Abeer then rolls up the bedding and sweeps the dust and sand from the tent floor. With no food left over from the day before, she heads out to beg for something for her family's breakfast.

Sometimes, neighbors or passersby give her lentils. Sometimes she gets nothing.

Abeer gives Hala water from a baby bottle. When she's lucky, she has lentils that she grinds into powder to mix into the water.

"One day feels like 100 days, because of the summer heat, hunger and the distress," she said.

Fadi heads to a nearby soup kitchen. Sometimes one of the children goes with him.

"But food is rarely

available there," he said. The kitchen opens roughly once a week and never has enough for the crowds. Most often, he said, he waits all day but returns to his family with nothing "and the kids sleep hungry, without eating."

Fadi used to go to an area in northern Gaza where aid trucks arrive from Israel. There, giant crowds of equally desperate people swarm over the trucks and strip away the cargo of food. Often, Israeli troops nearby open fire, witnesses say. Israel says it only fires warning shots, and others in the crowd often have knives or pistols to steal boxes.

Fadi, who also has epilepsy, was shot in the leg last month. That has weakened him too much to scramble for the trucks, so he's left with trying the kitchens.

Meanwhile, Abeer and her three eldest children — 10-year-old Youssef, 9-year-old Mohammed and 7-year-old Malak — head out with plastic jerrycans to fill up from a truck that brings freshwater from central Gaza's desalination plant. The kids struggle with the heavy jerrycans. Youssef loads one onto his back, while Mohammed half-drags his, his little body bent sideways as he tries to keep it out of the dust of the street.

Abeer sometimes heads to Zikim herself, alone or with Youssef. Most in the crowds are men — faster and stronger than she is. "Sometimes I manage to get food, and in many

cases, I return empty-handed," she said.

If she's unsuccessful, she appeals to the sense of charity of those who succeeded. "You survived death thanks to God, please give me anything," she tells them. Many answer her plea, and she gets a small bag of flour to bake for the children, she said.

She and her son have become familiar faces. One man who regularly waits for the trucks,

Youssef Abu Saleh, said he often sees Abeer struggling to grab food, so he gives her some of his. "They're poor people and her husband is sick," he said. "We're all hungry and we all need to eat."

During the hottest part of the day, the six children stay in or around the tent. Their parents prefer the children sleep during the heat — it stops them from running around, using up energy and getting hungry and thirsty.

As the heat eases, the children head out. Sometimes Abeer sends them to beg for food from their neighbors. Otherwise, they scour Gaza's bombed-out streets, foraging through the rubble and trash for anything to fuel the family's makeshift stove.

They've become good at recognizing what might burn. Scraps of paper or wood are best, but hardest to find. The bar is low: plastic bottles, plastic

bags, an old shoe — anything will do.

One of the boys came across a pot in the trash one day — it's what Abeer now uses to cook. The family has been displaced so many times, they have few belongings left.

"I have to manage to get by," Abeer said. "What can I do? We are eight people."

After a day spent searching for the absolute basics to sustain life — food, water, fuel to cook

— the family sometimes has enough of all three for Abeer to make a meal. Usually it's a thin lentil soup. But often there is nothing, and they all go to bed hungry.

Abeer said she's grown weak and often feels dizzy when she's out searching for food or water.

"I am tired. I am no longer able," she said. "If the war goes on, I am thinking of taking my life. I no longer have any strength or power."



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Cutting housing counselling is a grave mistake

For generations, owning a home has been one of the most effective ways for American families to build wealth, stability and long-term opportunity. But for far too many families, especially those who are Black and Latine, this opportunity remains out of reach. Sustainable homeownership means giving people the tools and support they need to make informed decisions for long-term success.

That's what housing counseling does. Usually working at nonprofit organisations, trained counselors certified by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) help individuals and families navigate every stage of the housing journey, from renting to buying to holding on to their homes during hard times, according to the Tribune News Service.

The advice of these counselors is unbiased, typically free and grounded in the best interests of families and communities. They help clients build budgets, improve credit, understand down-payment assistance programmes and avoid scams. When crises like illness or job loss strike, housing counselors are often the ones helping families avoid foreclosure.

This work has significant reach. HUD data shows that from October 2023 to September 2024, more than 4,600 HUD-certified counselors assisted more than 850,000 households. In Illinois alone, 193 HUD-certified counselors assisted more than 34,000 households. More than 2,000 families purchased their first home, and approximately 800 families avoided mortgage default or foreclosure, stabilising not only these families but entire neighbourhoods.

But the budget proposed by the House of Representatives eliminates funding for HUD's Housing Counseling Program from the nation's budget for fiscal year 2026. This is not just a routine cut. It's a reversal of decades of bipartisan support for sustainable homeownership and housing stability. The Senate could restore housing counseling funding in its budget proposal, which would then need to be negotiated with the House of Representatives.

At Housing Action Illinois, a HUD-approved intermediary, my work involves supporting a network of 35 housing counseling agencies across the Midwest and beyond. I see up-close how the numbers translate into real, life-changing stories.

An agency in our network recently helped Yara, a single mother in Central Illinois who was overwhelmed by the homebuying process. It connected her with Tessa, a housing counselor who helped her walk through the process of building credit and preparing for home ownership. With Tessa's guidance, Yara secured down payment assistance and became a first-time homeowner. Then there's China, who came to a Missouri-based counselor with a low credit score. Over two years, she followed a personalized plan to pay off student loans and raise her credit, eventually qualifying for a mortgage. After closing on her new home this past winter, she returned for post-purchase counseling to stay on track.

I also think of Elliot, a single father of four who spent five years working with a housing counselor in Wisconsin. With support and perseverance, he went on a remarkable journey from homelessness to homeownership by rebuilding his credit, growing his savings and qualifying for a Habitat for Humanity home. As housing becomes harder to find amid growing economic uncertainty, housing counseling becomes even more of a lifeline. That's why it's alarming that these budget proposals zero out funding for HUD's Housing Counseling Program. Eliminating this support turns away from decades of federal policy that has embraced homeownership as a core national goal.

For nearly 60 years, housing counselors have helped families buy and keep homes — in big cities, small towns and rural communities alike. This work has been especially important during tough times, such as the foreclosure crisis and again during the COVID-19 pandemic, when housing counselors were on the front lines, meeting with clients and contacting banks and servicers to help homeowners to keep their homes.

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India's heinous role behind Mukti Bahini & BLA

Abdul Basit Alvi

Mukti Bahini and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) are often viewed as two distinct but intrinsically linked terrorist movements, both driven by the ultimate objective of destabilizing and dismembering the Federation of Pakistan. While separated by decades and operating in different geographical contexts—the Mukti Bahini in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in the early 1970s, and the BLA primarily in south-western Balochistan today—what connects them is not merely their violent methodologies or separatist aspirations. Instead, it is their alleged external patronage, particularly the pervasive role attributed to India, which is widely believed to have masterminded, funded, and militarily supported both campaigns. This narrative suggests that in 1971, amidst the political and ethnic turmoil in East Pakistan, India perceived an opportune moment to bolster the Bengali nationalist insurgency, seeking to weaken its regional rival. India is accused of hosting thousands of training camps across its border regions, including West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura, where Mukti Bahini fighters were allegedly armed, trained, and equipped for guerrilla warfare against Pakistani forces. From this perspective, what began as an internal crisis rapidly escalated into a full-fledged proxy war, with the Mukti Bahini receiving extensive military assistance, including weaponry, communication devices, uniforms, and even direct combat support. Indian military intelligence, particularly RAW, is asserted to have played a pivotal role in orchestrating these operations. The guerrillas reportedly engaged in systematic sabotage, destroying vital infrastructure such as bridges, power stations, and railway lines, and waged an urban bombing campaign in cities like Dhaka and Chittagong. Critically, they also allegedly targeted non-Bengali populations, especially the Urdu-speaking Biharis, with accusations of mass killings and ethnic cleansing that remain a painful historical memory for many in Pakistan. The systematic targeting of civilians, brutal executions, and the deliberate destruction of state infrastructure are all presented as elements of a calculated strategy to render the governance of East Pakistan impossible. India's alleged support reached its zenith in December 1971 when it intervened militarily under the purported pretexts of humanitarian concern and regional stability. The war's conclusion, resulting in the creation of Bangladesh, is thus interpreted not merely as an outcome of internal grievances but as a direct instance of external aggression utilizing an internal insurgent movement as a proxy. In this narrative, the Mukti Bahini was never an organic liberation force but rather an Indian proxy that operated under Indian command, with the unequivocal goal of dismembering Pakistan.

Fast forward to the 21st century, the Balochistan Liberation Army has emerged as a new face of separatist insurgency within Pakistan. Operating in the vast, resource-rich province of Balochistan, the BLA has reportedly conducted dozens of high-profile attacks on Pakistani security forces, public infrastructure, ethnic settlers, and foreign nationals, particularly Chinese workers associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The assertion that the BLA is backed by Indian intelligence, mirroring the alleged support for the Mukti Bahini, is a central tenet of this perspective. One of the most pivotal events reinforcing this belief was the arrest of Kulbhushan Jadhav in 2016, a serving Indian

separatist insurgency within Pakistan. Operating in the vast, resource-rich province of Balochistan, the BLA has reportedly conducted dozens of high-profile attacks on Pakistani security forces, public infrastructure, ethnic settlers, and foreign nationals, particularly Chinese workers associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The assertion that the BLA is backed by Indian intelligence, mirroring the alleged support for the Mukti Bahini, is a central tenet of this perspective. One of the most pivotal events reinforcing this belief was the arrest of Kulbhushan Jadhav in 2016, a serving Indian

and mass ambushes on military convoys. The March 2025 hijacking of the Jaffar Express, where BLA militants reportedly held passengers hostage, making demands that echoed the asymmetric warfare tactics attributed to the Mukti Bahini insurgency, further illustrates these parallels. Furthermore, the group has increasingly targeted foreign interests in Pakistan, especially those linked to Chinese investment and infrastructure development, which is seen as indicative of a broader geopolitical motive transcending purely domestic grievances. Pakistan's leadership has consistently accused India of arming, training, and funding BLA operatives via

as isolated nationalist movements but as integral components of a long-term Indian strategy designed to weaken and fragment Pakistan. Both organizations, it is argued, have targeted the integrity of the state by inciting ethnic division, conducting systematic attacks on civilians and infrastructure, and undermining national unity. Whether through the mass killings of Urdu-speaking civilians in 1971 or the assassination of Chinese engineers in 2022, both the Mukti Bahini and the BLA are seen as having employed tactics that squarely fall under the definition of terrorism. These acts, it's asserted, were not merely aimed at achieving independence but at paralyzing governance and forcing international intervention against Pakistan. The argument is firmly rooted in the belief that India has consistently employed proxy actors to wage indirect warfare against Pakistan. The objective, in this view, is not to genuinely assist oppressed communities but to exploit internal fault lines to degrade Pakistan's sovereignty, military strength, and economic progress. With the advent of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and growing Chinese investment in Balochistan, India's alleged sponsorship of the BLA is widely believed to serve the dual purpose of obstructing CPEC and perpetually entangling Pakistan in internal conflict. The striking similarities between the Mukti Bahini and the BLA are considered more than coincidental; they are perceived as reflecting a consistent strategic approach employed by India. Both organizations have been involved in violent separatist insurgencies, both have allegedly targeted state authority and civilian populations, and both are reported to have received training, funding, and logistical support from Indian intelligence agencies. The names may have changed, the provinces are different, but the fundamental agenda, from this perspective, remains the same: to weaken Pakistan through internal unrest and external manipulation.

The Mukti Bahini and the BLA, therefore, are presented as two names separated by time but unified in purpose, representing a chapter in Pakistan's history that continues to unfold, with old patterns seemingly repeating under new banners. It is considered an irony that certain individuals identified as nationalist leaders of Balochistan, such as Mahrung Baloch, reportedly remain conspicuously silent on the brutal killings of innocent people by the BLA and consistently fail to condemn these acts of terrorism. The Government of Pakistan and the Pakistan Army, it is affirmed, dealing with the BLA with an unyielding determination, with the entire nation standing in resolute solidarity with the government and its armed forces to curb the menace of terrorism, eliminate terrorist groups, and ultimately foster a peaceful and prosperous future for the country.

The BLA has allegedly developed operational capabilities strikingly similar to those employed by the Mukti Bahini decades earlier. It has reportedly executed train hijackings, suicide bombings, assassinations, and mass ambushes on military convoys. The March 2025 hijacking of the Jaffar Express, where BLA militants reportedly held passengers hostage, making demands that echoed the asymmetric warfare tactics attributed to the Mukti Bahini insurgency, further illustrates these parallels. Furthermore, the group has increasingly targeted foreign interests in Pakistan, especially those linked to Chinese investment and infrastructure development, which is seen as indicative of a broader geopolitical motive transcending purely domestic grievances. Pakistan's leadership has consistently accused India of arming, training, and funding BLA operatives via its consulates in Afghanistan, and of utilizing third-party NGOs and media networks to amplify separatist narratives. Numerous Pakistani intelligence reports have purportedly traced the flow of funds and communications to Indian handlers, and high-profile attacks-such as the April 2022 bombing at Karachi University which killed three Chinese nationals-are believed to have had direct external coordination.

Navy officer apprehended in Balochistan. His reported confession to being a RAW agent working to coordinate sabotage operations, fund separatist groups, and sow chaos within Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan, is considered irrefutable proof of India's alleged involvement in fostering insurgency in the region. Jadhav's case, coupled with the BLA's own statements and operational patterns, has led Pakistan to view the group not as a legitimate nationalistic movement but as a mercenary force operating at the behest of a foreign adversary. The BLA has allegedly developed operational capabilities strikingly similar to those employed by the Mukti Bahini decades earlier. It has reportedly executed train hijackings, suicide bombings, assassinations,

its consulates in Afghanistan, and of utilizing third-party NGOs and media networks to amplify separatist narratives. Numerous Pakistani intelligence reports have purportedly traced the flow of funds and communications to Indian handlers, and high-profile attacks-such as the April 2022 bombing at Karachi University which killed three Chinese nationals-are believed to have had direct external coordination. The BLA's strategic use of media and psychological operations also reportedly mirrors tactics attributed to the East Pakistan conflict, where international sympathy was allegedly garnered through propaganda while guerrilla fighters engaged in acts of terrorism on the ground. Therefore, the Mukti Bahini and the BLA are consistently presented not

I may starve to death before I am able to graduate in Gaza

Ahmad Abushawish

On July 27, the Palestinian Ministry of Education released the results of the secondary education certificate exams, also known as tawjihi. Like every year, families sat together, eyes fixed on phone screens, hearts pounding, everyone hoping to be the first to access the ministry's website and break the news with a jubilant shout. There were joyful tears and celebrations.

Thousands of students, who had endured months of pressure, sleepless nights and fragile hope, had the exam results in their hands that would determine whether and where they could continue their education.

But thousands of others — those in Gaza — were sitting in their tents and ruined homes in despair. I am one of them. This is the second year I, along with 31,000 other Palestinians born in 2006, was unable to take the tawjihi. For another year, we have been stripped of our right to continue our education and of the hope to build a future beyond the ruins. Now, we are joined by almost 40,000 students born in 2007, who are also stuck in this dreadful limbo.

Last year, when the tawjihi results were announced, I was huddled in front of a crackling fire near a tattered tent, far too small to hold my big dreams. The deep frustration I felt didn't fade — it settled in my mind and stayed. All I could think about was how all my sacrifices, tears, and relentless effort during a full year of studying under difficult circumstances had been for nothing.

This year, it feels even worse. Not only are my dreams of education crushing, now I struggle to keep myself and my family alive, as Gaza is starving to death.

In these two years, I have watched our education system destroyed,

hi or missed some of its exams; they were supposed to have done this exam in December 2023. Some 1,500 students were able to take the tests online.

This gave me a bit of hope that my turn would also come, but that quickly faded. The Ministry of Education hasn't given us any updates on the process, and it feels like we've been completely forgotten in the shadow of war and starvation. Some readers may ask themselves, why amid a genocide are Palestinians so preoccupied with an exam?

You have to understand, tawjihi is a milestone in every Palestinian's life — a decisive moment that shapes future paths for at least the next five years. It determines whether we can pursue our education in the field we desire and gain admission to top universities.

But beyond academics, tawjihi carries a much deeper cultural and emotional weight. It is not just an educational phase — it is part of our identity, a symbol of perseverance. In a place where the occupation closes nearly every door, education is able to keep a few doors still open.

That's why we celebrate it like a national holiday; the day tawjihi results are released feels like a third Eid for Palestinians. It gives families hope, brings pride to entire neighbourhoods, and keeps alive the dream of a better future.

Over the many months I waited for the tawjihi, I held on to my dream to study medicine at a prestigious university abroad. I kept applying for scholarships and sending emails to universities across the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe, hoping for special consideration as a student affected by war. I pleaded with university administrators to waive the tawjihi certificate requirement.

But the responses were

Wanting to give Gaza's children and youth hope, it has undertaken various initiatives to try to keep students motivated. Makeshift schools have been organised wherever possible, while some university students have been able to continue their education online. For us, the tawjihi students, efforts were repeatedly made to set up our exams. Last year, the ministry announced it would conduct the exams in February. I kept studying, despite the harsh reality and the collapse of everything around me, believing this was my chance to move forward.

classroom by classroom. My school, Shohada al-Nusierat, once a place of learning and dreams, first became a shelter housing displaced families and then a target for Israeli bombing.

My schoolbag — once filled with notebooks and study materials — now carries essential documents and a change of clothes, always packed and ready in case we are forced to flee our home again. The academic calendar, with all its important dates, has been replaced by a grim schedule of air strikes, displacement, and loss of friends and loved ones.

Amid this devastation, the Education Ministry has struggled to keep an educational process going. Wanting to give Gaza's children and youth hope, it has undertaken various initiatives to try to keep students motivated. Makeshift schools have been organised wherever possible, while some university students have been able to continue their education online.

For us, the tawjihi students, efforts were repeatedly made to set up our exams. Last year, the ministry announced it would conduct the exams in February. I kept studying, despite the harsh reality and the collapse of everything around me, believing this was my chance to move forward.

February passed, and nothing happened. The ministry then announced that the exams would be held in April. But once again, they were postponed due to the unsafe conditions. Then, in June, the ministry scheduled an online exam for July for students born in 2005 who had either failed their tawjihi

painfully consistent: "Unfortunately, we cannot consider your application unless you provide your final diploma."

Today, despair and helplessness are not the only unwanted visitors I have. Hunger is another one. The starvation has destroyed not only my body but also my mental health.

Most days, we manage to have one meal. We survive mostly on canned beans, dry bread, or rice without any vegetables or protein. Our bodies are weak, our faces pale, and our energy almost nonexistent. The effects go beyond the physical. Hunger fogs the brain, dulls memory and crushes motivation. It becomes nearly impossible to focus, let alone study for a life-changing exam like the tawjihi. How can I prepare for the most important exam of my life when my stomach is empty and my mind clouded by fatigue and worry?

It feels as though my youth has been stolen before my eyes, and I can do nothing but watch. While my peers around the world are building their futures, I remain stuck in a place of overwhelming pain and loss.

As a tawjihi student trapped in a warzone, I urgently call on educational authorities and international institutions to step in and implement immediate solutions to ensure our right to education is not buried under the rubble of war.

We are not asking for much. Giving us a chance to finish our secondary education in Gaza is not just a matter of logistics, but a matter of justice and future survival.

Summit on two-state solution rekindles hopes of peace

Dya-Eddine Said Bamakhrama

As international momentum in support of the rights of the Palestinian people continues to grow, the holding of a summit on a two-state solution at the UN headquarters in New York — co-chaired by the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and France — marked a decisive moment in the political trajectory of a cause deeply rooted in global conscience. This conference, attended by a majority of countries, as well as international and regional organizations, was not just another diplomatic event; it was a genuine symbol of hope for a fair and comprehensive political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The conference brought renewed focus to the fact that the Palestinian issue remains the most pressing challenge facing the international community, and that the time for concrete action has come. Although calls for a two-state solution are not new, their adoption by such a broad international consensus — and at this particular moment — has given them unprecedented political and moral weight.

The summit achieved widespread success and stood out as a powerful global referendum, with numerous countries announcing their intention to officially recognize the state of Palestine during the upcoming session of the

UN General Assembly. These countries also expressed full support for the conference's outcomes and for the peace efforts led by Saudi Arabia and France, within the framework of an international initiative that reflects growing awareness of the importance of justice as a cornerstone for peace and stability.

The pivotal role played by the Kingdom and France

Palestinian people and ending their prolonged suffering — an approach aligned with that of most of the world's nations advocating for a just and lasting peace.

One of the most significant outcomes of the conference was the growing international consensus on the urgent need to end the suffering of Palestinian civilians, especially in Gaza. All participants

aspiration for an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The conference sent powerful messages of hope, fueled by strong political and humanitarian will. Peace, once seen as distant, now seems closer than ever — provided the international community displays firm and united resolve to end the war on Gaza and put a stop to occupation and settlement policies.

Speeches delivered during the conference affirmed that global peace and stability cannot be achieved without justice for Palestinians and the fulfillment of their legitimate aspiration for an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital. The conference sent powerful messages of hope, fueled by strong political and humanitarian will. Peace, once seen as distant, now seems closer than ever — provided the international community displays firm and united resolve to end the war on Gaza and put a stop to occupation and settlement policies.

in convening the conference and rallying international efforts around a clear peace initiative based on UN resolutions cannot be overstated. Their commitment went beyond diplomacy; it embodied a moral and political stance that affirmed the dedication of both Riyadh and Paris to supporting the legitimate aspirations of the

unanimously called for an immediate ceasefire, the lifting of the humanitarian blockade, and an end to repeated incursions in the West Bank.

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tlement policies.

This international movement was widely welcomed, particularly by the Republic of Djibouti, which actively participated in the summit's proceedings, reaffirming its principled position in support of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and its full backing of all efforts that promote a just and compre-

hensive peace in the region and the world.

In the past, some Arabs had promised to throw Israel into the sea — empty and unrealistic slogans. Meanwhile, Israel, despite decades of occupation and brutal warfare against the Palestinians, has never succeeded in extinguishing their right or legitimate hope to live freely on their own land.

Today, ushering the Middle East into an era of development and stability has become an urgent necessity, especially amid the sweeping economic transformations led by Saudi Arabia through its Vision 2030 under the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. This ambitious vision aims to not only ensure prosperity for the Saudi people, but also to serve as a regional engine of growth, with major cross-border and transcontinental investment projects that will benefit the global economy as a whole.

The human conscience now stands at a critical crossroads: either the triumph of peace, justice, stability, and development through the implementation of a two-state solution and the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its broader implications, or a dangerous regression that traps the region and the world in a spiral of violence, extremism, and instability, with dire consequences for both regional and international security.

Africa's debt crisis demands self-reliant solutions

Hafed Al-Ghwell

The much-discussed Jubilee Report, emerging from expert deliberations commissioned by the Vatican, diagnoses the acute debt distress strangling developing economies, particularly in Africa, with commendable clarity. It presents a familiar litany of systemic failures: procyclical capital flows, creditor-friendly legal architectures in New York and London, the inadequacy of debt sustainability analyses, and the perverse incentives perpetuated by international financial institutions. Its prescriptions, including a new heavily indebted poor countries initiative, legal reforms to curb predatory litigation, shifts toward "growth-oriented austerity," and massive increases in multilateral financing, echo decades of expert consensus.

Yet, a fundamental flaw remains. The report's prescriptions rely on coordinated global goodwill and structural reform that is demonstrably absent in today's fragmented world. For Africa, where public debt has outpaced national economic growth since 2013, and home to 751 million people in countries spending more on servicing external debt than on education or health — waiting for this global consensus is not strategy; it is surrender.

The report's morally resonant idealism dangerously underestimates the entrenched hostility to meaningful concessions benefiting African economies and overlooks the imperative for radical, self-reliant solutions.

Consider the sheer scale of the crisis versus the proposed global fixes. A total of 54 developing countries now allocate over 10 percent of public revenues merely to interest payments. In Africa, this fiscal hemorrhage directly competes with existential needs: costly climate adaptation for countries contributing minimally to emissions, yet facing devastating impacts, and investment in a youth population projected to reach 35 percent of the global total by 2050.

The report rightly condemns the injustice, historical and ongoing, embedded in this dynamic. However, its central remedy, a heavily indebted poor countries initiative, requires unprecedented cooperation from diverse and often adversarial creditor blocs: traditional Paris Club members; newer bilateral lenders such as China; and, crucially, private bondholders who now dominate over 40 percent of low and lower-middle income country external debt.

Regardless, historical precedent does not inspire confidence. A predecessor heavily indebted poor countries initiative, while delivering relief, failed to prevent recurrence precisely because it did not alter the fundamental dynamics or the structure of global finance. Why expect a sequel, demanding even greater concessions from powerful financial interests operating within unreformed legal jurisdictions, to succeed now? The Common Framework, hailed as progress, has delivered negligible relief precisely

due to creditor discord and obstructionism. Betting Africa's future on such actors suddenly developing a collective conscience is not realism; it is negligence.

Additionally, the report's reliance on international financial institutions as engines of reform and finance is equally problematic. It calls for an end to International Monetary Fund bailouts of private creditors; lower surcharges; massive SDR, or Special Drawing Right, reallocations; and transformed multilateral development bank lending models. Yet, the governance structures of these institutions remain frozen in mid-20th-century power dynamics that remain heavily skewed against African representation and influence. For instance, securing a \$650 billion SDR allocation during the pandemic proved a herculean task; achieving the regular, larger, and equitably distributed issuances the report envisions, given rising fiscal nationalism and escalating geopolitical rivalries, seems quixotic.

Moreover, the notion that these same institutions, historically enforcers of austerity and guardians of creditor interests, can reinvent themselves as champions of unconditional, mission-driven finance for African transformation ignores their institutional DNA and the political constraints imposed by their major shareholders. Meanwhile, the call for MDBs to lend massively in local currencies, while technically sound for reducing exchange rate risk, faces fierce resistance from bond markets and rating agencies wary of currency volatility, effectively limiting its scale without improbable capital increases.

Furthermore, the report's focus on grand interventions, from debt buyback funds and global climate funds to international bankruptcy courts, fails to grapple with the toxic geopolitical environment. Historical prejudices framing African governance as inherently corrupt or incapable, combined with rising great power competition, actively work against complex cooperative frameworks perceived as primarily benefiting African countries.

In addition, resources for global funds are notoriously scarce and fiercely contested; establishing new international legal architectures faces veto points at every turn. The current global context is not merely indifferent to African debt distress; elements within it are actively hostile to solutions requiring hefty financial transfers or perceived concessions of leverage. Waiting for this hostility to abate condemns Africa to prolonged debt traps, draining precious reserves crucial for the continent's 1.4 billion people and, ultimately, global stability.

The path forward, therefore, demands a harsh pivot toward solutions Africa controls, minimizing reliance on external mobilization vulnerable to global whims. This is not isolationism but pragmatic self-preservation. It requires, for

instance, aggressively developing domestic capital markets. Africa's savings, estimated in the trillions of dollars collectively, are often parked in low-yield advanced economy assets or leave the continent entirely. Redirecting these resources requires efforts to deepen local bond markets, strengthen regulatory frameworks, and incentivize institutional investors to allocate capital locally.

Second, the report mentions implementing strategic capital account regulations, but underplays their centrality. African countries must actively deploy tools, from reserve requirements to taxes on short-term inflows and prudential limits on foreign currency exposure, to break the pro-cyclical boom-bust cycle of capital flows. This shields fiscal space and reduces vulnerability to the monetary policy shocks emanating from advanced economies. It is a tool of sovereignty, not retreat.

Third, strengthening mechanisms such as the African Monetary Fund and expanding regional swap arrangements is critical for building robust regional financial safety nets. Pooling reserves and establishing regional payment systems, thereby reducing dollar dependency for intra-African trade, can provide vital liquidity during crises without the conditionalities of the IMF. This demands unprecedented political will for regional integration and also offers a tangible buffer against global volatility.

Fourth, every new infrastructure project financed in dollars increases future vulnerability. Negotiating harder for local currency loans from remaining bilateral partners and MDBs, even at marginally higher initial rates, is essential. Simultaneously, investing in credible monetary policy frameworks is non-negotiable to sustain this approach.

Lastly, transparency and robust domestic oversight of borrowing, including contingent liabilities from public-private partnerships, are vital to prevent repeating past mistakes. Building domestic technical capacity for sophisticated debt sustainability analyses, independent of existing models often blind to climate vulnerability, strengthens negotiation positions.

Ultimately, the diagnoses are accurate — there is no argument there.

However, the prescribed medicine is simply a dose the global pharmacy refuses to dispense. Africa's debt crisis, crippling distressed countries and suffocating the futures of 288 million people in extreme poverty, cannot await a global kumbaya moment. The moral imperative remains, but the strategic response must shift. Solutions built on African agency, regional cohesion, and financial self-reliance, however difficult, offer a more realistic, and ultimately, more dignified path out of the debt trap than persistent reliance on a system structurally biased against the continent's development.

Japan expo builds on the vision of Dubai 2020

Andrew Hammond

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has expressed hope that this year's Osaka Expo will help restore global unity in a divided world. Yet, while that grand goal is unlikely to be fully realized, the big event is having a positive impact on international relations.

Building from the legacy of Dubai's Expo 2020, the first ever in the Middle East, this year's Osaka event is proving to be a diplomatic magnet, with more than 100 foreign dignitaries expected to pass through by the end of the event. Moreover, almost 160 nations and regions are taking part.

At the opening ceremony, Ishiba said that "the world, having overcome the coronavirus pandemic, is now threatened by an array of divisions. At a time like this, it is extremely meaningful that people from around the world gather here and discuss the theme of life and experience cutting-edge technology, diverse ideas, and culture. I sincerely hope the world will unite again through interactions among countries and visitors in and outside this ring."

This vision may appear grandiose, but in fact is largely in keeping with a long tradition of expos which, building from Dubai 2020, date back to at least the 1851 UK Great Exhibition planned by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. That big UK event was designed to symbolize world peace, unity, and the progression of modernity, much like this year's expo.

Moreover, just as the 1851 event was designed to showcase Britain as an industrial leader, the Osaka Expo has the potential to do the same for Japan. Osaka's big event takes place around a half century after the city last held the expo

amid much business and consumer interest.

While the exact economic impact of the event may not be clear for months, Japan's second city is already undergoing a significant transformation. An artificial island almost 400 hectares in size has been created in Osaka Bay for visitors.

As impressive as the Osaka Bay development is, the biggest change to the

event is "designing the future of our lives." One big feature will be the showcasing of flying car services. The Osakako Vertiport will display the latest vehicles, which will be flown to nearby sites.

At least two major questions arise from the ambitions of expo hosts. First, can a country's reputation be enhanced in the same way as a corporation, or other organization, might

itively differentiate themselves to the world.

One standout success story is the 1992 Seville Expo, which aligned with Spain's hosting of the Barcelona Summer Olympics the same year. For good reason, 1992 has been described as the "year of Spain," a time when "Spanish soft power conquered the world."

Yet, many nations fail to fully capitalize, reputation-

On the first question, competition for the attention of stakeholders such as investors and tourists is intensifying, and national reputation is, therefore, a prized asset or a major liability, with a direct effect on future political, economic, and social fortunes. Boosting country branding is a common ambition in what is an overcrowded global information marketplace, and a number of countries have successfully delivered big events to positively differentiate themselves to the world. One standout success story is the 1992 Seville Expo, which aligned with Spain's hosting of the Barcelona Summer Olympics the same year. For good reason, 1992 has been described as the "year of Spain," a time when "Spanish soft power conquered the world."

physical character of the city is in the center, with redevelopment of the Osaka Station area into the so-called Grand Green Osaka. There has also been an influx of upmarket hotels, including the Canopy by Hilton Osaka Umeda, the Hotel Hankyu Gran Respire Osaka, and the Waldorf Astoria Osaka.

For over a century, one of the key features of expos has been highlighting a country's cutting-edge innovation. In earlier eras, inventions such as the telephone were showcased.

Fast forward to 2025, and the theme of Osaka's

do by hosting them. And, second, can this have a significant, sustainable national economic impact.

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ally or economically, on hosting the expo or major sporting events such as the Olympics. Moreover, on the economic front, numerous studies have indicated that legacy-driven big event growth is sometimes overhyped.

This was shown most recently by Japan's hosting of the 2020 Summer Olympics, an event that was blighted by the global pandemic and eventually delayed until 2021.

In 2018, when Osaka was announced as the host of the expo in 2025, delight was expressed in Japan. Then-Prime Minister

A masterclass in diplomacy

Ali Shihabi

Over the past 18 months, Riyadh has quietly delivered a masterclass in diplomacy, steadily reshaping how Western capitals approach the Palestinian file. Under the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the hands-on diplomacy of Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the Kingdom has pursued a strategy rooted in hard-nosed pragmatism: Washington's strategic umbrella over Israel will not fold under fiery speeches or social media storms. Rather than waste energy on theatrics, Saudi Arabia has opted for a patient, cumulative approach — chipping away at Israel's aura of effortless Western legitimacy until the political calculus inside G7 capitals begins to shift. It may

feel slow to the impatient observer, but in a world that rewards persistence over noise, this is how real influence is built.

At the core of this approach is a sober understanding of limits, paired with precisely applied leverage. Saudi Arabia does not pretend it can strong-arm a superpower. Instead, it keeps oil markets steady and refrains from military theatrics — moves that earn quiet access where it matters most: in chancelleries, parliaments, and boardrooms that shape policy toward Israel. Critics mistake this restraint for timidity. In truth, it reflects a deeper wisdom: Decades of impulsive grandstanding have done little beyond plunging the region into chaos. Riyadh has learned that proportion, not provo-

cation, delivers lasting results.

The coalition-building effort began in Paris, where France, seeking Middle East relevance, found its regional ballast in Saudi Arabia. London, responding to domestic outrage over Gaza, followed suit; Ottawa, wary of standing alone in the G7, came next. Each recognition of Palestine may be symbolic, but symbolism is precisely what has underpinned Israel's hard-won status as a normalized Western democracy. Every fracture in that image raises the long-term reputational cost of occupation and embeds it into Israeli strategic thinking.

This quiet momentum reflects the polling data: US support for Israel's Gaza operations has eroded

sharply, especially among voters under 40. Demography is destiny. Riyadh is playing the long game — betting on time, not tantrums, to unwind Washington's old consensus. That consensus is already fraying on college campuses, in statehouses, and across ESG-conscious boardrooms. The tactic: maintain the spotlight on Gaza, deny any pretext for American disengagement, and let US voters begin to carry the moral and political weight.

The crown prince made the Kingdom's position unequivocal in his Shoura Council address: There will be no recognition of Israel without a viable Palestinian state. This is not a revival of 1973-style oil brinkmanship — which in today's

world would simply accelerate Western diversification and slash Arab revenues. Instead, Riyadh keeps markets stable while freezing Israel's regional integration until it engages seriously with a two-state solution. That keeps global consumers comfortable — and Israel on edge.

The promise of normalization remains on the table — but firmly behind a two-state gate. The Abraham Accords opened easy access to the Gulf. Saudi Arabia redrew that map. Sovereign capital, Red Sea connectivity, and cutting-edge partnerships are all within reach — but only post-settlement. The burden now shifts to Israel: It must explain to its own citizens why ideology should

block a generational opportunity to transform from a garrison state to a regional player. When economic logic aligns with strategic necessity, ideology eventually yields.

One of the most consequential developments came when Saudi Arabia, alongside other Arab states, publicly called for Hamas to disarm and relinquish control of Gaza.

This decisive step stripped Israel of a convenient excuse to delay its withdrawal and continue its campaign of collective punishment. By removing the justification of "no partner for peace," it undercut Israel's excuse to prolong military operations and war crimes under the guise of self-defense — reinforcing the international call for an end to occu-

pation and the need for a political solution.

Those Muslim and Arab voices calling for boycotts, embargoes, or war have misread both history and the current moment. Power today lies in leverage applied at pressure points — not in slogans shouted from podiums. Saudi diplomacy has forced Western democracies, Israel's most critical club of supporters, to seriously reconsider the question of Palestinian statehood.

It has achieved in 18 months what half a century of summitry and rhetoric failed to deliver. The task now is for other Arab capitals to reinforce this approach, consolidating influence rather than scattering it in performative gestures.

Yes, Israel retains a US

veto — for now. But no veto can stop demographic shifts in swing states, the quiet pressure of British MPs attuned to their constituents, or the economic calculus of European firms navigating boycott risks. In time, Israel will face a stark choice: perpetual siege and growing isolation, or coexistence with a sovereign Palestinian neighbor. Saudi Arabia today holds the key to that door — and remains the only real diplomatic lifeline for Ramallah.

In the battlefields of 2025 — conference rooms, boardrooms, and social media feeds — the Kingdom advances quietly, methodically, and on its own terms. For those who value outcomes over optics, this is not caution. It is wisdom.



Ahsan, Lu Hao discuss further strengthening economic cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal has met with Lu Hao, President of China's Development Research Center (DRC) and Centre for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD).

During the meeting, both sides discussed further strengthening economic cooperation between Pakistan and China, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives on Sunday.

The strong economic collaboration between Pakistan and China is key to national development, he

said adding that CPEC has transformed the everlasting friendship between Pakistan and China from political cooperation into a comprehensive economic and social partnership.

He emphasized that Pakistan is eager to learn from China's economic and reform successes, and termed China's scientific planning as a guiding light for achieving long-term and sustainable development.

The minister noted that under the Uraan Pakistan program, the country's economy is moving toward stability, with the target of becoming a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2035.

He further stated that all

indicators of Pakistan's economy are showing positive trends, a fact also acknowledged by international institutions.

He mentioned that the policy rate has declined from 23% to 11%, while the Pakistan Stock Exchange has crossed 140,000 points. He pointed out that China imports nearly 2 trillion dollars worth of goods annually, while Pakistan's share remains negligible.

He added that Pakistan seeks to expand trade and exports with China and that gaining access to Chinese markets is a key economic objective.

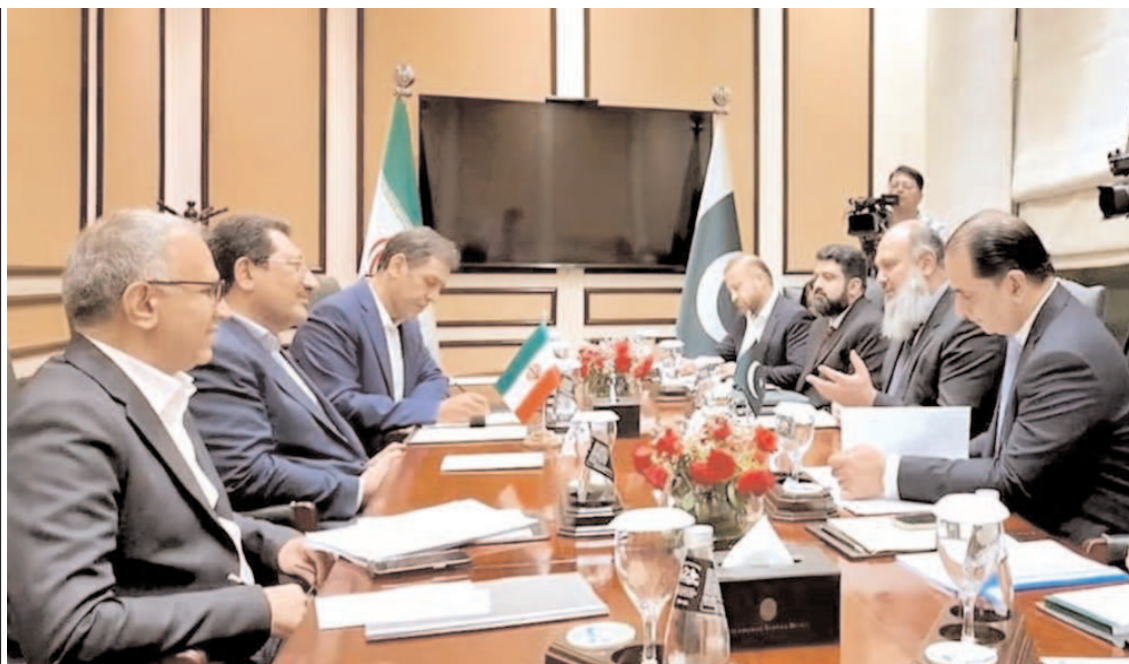
Referring to past challenges, the Minister high-

lighted that political instability and lack of policy continuity had hindered the country's development process.

On this occasion, Minister Lu Hao expressed confidence in Pakistan's strategy to build an export-led economy.

During the meeting, it is agreed upon to enter into a partnership and cooperation agreement between Ministry of Planning and China's Development Research Center.

Under the agreement, China will support Pakistan's economic development through joint research, training programs, and expert exchanges.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Iranian Minister for Industry, Mines and Trade Mohammad Atabak during a high-level meeting.

Food export delegation departs for Saudia

LAHORE (APP): A high-profile food sector delegation from South Punjab departed for Saudi Arabia on Sunday to explore new export avenues and joint ventures in alignment with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 initiative.

Talking to media prior to departure, Shahid Imran, Convener of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food, said the visit is aimed at strengthening bilateral trade ties and showcasing Pakistan's high-quality processed food products, especially snacks.

He said the delegation, comprising prominent food exporters, will focus on establishing partnerships with Saudi investors and food businesses, capitalizing on the Kingdom's growing demand for halal-certified food products. Discussions will also cover technology transfer and potential investment in Pakistan's food processing sector.

"This initiative supports Pakistan's broader goal of increasing food exports to the Gulf region, especially in light of Saudi Arabia's economic diversification strategy," Shahid Imran added.

He expressed hope that the visit will result in meaningful agreements, enhanced export revenues, and long-term collaboration in the agri-food sector.

SCCI president emphasizes dialogue — to address tax concerns of hotels, halls

SARGODHA (APP): Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Khawaja Yasir Qayyum has stressed the importance of dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation for resolving issues faced by the business community.

He made these remarks while addressing a special event held in honour of Commissioner Punjab Revenue Authority, Rai Naveed Ahmad, attended by a large number of restaurant and banquet hall owners on Sunday.

In his address, Khawaja Yasir Qayyum highlighted that the hospitality sector, particularly marriage halls and restaurants, is facing several challenges related to taxation. He urged the Punjab Revenue Authority

to play a key role in resolving these issues to ensure that individuals involved in this sector can earn their livelihood with dignity.

During the event, owners of hotels and marriage halls shared their concerns and challenges, calling for simplified procedures and fair policies to support their sector, which significantly contributes to the local economy.

Commissioner PRA Rai Naveed Ahmad assured the participants that the goal of his department is not to harass businesses unnecessarily.

He emphasized that anyone operating within the legal framework would be fully protected.

He added that matters related to taxes can be resolved through mutual

dialogue and understanding, and expressed his desire to see the restaurant and banquet hall sector flourish, particularly in cities like Sargodha, where many people depend on this sector for employment.

Chairman of the Standing Committee on Restaurants and Banquet Halls, Rao Jawad Tariq, also addressed the gathering and shed detailed light on the specific issues faced by the sector.

The event concluded with Senior Vice President Mian Muhammad Imran thanking the honorable guests and reaffirming the Chamber's commitment to resolving the issues of its members, traders, and citizens through the platform of the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

PIAF warns rising inflation fueling pressure on trade and economy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has sounded a warning that rapidly rising inflation—driven by escalating food and energy prices—is placing immense pressure on manufacturers, traders, and the broader economy. With inflation hitting high in July, the highest annual rate since December last year and representing a monthly increase of 2.9%, PIAF leadership says urgent measures are needed to cut production costs and preserve industrial competitiveness.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol expressed deep concern that inflation has risen sharply due to surging non-perishable food items and administratively increased gas and electricity charges, yet interest rates remain unadjusted at 11%, well above the inflation rate. He emphasized that this interest rate gap effectively benefits commercial banks at the expense of businesses and the federal government, which is burdened by nearly half of the yearly budget devoted to debt servicing.

The Chairman noted that while the inflation figure

remains within the official forecast range of 3.5% to 4.5%, it masks the real pain being felt across shop floors and supply chains. He pointed to sugar prices, which have skyrocketed nearly 29.4% year-on-year and over 6% in the past month alone, despite official controls targeting ex-factory prices around Rs165 per kilogram. This stray pricing has pushed the market average to Rs179 per kg, with some sellers charging as high as Rs190 per kg.

Saigol highlighted that such runaway price increases—including a 20% rise in various pulses and substantial hikes in motor vehicle taxes (up 169%), gas (23%), and water supply (14%)—betray the vulnerability of small businesses and SMEs to inflation shocks. With the government's fresh inflation projection target of 7.5% for the current fiscal year, he warned there is limited rationale left for high-interest rates to remain unchanged, which continue to elevate the cost of doing business.

Senior Vice Chairman Nasrullah Mughal echoed these concerns, warning that rising energy tariffs, inflation, currency volatility, and inflationary pressure from finance policies are and strategic planning for the automotive industry. The lineup featured the Jaecoo J5, Jaecoo J7 and Omoda C7, each model thoughtfully selected to cater to the evolving needs of Pakistan's automotive consumers.

The launch represents a pivotal moment in Nexgen Auto's mission to transform mobility in Pakistan through cutting-edge technology, eco-conscious design, and intelligent performance.

With OMODA and JAE-COO, the company is introducing global innovation and a modern driving experience to local roads, setting a new benchmark in the market.

The event was attended by senior political leaders, environmental advocates, and prominent automotive influencers, highlighting

combining to compress profit margins and drain liquidity. He pointed out that these circumstances serve as a direct threat to industrial recovery and export growth, particularly as policy inconsistencies and budget gaps in the recently approved federal budget fail to provide tangible relief.

Vice Chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry added that production cost pressures are eroding Pakistan's competitiveness in global markets. He underscored that without immediate steps to ease energy bills—electricity, gas, transportation—and cut red tape in compliance, manufacturers will struggle to remain viable. He urged the government to prioritize industrial financing relief, simplify operations for SMEs, and accelerate tax refunds to help manage cash flow.

The PIAF leadership jointly emphasized that the gap between inflation and policy rate is stifling the private sector. They cautioned that unless cost burdens are alleviated through targeted relief—in utility pricing, industrial credit access, and regulatory easing—the slow pace of production and stagnant trade

will undermine economic stability.

Chairman Saigol explicitly urged authorities to consider reducing electricity and gas tariffs, linking utility bills to global fuel price movements, and to expedite adjustments across all energy-consuming industries. They called for phasing out inefficient oil-based power generation plants to favor cheaper base-load sources, thereby lowering input costs for industrial users.

Senior leadership warned that uncontrolled inflation, if unchecked, may cause a business shutdown wave and jeopardize domestic manufacturing capacities. They pressed the government to adopt policies that support value-added industries, simplify import procedures for crucial raw materials, and strengthen R&D support to help enterprises innovate and reduce dependence on imported inputs.

PIAF's top team reminded policy-makers that high cost of doing business—stemming from inflation, high fuel and power charges, expensive credit, and unstable exchange rates—is the principal threat to both domestic growth and export resilience.

Nishat Group unveils OMODA and JAE-COO in Pakistan

F.P. Report

LAHORE: One of Pakistan's largest business conglomerates, Nishat Group, through its subsidiary Nexgen Auto, has officially introduced the renowned automotive giant Chery International's global brand OMODA and JAE-COO to the local market.

At a high-profile launch event held at Expo Centre Lahore, OMODA and JAE-COO unveiled their highly anticipated electric vehicle models, the Omoda E5 and Jaecoo J6, along with compelling pricing.

Demonstrating Nishat Group's commitment to innovation and excellence, the event was executed with precision and vision.

The showcase of the future lineup reflected the Nishat Group's clear vision



the significance of this milestone in shaping the country's electric vehicle landscape.

The official car reveals

were supported by strategic insights from Nexgen Auto's leadership, sharing their long-term vision for redefining electric mobility

in the region.

With this launch, Nexgen Auto is starting a new chapter in Pakistan's automotive landscape

‘US trade breakthrough a game-changer for exports’

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday lauded the government's successful efforts in securing a favorable trade tariff framework with the United States, calling it a major breakthrough for Pakistan's export sector.

In a statement issued here, he said, "The government deserves full credit for negotiating a fair and forward-looking trade arrangement with the US amidst global tariff uncer-

tainties."

He emphasized that securing the 19 percent tariff framework is a strategic success that strengthens Pakistan's export potential, especially for value-added sectors such as textiles, garments, and IT services. "This landmark agreement will greatly enhance Pakistan's access to its largest non-Asian export market, boosting our competitiveness in the global arena," Malik added.

He said the development signals Pakistan's ris-

ing credibility as a reliable and responsible trading partner.

He noted that diplomatic and economic initiatives of this nature are vital for revitalizing exports and attracting foreign direct investment.

He said, "Continued engagement with US counterparts is essential to unlocking further economic opportunities. We must now focus on compliance, innovation, and diversification to fully capitalize on this success."

any bilateral trade plan. He offered the full support of FPCCI's BMP to facilitate sector-specific dialogue, organize trade exhibitions, and help solve practical challenges faced by exporters and importers on both sides.

He said Pakistan must take lessons from earlier failures and act with strategic clarity this time. He recalled that nearly every few years, similar trade targets have been set between the two countries but were never met. He said the only way to break this cycle is to start with concrete action—reviving cross-border trade, launching the gas pipeline, and streamlining trade regulations. Without these pillars, he said, the \$8 billion figure would be no different than previous targets that faded away.

BMP welcomes \$ 8 billionn Pakistan-Iran trade target

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has welcomed the announcement of an \$8 billion annual trade target between Pakistan and Iran, calling it a step in the right direction for regional economic cooperation. However, it warned that such targets will remain only on paper unless both countries move swiftly to remove longstanding trade barriers, implement practical steps on the ground, and most importantly, complete the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project that has already suffered years of costly delay.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that while the trade target

reflects a positive political atmosphere and renewed interest in economic ties, the business community has witnessed many similar pledges in the past that failed to translate into real trade growth. He said the central problem is not the lack of interest but the presence of systemic bottlenecks, regulatory restrictions, security issues, and inadequate infrastructure at the border, which continue to choke potential trade despite close cultural and geographical proximity. He emphasized that the two countries have all the ingredients to become natural trade partners, but this potential will remain wasted unless both governments show seriousness in execution and build reliable commercial linkages beyond announcements.

He stated that one of the most crucial and unresolved elements is the incomplete gas pipeline project, which, if operationalized, could provide Pakistan with a stable and cost-effective source of energy while boosting bilateral trust and regional interdependence. He reminded that Iran has already completed the construction of its portion of the pipeline years ago, but Pakistan's side remains frozen due to external pressure and internal indecision.

Anjum Nisar said it is no longer feasible to delay the project under the pretext of international sanctions, as energy insecurity in Pakistan has now reached a critical stage, requiring bold and independent decision-making. The BMP chairman stressed that unless

Pakistan finds a way to move forward with the gas pipeline, all talk of economic integration will remain hollow. He said the government must urgently engage in constructive diplomacy with international stakeholders to carve out a viable space for pipeline completion without breaching global obligations. He warned that further delay could lead to financial liabilities through arbitration proceedings already initiated by Iran, which could result in penalties running into billions of dollars. He said that economic sovereignty demands practical action, not just caution and postponement.

Mian Anjum Nisar pointed out that trade volumes between the two countries have remained disappointingly low for years, despite

repeated expressions of interest from both sides. He said non-tariff barriers, lack of banking channels, absence of trade insurance, inconsistent customs policies, and severe border restrictions have made even basic trade difficult. He cited the example of border areas like Mashkel, where legal trade has collapsed due to over-regulation and tight fencing, depriving thousands of people of livelihoods and pushing commerce into informal or smuggling routes. He said a country cannot boost regional trade if it suffocates its own border economy.

He said both countries should work on reactivating legal trade routes under strict but facilitative regulation, ensuring that cross-border movement of goods does not become hostage to

political or bureaucratic roadblocks. He urged both sides to develop joint border terminals, improve road links, and modernize customs procedures to reduce delays and encourage licensed trade. He also called for the introduction of barter trade systems in permitted categories that could function without needing conventional banking links, which remain limited due to sanctions-related financial isolation.

Anjum Nisar further urged that beyond energy and border trade, there are vast opportunities in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, construction materials, and IT services that have not yet been explored seriously. He said the lack of market awareness, business-to-business contact, and promotional initiatives has kept

Pakistani exporters largely disconnected from Iranian demand. He emphasized that trade offices, chambers of commerce, and private trade councils should be activated with dedicated staff to create an institutional bridge between Pakistani and Iranian businesses.

He said BMP strongly believes that the \$8 billion target is achievable but only if supported by a series of bold, clear, and time-bound actions. He emphasized that announcements made at the top level should now be matched by technical and logistical work on the ground. He noted that the frequent change of governments, economic crises, and shifting regional dynamics often interrupt such initiatives, and that is why the private sector must be made a permanent stakeholder in



In brief

Ali's brother dies at 82

LONDON (Agencies): Rahaman Ali, the younger brother of boxing legend Muhammad Ali, passed away on Friday at the age of 82. The news of his death was confirmed by the Muhammad Ali Center, though the cause has not yet been disclosed. Born Rudolph Valentino Clay, Rahaman later converted to Islam and changed his name, following in his brother's footsteps. He began his professional boxing career in 1964, carving out a respectable record of 14 wins, three losses, and one draw over the course of an eight-year career. Rahaman never achieved the heights and legacy that his brother had, but he played a crucial role in his brother's life. Beyond the ring, Rahaman stayed involved in keeping his brother's legacy. In 2014, he co-authored a book with boxing writer H. Ron Brashear, offering insights into life alongside 'The Greatest.' 'That's Muhammad Ali's Brother! My Life on the Undercard' and followed that with a second book in 2019 titled 'My Brother, Muhammad Ali: The Definitive Biography'. President and CEO of the Muhammad Ali Centre, DeVone Holt, cited that they can't mention the story and legacy of Muhammad Ali without mentioning Rahaman's name. "You can't tell Muhammad's story without mentioning Rahaman," Holt said. He further added that Rahaman was one of the most authentic sources to Muhammad Ali in his career, and both had a great relationship. "He was one of the most constant sources of support for Muhammad during this career, and their relationship was a true example of what it means to be 'my brother's keeper.'"

Pakistan team arrives in Dublin

DUBLIN (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan women's cricket team arrived in Dublin on Sunday to kick off their three-match T20I series against Ireland. The squad, under the leadership of newly appointed captain Fatima Sana, is set to begin preparations after a scheduled day of rest. The squad will face Ireland in a three-match T20I series, with all fixtures taking place at Clontarf Cricket Club Ground in Dublin. The national women's cricket team is scheduled to play at the Clontarf Cricket Club in Dublin on August 7, 10, and 11, respectively. According to team management, the players will resume training on Tuesday as they gear up for the opening encounter. The green shirts will then participate in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup the following month, which will be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka. Pakistan will begin their mega event campaign against Bangladesh on October 2 before taking on arch rivals India on October 5. They will play their last group stage match against Sri Lanka on October 24. T20I tour of Ireland First T20I against Ireland on August 7 in Belfast Second T20I against Ireland on August 10 in Belfast Third T20I against Ireland on August 11 in Belfast 15-Member Squad Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Eymaan Fatima, Gul Feroza, Muneeba Ali, Najiyah Alvi (wicketkeeper), Nashra Sandhu, Natalia Pervaiz, Rameen Shamim, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Ameen, Tuba Hassan, and Waheeda Akhtar.

Last-ball hero Holder lifts West Indies over Pakistan in T20



MIAMI (AFP): Jason Holder smashed a four on the final ball to give West Indies a dramatic two-wicket victory over Pakistan on Saturday, lifting the hosts level in their T20 international series. On the same night he took four wickets to reach a West Indies T20I record 81 for his career -- breaking Dwayne Bravo's old mark of 78 -- Holder went 16 not out and West Indies ended a horrid losing streak with zero balls to spare. Pakistan, which won Thursday's opener by 14 runs, will try to bounce back in Sunday's series-deciding T20 match under the lights at Lauderhill, Florida.

West Indies, set 134 to win, was on the brink of a seventh consecutive T20 defeat after having been swept 5-0 last month by visiting Australia. Gudakesh Motie led West Indies with 28 runs but went down on the first ball of the 17th over, run out by Mohammed Haris with the hosts on 96 for six. Haris caught Keacy Carty for a duck three balls later but Holder swatted a six to end the 18th over, West Indies still needing 24 to win. Romario Shepherd smashed a six and a four off Hasan Ali in the 19th over to leave West Indies on 126 for seven entering the final over.

Shaheen Shah Afridi allowed Holder a run but then took Shepherd's wicket lbw for 15. He allowed newcomer Shamar Joseph a run that pulled West Indies within six runs with three balls remaining. Holder and Joseph each struck for singles and Afridi went wide to Holder, leaving West Indies three runs shy for the final delivery, setting the stage for Holder's heroics. Pakistan won the toss and batted first, going 133 for nine. Hasan Nawaz led Pakistan on 40 with four sixes and a four while captain Salman Agha added 38 on one six and three fours.

WCL's hypocrisy forces PCB to slap blanket ban

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday slapped blanket ban on the participation of Pakistan Champions' future participation in the World Championship of Legends (WCL) competitions after the WCL failed to maintain neutrality in the recent edition. The decision was taken during the 79th BoG meeting of the PCB held virtually under the chairmanship of Chairman Mohsin Naqvi. The WCL, in its recently concluded 2025 edition, had exhibited discrimination and bias to favor Indian Champions against all sporting laws and values after it declined to play its matches against Pakistan Champions. The meeting reviewed with considerable disappointment WCL's appalling conduct of awarding points to a willfully forfeiting team, and the content of the press releases of the WCL announcing the cancellation of the scheduled India versus Pakistan legends matches, which were tainted with hypocrisy and bias. The meeting took exception to the contents of the said press releases which highlighted a duality where

the narrative of "peace through sport" was selectively applied and believed that the sporting events are held hostage to political expediency and narrow commercial interests. The BoG said the PCB has always advocated for the separation of sports and politics. Our unwavering belief is that cricket, like other international sports, should solely serve as a platform for goodwill, healthy competition, and mutual respect. For a tournament involving legendary players to be dictated by sentiments that undermine this fundamental principle is not only regrettable but also deeply concerning for the future of independent sporting events. The meeting further reviewed that the WCL's apology for "hurting the sentiments", whilst being farcical, inadvertently acknowledges that the cancellation was not based on cricketing merit, but rather on succumbing to a specific nationalistic narrative. This bias, masquerading as sensitivity, sends an unacceptable message to the international sporting community. The PCB media release said "In light of this unfortunate development,

which underscores a clear and intolerable pattern of external influence and a disregard for the principles of sporting neutrality, the PCB is compelled to take a firm stance. The PCB can no longer condone participation in an event where the fundamental principles of fair play and unbiased administration are compromised by external pressures". It further said "The PCB remains committed to promoting cricket globally and fostering healthy sporting rivalries. However, we cannot allow our players to be part of events where the spirit of the game is overshadowed by skewed politics that undermines the very essence of sportsmanship and the gentleman's game". The virtual BoG meeting was attended by Sumair Ahmed Syed, Salman Naseer, Zaheer Abbas, Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Sajjad Ali Khokhar, Zafarullah Jadal, Tanveer Ahmed, Tariq Sarwar, Muhammad Ismail Qureshi, Anwaar Ahmad Khan, Adnan Malik, Usman Wahla (special invitee) and Mir Hassan Naqvi (Additional Secretary).

Messi exits early with injury in Miami's Leagues Cup win



MIAMI (AFP): Lionel Messi suffered an injury and was removed in the 11th minute of Inter Miami's Leagues Cup penalty kicks victory over Mexico's Necaxa on Saturday at Fort Lauderdale's Chase Stadium. The 38-year-old Argentine superstar forward appeared to be having treatment on his upper right leg or groin before making his exit under his own power and walking to the locker room. But after a 5-4 triumph in penalties after a 2-2 draw, Miami coach Javier Mascherano said it would be Sunday before exact details of the injury and the severity of the setback would be known. "Well, he felt a discomfort, and we will not be able to know until tomorrow how severe the injury is," Mascherano said after the match.

"There's probably something there. Maybe not as important, because he was really not in pain. But he did feel a pull." Messi took the ball and dribbled into the Necaxa back line, but he stumbled at the top of the box and ran into Necaxa defender Alexis Pena then tumbled to the ground, pounding the pitch in frustration as the ball was cleared away. Moments later, Herons captain Messi was alone near midfield on the left wing by himself when he went to the ground in a seated position, lying on his back briefly until trainers arrived. Mascherano elected to send in Federico Redondo to replace Messi. Inter Miami won 5-4 on penalties after the 10-man teams played to a 2-2 draw after full time. Argentine striker Tomas Badaloni

was denied on the decisive penalty kick in the third round of the shootout while Rodrigo De Paul, Ben Cremaschi, Jordi Alba, Redondo and Luis Suarez hit penalties for Miami. Uruguayan striker Suarez getting the decider on the last kick. Inter Miami Venezuelan midfielder Telasco Segovia scored in the 12th minute, but Herons defender Maximiliano Falcon of Uruguay was shown a red card in the 17th minute. Badaloni netted the equalizer for Necaxa in the 33rd minute to lift the visitors level at half-time, and Necaxa was cut to 10 men as well when Cristian Calderon received a red card in the 60th minute. Ricardo Monreal, who came off the Necaxa bench in the 74th minute, scored in the 81st to put the Mexican side ahead only for Spain's Alba to net the equalizer for Miami in the second minute of stoppage time. During Argentine World Cup qualifiers in March, Messi was nagged by thigh strain issues. Messi has scored 18 goals and assisted on nine others in 18 MLS appearances this season. He assisted on both Inter Miami goals in a 2-1 victory over Atlas on Wednesday in their opener in the Leagues Cup, a tournament involving MLS and Mexican League squads. Miami conclude group stage play in the event on Wednesday against Pumas. Messi led Inter Miami to the inaugural Leagues Cup crown in 2023 just after his arrival with the MLS club.

Norris holds off late Piastri attack to win in Hungary

BUDAPEST (AFP): Lando Norris trimmed McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri's lead in the drivers' world championship to just nine points on Sunday when he switched tactics to lead him home by just 0.698 seconds in a thrilling finish at the Hungarian Grand Prix. The 25-year-old Briton, who moved from a two-stop strategy to one stop, held off series leader Piastri, on fresher tyres, over the closing laps of a strategic contest to claim McLaren's 200th victory and their record 13th win in Hungary. It was Norris's first win at the Hungaroring in the event's 40th race, avenging his 'team orders' defeat in 2024 when Piastri claimed his maiden success, his fifth victory of the season and the ninth of his career. The dominant McLaren pair finished 22 seconds clear of third-placed George Russell of Mercedes with pole sitter Charles Leclerc of Ferrari fourth, grumbling at the Italian team's poor planning after he slipped out of the leading position. "I wasn't planning to do a one-stop," said Norris. "But it was the only option to get back into things and it was tough. Oscar was pushing all the way." Piastri said he had done



all he could to triumph.

"It was great racing," he said. "Lando did a great job." His drive brought McLaren their fourth consecutive 1-2 finish. Two-time champion Fernando Alonso came home fifth for Aston Martin ahead of Sauber's Gabriel Bortoleto, Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin, rookie Liam Lawson of Racing Bulls and frustrated four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull. Mercedes' rookie Kimi Antonelli was 10th ahead of Racing Bulls' Isack Hadjar with seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton 12th in the second Ferrari, 24 hours after declaring himself undeserving of their race seat. Heavy

overnight rain had 're-set' the track on a breezy afternoon in front of a big crowd at the Hungaroring. Classic scrap The track temperature was only 31 degrees, encouraging thoughts of a one-stop race as tyre-wear decreased and Leclerc controlled the pace ahead of Piastri, Russell and Norris. Piastri pitted on lap 18, seeking an undercut. He returned in fifth as Leclerc responded to stay ahead. Norris inherited the lead and had a 10-second advantage, as the Monegasque regained second, with Piastri third. He then chose to stay out until pitting, in just 1.9 seconds, for hards on lap 31, rejoining fourth

and facing a long run home. At the front, Leclerc responded to an apparent "bluff" call from McLaren and pitted, falling to fourth and gifting Piastri the lead ahead of a rapid Norris as the race dissolved into a strategy and tyre-management contest between the two McLarens. Norris revelled in his delayed one-stop tactic as Piastri made a second pit on lap 45, the Briton leading with a frustrated Ferrari second, Leclerc blaming his team for bungling his plan before being passed by Piastri around Turn One on lap 51. This left Norris, on ageing tyres, leading his teammate in a classic scrap to the flag, negotiating traffic and separated by half a second over the final laps. On lap 68, the Australian went close to passing in Turn One and on lap 69, he locked up. "Remember how we go racing," Piastri's engineer Tom Stallard reminded him. For Leclerc, soon left a distant third by the two McLarens, it was another pole wasted -- the 15th time he failed to convert pole into a win in 16 attempts -- and it grew worse when Russell, after two attempts, passed him on lap 63.

BCCI rejects boycott calls

NEW DELHI (Web Desk): The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has made it clear that it will participate in the Asia Cup despite growing pressure from Indian politicians to boycott the tournament, Indian media reported on Sunday. According to a report, the BCCI has no plans to withdraw from the event and remains firm on its earlier decision. The board informed political leaders that the decision to take part in the Asia Cup was not made overnight but after two months of consultations. The board has stressed that pulling out of the tournament could negatively affect India's standing in international sports and harm its chances of hosting future global events. Indian media further claimed that any boycott could have repercussions on India's bids to host major competitions, including the Olympic Games 2036, the Commonwealth Games 2030, and the Youth Olympics 2032. The BCCI has argued that refusing to play against a specific country in a multinational event would violate international sporting norms. While decisions on bilateral series can be made between two nations, the board said, withdrawing from multinational tournaments is not an easy option. Meanwhile, criticism from Indian politicians over the decision to play in the Asia Cup continues. Shiv Sena member of parliament Priyanka Chaturvedi strongly criticised both the BCCI and the government.

England-India series on knife edge

LONDON (AFP): Harry Brook and Joe Root both hit hundreds before England's series finale against India was left on a knife edge after an Oval downpour cut short Sunday's fourth day. England were 339-6 when play was abandoned at 1703 GMT, with the hosts needing a further 35 runs to reach a target of 374 on Monday's final day. India, meanwhile, require four wickets to end this thrilling five-match series level at 2-2. England were faltering at 106-3 following the loss of stand-in captain Ollie Pope. But the Yorkshire duo of Brook (111) and Root (105) turned the tide with a fourth-wicket stand of 195 that left England cruising to a 3-1 series win with more than a day to spare. But Brook's exit sparked a mini-collapse that saw England lose three wickets for 36 runs, with Root also unable to finish the job. And when bad light halted play at 1630 GMT, England were wobbling, with Jamie Smith (two not out) and Jamie Overton (nought not out) struggling for runs. A huge downpour then effectively prevented any hope of a resumption Sunday. "It is quite fitting for how the rest of the series has gone," Root told the BBC. "We are in for a cracker for tomorrow. It is a weird one going into the fifth day with the sun out now but it will be a great finish." The most any side have made in the fourth innings to win a Test at the Oval is England's 263 in a one-wicket victory over Australia back in 1902. Aggressive batting has been a cornerstone of England's approach to Test cricket since captain Ben Stokes, ruled out of this match with a shoulder injury, and coach Brendon McCullum joined forces in 2022. England started this series with the 10th highest successful run chase in Test histo-

ry after they knocked off a target of 371 for a five-wicket win over India in the opener at Headingley in June. Brook made an immediate impact when he came out to bat on Sunday, at one stage hitting 27 runs in the space of eight balls. The talented 26-year-old charged down the pitch to loft Akash Deep for an extraordinary six over cover despite heavy cloud cover in London favouring India's quicks. Brook escape He almost holed out to fine leg off Prasidh Krishna but Mohammed Siraj was unable to stop himself stepping onto the boundary rope, which meant a six for Brook. India captain Shubman Gill let the game drift and it was not until the 43rd over, with England 190-3, that he introduced spin -- in the shape of Washington Sundar. But neither off-spinner Sundar or left-arm Ravindra Jadeja made much impact against two well-set batsmen, who took just 108 balls to complete a century partnership. Brook went to 98 when Deep misfielded a drive on the rope to concede a boundary. Next ball a two to third man took Brook to a 91-ball century, including 12 fours and two sixes, his second of the series. Brook's innings ended in appropriately spectacular fashion when, going for another big hit off Deep, his bat flew out of his hands. As the blade soared towards square leg, the ball looped to mid-off where Siraj held the catch. Root's typically elegant straight-driven four off Siraj took him to 98 not out at tea, with the former England captain completing his 39th Test century following the interval, reaching the landmark in 137 balls, including 12 fours. The recalled Jacob Bethell lost his wicket when he charged down the pitch to Krishna only to be clean bowled for five as his middle stump went flying.

Marchand, McIntosh dominate



SINGAPORE (AFP): Leon Marchand and Summer McIntosh sealed their gold-en swimming world championships with dominant victories on Sunday's final day as the United States signed off with a relay record. Eight days of competition in Singapore wrapped up with French superstar Marchand and 18-year-old Canadian sensation McIntosh underlining their supremacy. Marchand, who won four individual golds and was the face of his home Paris Olympics a year ago, added the 400m individual medley crown to his 200m medley title this week. The 23-year-old arrived in Singapore with a lighter programme in an effort to smash Ryan Lochte's 200m IM world record from 2011 -- and he did just that. Marchand on Sunday cruised to victory in the 400IM, powering to the wall in 4min 04.73sec, more than three seconds ahead of Japan's Tomoyuki Matsushita

(4:08.32), with Russian Ilya Borodin (4:09.16) third. "It's not perfect because it's never perfect, but it's more than I expected, especially the world record in the 200m medley," said Marchand. "It shows that I still have a passion for swimming, that I love it." Not to be outdone, McIntosh was similarly emphatic in winning the women's 400IM for her fourth gold in Singapore, to go with triumphs in the 200m medley, 200m butterfly and 400m freestyle. The world record holder led from start to finish to romp to victory in a championships-record 4:25.78, with Australia's Jenna Forrester and Japan's Mio Narita sharing silver (4:33.26). McIntosh's only defeat of the championships came on Saturday when she finished third in the 800m freestyle, with the American Katie Ledecky reigning over that event once more to underline her

enduring quality aged 28. "Overall happy with my meet but always wanting more," said McIntosh. "Even if I were to get five golds, I would still want more, that's just my mentality." The US team were battling acute gastroenteritis all week and faced flak from Olympic greats Michael Phelps and Lochte. But they silenced the doubters by breaking their own world record in winning the women's 4x100m medley relay. The Americans were victorious in 3:49.34, beating their previous record of 3:49.63 from Paris a year ago. They also set a mixed 4x100m freestyle world record on Saturday. The US ended a turbulent week top of the pile with nine golds, ahead of Australia with eight and France and Canada on four -- all by McIntosh. American three-time Olympic gold medalist Bobby Finke called the criticism "weak" and "stupid". "Someone wants to say our swimmers are entitled, that's just the dumbest thing I've personally ever heard," world record holder Finke said after winning bronze in the 1,500m freestyle. History-maker at 12 China's 12-year-old schoolgirl Yu Zidi -- whose presence at the championships at such a young age has ignited debate -- was just out of the medals in fourth in the 400m medley.



In brief

Police arrest fake officials

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two individuals who were impersonating officers from a law enforcement agency during operation here on Sunday. According to police spokesman, the suspects introduced themselves as senior officers of law enforcement agency. However, upon verification, both failed to prove their identities, and their claims were found to be false. Police also seized the vehicle used by them. Saddar Barooni police have registered a case and further investigation was in progress. SP Sadar Muhammad Nabil Khokhar appreciated the performance of police team and said that the suspects will be formally charged with strong evidence and brought to justice.

Police detain 4 outlaws

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police have arrested four outlaws and recovered liquor, arms, and ammunition during separate operations carried out in various areas of the city. According to police spokesman, Sadiqabad Police held supplier and seized 10 liters of liquor from his possession. In a similar operation, Wah Cantt Police also detained another liquor supplier and recovered 10 liters of liquor. Meanwhile, Pirwadhai and Rawat Police each arrested one suspect and recovered illegal arms and ammunition. All suspects have been booked in separate cases. Divisional SP said that strict action will continue against those involved in carrying liquor and illegal weapons, adding that no one will be allowed to violate rule of law.

Police action on firecrackers

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a continued effort to curb the illegal sale of fireworks, Waris Khan police arrested a firecracker dealer and recovered a large quantity of fireworks and related manufacturing materials during a targeted operation conducted on Sunday. According to a police spokesperson, the operation was carried out following a tip-off about the illegal activity. Police raided a location in Waris Khan and apprehended the suspect on the spot. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway to trace the supply network and possible collaborators involved in the illegal trade. SP Rawal Division, Muhammad Haseeb Raja, stated that operations against the illegal sale and use of fireworks will continue. He emphasized that such activities pose a serious risk to public safety and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Police arrest two dacoits

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, have arrested two dacoits involved in looting shopkeepers at gunpoint and committing multiple street crimes across the federal capital. A police spokesperson told APP on Sunday that the operation was conducted by the Sumbal police station team, which apprehended two suspects identified as Allah Noor and Akhtar Zaib. The official said the dacoits were known for targeting shopkeepers and pedestrians at gunpoint in various sectors of Islamabad. Snatched mobile phones and pistols used in the crimes were recovered from their possession. The arrests were made under the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi as part of the force's intensified crackdown on criminal elements in the city.

Mushaal Mullick presses forums to act against India

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Mullick, wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, Sunday demanded that international justice forums urgently act under international law and penalize the Indian government for its unlawful actions in IIOJK, backed by solid evidence.

In an exclusive interview with a state news channel, Mushaal Mullick passionately called on international justice forums to urgently penalize India, citing hard evidence of heinous human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

She emphasized that the systematic oppression and violence inflicted on the Kashmiri people go beyond isolated incidents, representing a calculated effort to alter the region's demographic composition.

This demographic engineering, she warned, aims to marginalize the indigenous

population and erase their cultural identity, which is a blatant violation of international laws and norms.

Mushaal Mullick also highlighted the severe damage inflicted on the region's economy, particularly on its once-thriving fruit crops and agricultural sector, which form the backbone of local livelihoods.

The ongoing conflict and militarization have devastated health services and education systems, leaving the population deprived of basic rights and opportunities, she said, adding, these destructive policies not only cripple the social fabric of Kashmir but also threaten the long-term stability of the region, further isolating it from the global community.

She condemned the silence of international forums and organizations, warning that their failure to act decisively against these violations undermines the

credibility of the global order. Mushaal Mullick cautioned that such apathy could precipitate the collapse of established world systems built on justice and human rights.

She urged immediate and concrete action to hold India accountable, asserting that only through global justice mechanisms can peace, stability and respect for human dignity be restored in IIOJK.

Responding to a query, she said that all Hurriyat leaders', including Yasin Malik' voices have been silenced through systematic repression and incarceration, leaving the people of Kashmir voiceless in the face of ongoing atrocities.

She said international forums must counter India on a parallel basis, matching its actions with equal determination and urgency to uphold justice and prevent further violations in IIOJK.

Foreign delegation movement ITP issues diversion plan for key Capital routes

ISLAMABAD (APP): In view of the arrival and movement of a foreign delegation on Sunday, the Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) implemented special traffic and security arrangements across key routes, including Serena Hotel, Club Road, Faizabad Expressway, Koral, Zero Point, and Srinagar Highway.

An ITP official told APP that traffic flow on Expressway and Srinagar Highway is expected to experience intermittent delays between 8:00 PM and 10:00 PM due to protocol movements.

To minimize inconvenience, motorists are advised to use alternate service

roads linked to Expressway and Srinagar Highway, the official said.

For travel toward Blue Area and sectors F-6 and F-7, commuters are instructed to use the H-8 underpass, while those heading to or from the Red Zone and Serena Hotel should opt for Margalla Road, Jinnah Avenue, Ayub Chowk, and NADRA Chowk.

Citizens traveling to Bari Imam have been directed to use NADRA Chowk for access. For sectors I and H, traffic may use Rawalpindi Peshawar Road and IJP Road via connecting service roads.

The route from Murree

Road to Serena Hotel and Faizabad via Rawal Dam will remain temporarily closed during the delegation's movement, the official added.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider said traffic wardens have been deployed at key locations to assist and guide commuters throughout the day.

CTO Zeeshan urged citizens to allow an additional 20 minutes of travel time and to stay updated through ITP's social media platforms. For real-time assistance or route guidance, citizens can also call the ITP helpline at 1915.



ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN, AUG 03: View of huge heap of garbage laying at a roadside, creating problems for commuter.

Experts call to break stigma around female drug addiction

ISLAMABAD (APP): In Pakistan, countless women struggle with drug addiction behind closed doors, their pain hidden by a wall of silence and stigma. Many suffer alone, too afraid to seek help for fear of judgment, shame, or rejection by their families and society.

"It started quietly, I didn't even realize when I lost control," said one young woman in recovery, speaking anonymously from a rehab center. Health experts and social activists now warn that this growing crisis demands urgent attention and compassionate care before more lives are lost to neglect and shame.

Dr. Shamsheer Hayat, a PhD, clinical psychologist and CEO of Hayat Rehab Clinic, told APP that, "addiction among women is rising, yet most cases are reported anonymously. Families avoid bringing daughters or wives for treatment out of fear of judgment," he said, noting a growing number of school and university girls falling into addiction due to peer pressure, neglect, or academic stress.

He described that addiction is often linked to deeper mental health issues like depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder, and requires holistic care, detox, therapy, and emotional healing. Dr. Shamsheer Hayat explained that whether women are using cannabis, heroin, methamphetamine, amphetamines, prescription painkillers, or alcohol, substance abuse takes a serious toll, not just physically, but also on their emotional stability, mental health, behavior, and personal relationships.

The impact of female addiction reaches far beyond the individual, affecting children through emotional neglect and mental health struggles, burdening families emotionally and financially. Deep-rooted social stigma wrongly links addiction to moral failure, while gender-insensitive healthcare policies worsen the crisis. Overprescription and misleading media portrayals add to the problem.

Psychologist Zunaira Hamid explained to APP that women are more vulnerable to addiction due to emotional distress, hormonal imbalances, and trauma, often using substances to cope. She noted that addiction affects women differently, with hormonal cycles increasing relapse risk. Yet, most rehab centers lack programs tailored to women's unique emotional and psychological needs delaying recovery.

Students are increasingly aware of the growing issue of female drug addiction. Umaira Gull, a Computer Science student at Asia Pacific University, Malaysia, echoed this, saying she's heard of many girls turning to marijuana and pills due to stress, personal struggles, or toxic friendships, yet stigma keeps them silent. In truth, female addiction is not a moral failure but a public health crisis. These women are not weak, they are often survivors of trauma, neglect, or untreated mental illness, and their silence is a response to a society that chooses judgment over empathy.

Ainabia Faisal, an A-Level student at Cedar College, Karachi, noted that while she hasn't seen it directly at

school, it's clearly a rising problem in society, especially for girls who face harsher judgment. She cited peer pressure and trauma as major triggers.

In countries like Germany, Canada, and the UK, female addiction is treated as a health issue, not a moral failure. Women have access to gender-sensitive rehab centers that offer medical detox, trauma-informed therapy, childcare support, and long-term reintegration plans. Public health campaigns reduce stigma, while government-funded programs ensure no woman is denied help due to fear or finances. In contrast, Pakistani women face silence, shame, and scarce treatment options, pushed into hiding instead of healing.

Dr. Zainab, a psychiatrist specializing in addiction treatment, highlighted how societal attitudes often prevent women from seeking timely care. "Shame and fear push many women to hide their struggles until it's too late," she said. "The earlier the treatment begins, the smoother and faster the recovery process can be. We need to shift the narrative, addiction is a treatable condition, and women deserve support, not silence. Compassion, not condemnation."

It's time we stop whispering about women's addiction and start speaking up. We need better rehab facilities, supportive families, public awareness campaigns, and healthcare policies that treat addicted women with the empathy, respect, and specialized care they deserve. Because behind every addiction is a story, and behind every story is a woman who needs to be heard, not hidden.



Tehran eyes stronger bilateral ties Aleem Khan invites Iran to Ministerial Conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): Iranian Minister for Roads & Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh, who accompanied the Iranian President on official visit to Pakistan, participated in a joint session held with Federal Ministers for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, and Railways Hanif Abbasi.

The discussions focused on strengthening the longstanding friendly and bilateral relations between the two countries, particularly by enhancing transportation, connectivity network and road infrastructure, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

During the meeting interest was expressed by Iran in joining the Silk Road initiative with Pakistan and China and discussed expanding maritime trade via the Gwadar-Chabahar Route. Welcoming the Iranian delegation, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan congratulated Iran on his great success & firm stance against Israel, describing it as a matter of pride and solidarity for the entire Muslim

World. He emphasized that Pakistan and Iran have always stood by each other while recent developments have brought the two nations more closer.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan invited the Iranian Minister for Roads and Urban Development to attend the upcoming Ministerial Conference in Pakistan on October 23-24, which will be hosted by Pakistan and Ministers from 20 countries be participating. In response, the Iranian Minister Ms. Farzaneh Sadegh expressed her deep appreciation for Pakistan's support against Israeli aggression and extended sentiments of goodwill to the people of Pakistan.

Iranian Minister highlighted the need to increase the number of vehicles operating between Iran and Pakistan and suggested modernizing the current Quetta-Zahedan Route. Federal Minister Communications Abdul Aleem Khan proposed forming bilateral working groups to accelerate the implementation of agreed initiatives.

During the meeting, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal

Khan briefed the Iranian delegation on opportunities to expand trade volume and highlighted the significant untapped potential across various sectors. He noted that both countries can serve as viable markets for each other.

Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to review the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Railway Projects, adding that the Quetta-Zahedan Railway Line would be upgraded and expanded to improve regional connectivity. In response, Iranian Minister Ms. Farzaneh Sadegh thanked her Pakistani counterparts and assured full cooperation from her country, Iran. She described her visit to Pakistan as highly pleasant and memorable, expressing optimism for more dynamic and effective bilateral engagements going forward. Aleem Khan recalling his recent visit to Iran, termed the progress in bilateral relations as positive and meaningful. He also presented gifts to Iranian Minister Ms. Farzaneh Sadegh and conveyed warm wishes to the people of Iran.

CDA's beautification drive shines

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) successfully led a wide-ranging beautification and urban enhancement campaign as the President of Iran arrived in Islamabad for a two-day official visit, marking a major diplomatic milestone in Pakistan-Iran relations.

The civic body transformed key areas of the federal capital to reflect Pakistan's tradition of hospitality and commitment to regional diplomacy. "The arrival of the Iranian President is a proud moment for our nation. Islamabad was prepared to reflect our warmth and our values of peace, progress, and hospitality," said Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa. "Our team worked tirelessly to ensure the capital presented itself with dignity and grace."

In the days leading up to the visit, the CDA launched a comprehensive city beautification campaign. Major roads, intersections, and avenues were cleaned and adorned with national flags of Pakistan and Iran, celebrating the long-standing cultural and diplomatic ties between the two countries. Colorful lighting installations were placed along key routes, giving the city a festive and ceremonial atmosphere.

DG PDMA warns citizens to avoid waterlogged areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General (DG) Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Irfan Ali Kathia on Sunday warned people to stay cautious and steer clear of waterlogged places as the sixth round of heavy monsoon rains is forecast across Punjab starting August 5.

In a message on media channels, he warned that the ongoing rains could lead to medium to high-level flooding in the Chenab and Jhelum rivers, with the risk expected to begin from August 5, adding, authorities are closely monitoring the situation to ensure timely warnings and necessary precautions are taken to minimize potential damage.

Monsoon rains in August are expected to be

heavier than those experienced last month. PDMA Punjab, under CM directives, has issued a comprehensive alert to all commissioners and deputy commissioners across the province, urging them to prepare for the upcoming heavy monsoon rains and potential flooding.

Rain is predicted in Murree, Galliaty, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Narowal, Sahiwal, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Khushab, Sargodha, Mianwali, Nankana Sahib, Chiniot, Faisalabad, and Okara, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bhakkar, Bahawalpur, Khanewal, Pakpattan, Vehari, Lodhran, and Muzaffargarh and

Rajanpur. Civil defence, rescue teams and relevant agencies have been tasked by PDMA Punjab to complete all required arrangements, he added. Emergency control room staff and Rescue 1122 disaster response teams will remain on high alert to respond swiftly. The public is advised to follow all precautionary measures issued to stay safe during the heavy rains, he mentioned.

There is a risk of landslides in Murree and Galliaty, as well as potential damage to mud houses and weak buildings. Travellers and tourists should exercise caution, avoid unnecessary travel, and stay aware of the changing weather conditions, he added.

Khichi reaffirms support for Kashmiri people

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi has reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering moral, diplomatic, and cultural support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), stating that the entire nation speaks with one voice: "Kashmir Baney Ga Pakistan."

Talking to APP in connection with Youm-e-Istehsal, falling on August 05, the minister said that Pakistan's support for the oppressed people of Kashmir is rooted in the country's national resolve and historical responsibility. "The whole nation is standing with the Kashmiri people. We will continue to raise their voice on every forum and through every platform available to us," he said.

The minister emphasized that the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, along with its affiliated

institutions, Lok Virsa, the National Language Promotion Department, Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Pakistan Academy of Letters, and the National Library of Pakistan, has planned a range of cultural and literary activities to mark the day.

These include seminars, discussions, rallies, and competitions aimed at strengthening national solidarity with the Kashmiri cause. "Culture and literature are powerful tools of resistance," Khichi stated. "Through our artistic and literary voices, we aim to highlight the ongoing suffering of the Kashmiri people and amplify their demand for justice and self-determination."

He said that August 05 marks the day when India's ruling regime stripped IIOJK of its special constitutional status, attempting to silence the people of Kashmir through undemocratic means. "But they

failed to crush the spirit of Kashmiris. Their resilience and courage remain unshaken," he added.

"Through our cultural platforms, we are sending a clear message that the Kashmiri identity, history, and voice cannot be erased. Our artists, writers, poets, and youth are with Kashmir with their heart and soul."

As part of these initiatives, the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, will hold a special program to observe Youm-e-Istehsal on August 05. The day's schedule includes a photo exhibition and documentary screenings in the PNCA Main Lobby, followed by a puppet show in the auditorium.

These events aim to raise awareness about the illegal actions of August 05, 2019, and the continued human rights violations in IIOJK.

182 professional beggars netted during operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police have intensified their crackdown and detained 182 professional beggars during the last 21 days.

According to police, special squads have been deployed to arrest professional beggars operating in markets, intersections, and along major roads and highways. Police said that

many of professional beggars are linked to criminal activities, including theft and drug trafficking.

City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani stated that strict surveillance is being maintained, particularly in high-traffic areas, to discourage begging and ensure public safety.

He added that the cam-

paign is in line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and operations against professional beggars will continue throughout the city. Police have urged the public to cooperate and avoid giving money to street beggars, encouraging citizens to support legitimate welfare initiatives instead.

WFP seeks \$ 539 million

KABUL (Pajhwok): The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced it urgently needs \$539 million to continue delivering humanitarian assistance across Afghanistan over the next six months. In a post on X, WFP said: "Afghanistan's hunger crisis is growing deeper by the day. Women, children, and returnees are among the hardest hit. WFP urgently needs \$539 million to continue reaching those who need us most over the next six months."

2 killed, 1 hurt in collision

BAMYAN CITY (Pajhwok): Two individuals have been killed and another injured in a traffic accident in Bamyan on Sunday. Police spokesman Mohammad Khawani Rasa said that the collision occurred on Saturday between a car and a motorcycle in the Shaheed-an-Sheibarto area of Bamyan City. However, the exact cause of the accident was not ascertained, Rasa cited damaged roads, drivers' recklessness and non-compliance with traffic laws as common contributing factors.

Free eye treatment camp launched at Logar hospital



PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): The Public Health Department says a temporary camp has been opened for the treatment of eye patients at the 300-bed

Naib Aminullah Khan Logari hospital in the capital of central Logar province. Hafiz Syed-ur-Rahman Qadiri, head of Logar's

Public Health Department, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the camp will remain open for two weeks and will provide free eye treatment to 5,000 people during this period.

Qadiri added that ophthalmology specialists from the Ministry of Public Health will perform cataract surgeries on 200 patients and distribute eyeglasses to 400 individuals. According to him, priority is being given to underprivileged people.

Meanwhile, Akram Khan, an eye patient at the Naib Aminullah Khan Logari 300-bed Hospital, told Pajhwok that he was happy the Ministry of Public Health had launched free eye treatment services.

He added that he could not afford the cost of treating his eyes and called on the Ministry of Public Health to establish a permanent ophthalmology department at the provincial hospital.

Fig farmers struggle as export barriers lower prices

KANDAHAR (TOLOnews): In the Nili area of Kandahar's Shah Wali Kot district, Awal Khan and his fellow workers are busy harvesting, sorting, and preparing figs. He says that during the harvesting, drying, and packaging process, they consider all market demands.

Worker Awal Khan says: "We have received professional training in picking, sorting, and standard packaging of figs. Our work meets quality standards."

Another worker, Abdul Hanan, adds: "These are figs from Shah Wali Kot in Kandahar, there's no other place in the world with figs like these. They deserve proper attention." Shah Wali Kot district, known for its vast fig orchards, has left many orchard owners worried about the lack of export opportunities.

They say that although production is high, prices remain low due to the inability to export. They are calling on the Islamic Emirate to address these issues.

Fig trader Mohammad Din Mohammadi also says: "The prices of our figs are so low that they don't even cover our costs. We request support in marketing and selling our figs."

Fig grower TORYALAI stated: "We ask neighboring countries and the world to separate politics from business and take steps to boost trade. This is also our request to the Islamic Emirate."

Mohammad Khalid Zafarani, head of the Kandahar Farmers' Union, expressed his concern: "Every year during our harvest season, our trade routes are blocked. There's no effort to market our crops, and our farmers suffer losses. These problems must be resolved."

Officials report a 40% increase in fig production in Kandahar this year compared to last and say they are working to ease the export process. Fig orchards in Kandahar cover 15,000 hectares, yielding up to 135 metric tons annually.

Dozens of schools remain incomplete in Khost province

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): About 70 school buildings, work on launched in the previous government under the National Citizen Charter Programme, remains incomplete in southeastern Khost province.

Teachers and students are now urging the officials concerned to complete these buildings to resolve problems they face.

These schools, situated in various parts of the province, are reportedly 80 to 85 percent complete, but the remaining work has yet to be finished.

A teacher at Gul Younas Girls' Primary School in the Motakhel area of Sabari Yaqubi district said they had been teaching students in an unsuitable building for the past five years—one that lacks doors, windows, desks and chairs.

"Our voice reaches no one, our school has nothing—no windows, no plaster, no boundary wall, no well and no toilets. We have levelled the classrooms ourselves just to provide a sitting area for the students," Noor Shahbaz Khan told Pajhwok Afghan News.

Another teacher, Mira Jan, warned that if the remaining construction work was not completed on time, the 80 percent work already done could be wasted.

"This building has no doors or windows. We are facing many difficulties. Some girl students want to come to the school, but they don't because if the school had doors and windows, they would feel safer. The building is in a poor condition," he added.

Gul Younas Girls' School is not the only one facing such challenges. A school in Kuchakano area of Zazi Maidan district also suffers from the same fate.

Currently, students at that school study under the shade of trees, but when it rains or is windy, classes are cancelled and the children return home.

One student, Ikramullah told Pajhwok: "We want our school building to be completed. When it rains,

children cannot attend lessons and the heat also causes problems."

Another student, Naveedullah, said studying under trees was not effective.

He urged the caretaker government to complete the half-finished school building so they could learn properly and be protected from rain and heat.

Similarly, a number of Khost residents also asked government officials—especially the Ministry of Education—to urgently restart construction work on all schools across the province where the work was left incomplete.

Nasib, a local resident, said: "There are many schools in Khost that are incomplete. Some need painting, others need windows or other parts. If all these issues are addressed, students will have a comfortable environment to study."

Meanwhile, Education Department also acknowledged that construction work of about 70 schools, initiated during the previous government, has not been completed and the buildings have not yet been handed over to them.

Deputy Education Director Khairo Gul Khairkhwah told Pajhwok: "During the republic era, around 70 schools were planned under the Iqra programme within the Citizen Charter framework. About 70 to 80 percent of the construction work was completed."

He added that the matter had been brought to the attention of the Islamic Emirate's leadership and he hoped they would make a decision on the issue soon.

Calls for the completion of these unfinished school buildings come at a time when dozens of other schools in Khost still lack any shelters, forcing students to study under the open sky.

According to the Khost Education Department, out of 372 public schools in the province, 119 still have no buildings. Efforts are under way to allocate funds for their construction.

The department says currently around 300,000 students are enrolled in schools across Khost province.

30,000 drug addicts rehabilitated in Herat over past three years

HERAT (TOLOnews): Local officials in Herat province say that more than 30,000 individuals addicted to narcotics have received treatment and have now returned to normal life.

These individuals, who gave up drugs after undergoing months of treatment, are now reintegrated into society. Currently, nearly 300 people who were users of various types of narcotics have quit addiction and are ready to reunite with their families.

According to figures from Herat's local authorities, over 30,000 addicts have been treated in the province over the past three

years. Hayatullah Rouhani, Director of Counter-Narcotics at the Herat Police Command, said: "More than 30,000 addicts have been gathered and treated in Herat. In the past, addicts were treated in different places, but for the past two years, they have been receiving treatment at a 4,000-bed rehabilitation camp here."

These individuals struggled with addiction for many years. According to them, narcotics had ruined their lives and distanced them from their families and society.

Qudratullah, a patient

under treatment, said: "I'm trying not to use drugs anymore. I urge other youths to avoid narcotics and this harmful practice so their future won't be destroyed."

Another patient, Nisar Ahmad, stated: "In this difficult economic situation and unemployment, whatever little I earned went toward buying drugs. It wasn't just unhelpful, it caused serious harm."

According to doctors, most of these individuals have developed mental health problems due to drug use. Every month, more than 700 addicts receive treatment at the facility.

Homayoun Moham-

madi, a psychiatrist at the Herat addiction treatment hospital, said: "When someone becomes addicted to drugs, they inevitably suffer from mental disorders like depression and anxiety. We diagnose these patients in individual sessions, and a specialist addresses their issues."

Local authorities state that nearly 4,000 addicts are currently receiving treatment in this Herat city facility.

According to them, most of these individuals became addicted in Iran and were gathered by police upon returning to Afghanistan and placed under treatment.

UN asks donors to increase aid

KABUL (Pajhwok): The United Nations has called on donors to increase funding to support women and girls returning to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan.

On its X handle, United Nations for Women in Afghanistan wrote: "The new Afghanistan Gender Alert calls on donors to increase funding for women and girls returning—often not by choice—from Iran and Pakistan; and invest more in women aid workers supporting them".

"We urge donors to heed the call and help us respond": the report added.

Two days ago, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said the large-scale return of Afghan refugees from Iran has increased pressure on services and facilities at the borders, and a shortage of financial resources has hampered the work of aid agencies.

Herat woman employs dozens of female returnees

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Amid a sharp rise in deportation of Afghan migrants from neighbouring Iran, many women have come back empty-handed with painful memories and they are now facing uncertainty about their future.

Amidst these challenges, one woman in western Herat province has taken the initiative to create a sewing workshop that provides employment opportunities for dozens of these returnees.

In a corner of Herat city, the provincial capital, the sounds of sewing machines can be heard—a small yet bustling workshop has become a refuge for at least 50 women who recently returned from Iran. This initiative was launched by Farzana Mirzaei, a social activist.

Mirzaei, who manages the sewing workshop, says the purpose of establishing the centre is to support women who faced serious financial difficulties after

being forcibly deported from Iran.

She said fifty women were currently working in the workshop in the fields of tailoring and beadwork.

She urged international organisations and partner institutions to support her in expanding her programme and assist her in creating more employment opportunities for female returnees.

Many women working at the workshop share similar stories—of forced deportation, loss of property and the effort to rebuild their lives.

Farida Sediqi is one of these women. After years of living in Iran, she lost her home and savings overnight.

Now, sitting at a sewing machine with hope for a new beginning, she says: "I want to rebuild my life."

Expressing her gratitude for the job opportunity in Herat, she says that although she returned to the country empty-handed, she hopes to support her fami-

ly's basic needs through sewing and beadwork.

Recently, Iran began deporting Afghan migrants en masse.

In the past month alone, over 700,000 Afghans have returned to the country.

Mar Jan, an 18-year-old girl who was deported along with her eight-member family, says they lost a 250-million-toman down payment on their home in Yazd, Iran and are now living in a relative's house.

Earning 60 afghanis a day at the workshop, she tries to meet her family's basic needs.

She said: "Despite the low income, I'm happy for this opportunity. I hope more support is provided by national and international institutions so more women in need can be employed."

Jamila Sediqi, another woman who was forcibly deported from Iran 15 days ago, complains of insufficient aid.

Her husband remains

unemployed and she is striving to earn a living for her children through sewing.

Alongside these personal initiatives, local authorities in Herat province have also announced plans to help newly returned migrants find work.

Abdul Qayom Wasiq, head of the Employment Committee of the Commission for Migrants' Affairs in Herat, said they register new returnees daily at the Islam Qala border crossing.

According to Wasiq, over 5,000 skilled returnees in various fields have been registered so far, and after assessment, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will facilitate job opportunities for them.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Yousuf Saedi, spokesperson for the Herat governor, said the local administration was also striving to provide employment opportunities for both women and men who have



returned.

Saedi told Pajhwok that manufacturing factories in the Herat industrial park were active and once skilled returnees were identified, job opportunities will be provided for them in these factories and other sectors.

This comes just days after Islamic Emirate officials, in a conference titled "Employment for Returnees in Collaboration with the Private Sector", declared that creating jobs for returnees from neighbouring countries was a top priority. Several pro-

grammes in partnership with the private sector have already been launched in this regard.

These officials called on all national and international organisations to provide comprehensive support for employment generation for returnees.

From silence to skill: The struggle of deaf girls for self-reliance



SHIBERGHAN (Pajhwok): In Shibergahan, the capital of northern Jawzjan province, a group of young deaf individuals is refusing to surrender to the silence imposed by their hearing impairment.

Instead, they are embracing opportunities to express themselves, connect with others, and build confidence through vocational trainings.

Through a skills development workshop, these youth are learning beadwork, tailoring, and engraving—equipping themselves with practical tools for financial independence and personal growth.

The initiative is helping

them break down barriers, communicate using sign language, and support one another on a shared journey toward a brighter future.

The Afghanistan Support Organization for Persons with Disabilities and the Deaf has organized a vocational training workshop for 200 deaf individuals in Shibergahan city.

In this workshop, participants are taught tailoring, bead embroidery, and engraving.

Fatema, Eqlima, Aqela, and dozens of other deaf girls are breaking the silence in this training center. They communicate using sign language and

strive to achieve their dreams.

Eqlima: I believe every challenge can be an opportunity for growth

Eqlima, 24, currently learning tailoring in this workshop, told Pajhwok Afghan News through sign language that despite numerous challenges she has faced in life, she achieved significant accomplishments.

She said: "Every day was a new challenge for me. I've lived with deafness since childhood, and this made communication with others difficult. But I never allowed this issue to hinder my progress. I learned to connect with oth-

ers using sign language and other communication methods."

She highlighted the importance of her family's support, saying: "There are five people in my family. They have always stood by me and encouraged me to follow my dreams and work hard to achieve them."

Eqlima is one of thousands of girls deprived of education after the Islamic Emirate imposed restrictions on girls' schooling.

"When the schools closed to us, I was very upset. I was in 10th grade. At times I felt hopeless, but I pulled myself together and started teaching sign language to other deaf girls," she said.

She expressed gratitude for the establishment of this vocational center: "Here, I am learning tailoring. I believe every challenge can be an opportunity for growth. This workshop is a space for me to express creativity and learn new skills."

Eqlima added: "I want to inspire others—especially those who face similar challenges. Life is not always easy, but with determination and effort, we can achieve our goals."

Aqela: I want to learn tailoring and become financially independent

Aqela, another deaf participant who attends the workshop with her sister Zakia to learn tailoring, expressed her concern through sign language about financial struggles:

"Living in a six-member household with limited resources and daily challenges is difficult. We face problems such as lack of essentials, but my sister and I always try to help and support each other."

During the lessons, Aqela and Zakia paid close attention to the instructor and discussed matters using sign language, reflecting their passion and eagerness to learn the craft.

Aqela added: "We're happy that we can learn new skills and help our family. This work not only gives me financial independence but also brings a sense of worth and satisfaction."

She noted that before joining the workshop, both sisters were struggling with depression and constantly wondered how to improve their situation:

"Each day is a new opportunity for me to grow

and reach my goals. I hope one day I can create a better life for myself and my family."

Fatema: I never let my deafness hinder my progress

Fatema, another participant who has long lived in silence, is now introducing herself to society through sign language and skilled hands. She contributes to her family's income and also teaches her craft to other deaf girls.

Never allowing her deafness to block her dreams, Fatema now shines a light of hope for other deaf girls through her dedication to learning tailoring.

Fatema expressed joy over the establishment of the tailoring workshop:

"Since childhood, I always wanted to contribute to society like others and become financially independent. I never let my deafness stop me from advancing. With effort and perseverance, I participated in various training programs and gained essential skills."

She emphasized that deafness was not a weakness: "Many deaf girls are shy about going out and being in society. This place is a good opportunity for

learning. They should come, learn tailoring, and build a better future for themselves."

Fatema, who is also the breadwinner of her six-member family, called on the Islamic Emirate and aid organizations to provide more job and vocational opportunities for deaf girls and boys so they can also achieve self-reliance.

Women's rights advocate

Sharafat Nabizadah, a women's rights activist with a disability in Jawzjan, praised the launch of such vocational programs for the deaf.

Speaking to Pajhwok, she said: "As a woman with a disability who has long been active in defending the rights of disabled people, especially women, I believe that no one should be excluded from social, economic, and political participation due to physical differences."

She further called on government and non-governmental organizations to expand vocational training programs for persons with disabilities to help them achieve self-reliance.

Head of deaf association Zabihullah Qahraman, head of the Deaf

Association and the Support Organization for Persons with Disabilities and the Deaf of Afghanistan in Jawzjan, told Pajhwok that training opportunities have been provided to 200 deaf boys and girls in this program.

He added: "Our goal is to highlight the needs of people with disabilities and support them. With the help of institutions, we managed to provide training in tailoring, bead embroidery, handbag-making, engraving, nail driving, and literacy to 130 deaf girls, and in engraving, nail driving, and carpentry to 70 deaf boys."

However, he also noted: "Many deaf individuals are still left out of these trainings. We don't have enough space or budget to accommodate them. If institutions and the government help us provide courses like carpet weaving and other professions, we could even extend our work to districts and support more deaf individuals."

He called on the government and aid organizations to support persons with disabilities and not let them become a burden on their families and society.



NABULAS: People participate in a demonstration in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, in Nablus, West Bank, Sunday.

DPM sends off 17th consignment of humanitarian aid to Gaza



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar Sunday oversaw the dispatch of Pakistan's 17th consignment of humanitarian aid to Gaza, consisting of 100 tons of vital supplies, including food, ready-to-eat meals, powdered milk, and medical equipment.

According to the Foreign Office Spokesperson, this relief effort is part of Pakistan's ongoing commitment to supporting the Palestinian people, who continue to

endure extreme suffering amid an ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Since October 2023, Pakistan has sent multiple consignments of humanitarian aid to Gaza, totalling 1,615 tons of relief goods. This ongoing effort aims to alleviate the suffering of civilians, particularly women and children, affected by the brutal conflict.

The timely delivery of this consignment has been made possible due to the dedicated efforts of Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which has coordinated the swift

dispatch of aid to Gaza, ensuring that vital relief reaches those in need without delay. The NDMA's seamless collaboration with relevant international partners has been instrumental in making this operation a success.

In his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister emphasized that Pakistan remains steadfast in its support for Palestine during these trying times. He reiterated Pakistan's call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, the protection of civilians, and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, he called for renewed international support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which is essential for the survival of millions of Palestinian refugees.

He added that Pakistan also continues to advocate for the restoration of a political process leading to a just and lasting two-state solution based on pre-1967 borders in accordance with international law and relevant UNSC resolutions. Pakistan has actively participated in various international forums, including the UN Security Council, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), to ensure accountability for Israel's actions.

The humanitarian assistance provided by Pakistan reflects the country's unwavering commitment to the Palestinian cause and its determination to help bring peace, dignity, and justice to the Palestinian people. Pakistan will continue to provide relief and advocate for a just resolution to the ongoing crisis, the Spokesperson concluded.

Former AJK PM Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi arrested in Bhimber

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Azad Kashmir President and former Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has been arrested by police near Jandhi Chontra in the Samahni area.

According to police sources, arrest warrants had been issued for Niazi in connection with the May 9 riots.

Mirpur Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Liaquat Chaudhry said that the PTI leader was detained under Section 16 of the MPO, 1960.

"The arrest was made on the orders of the deputy commissioner," the DIG added.

Hundreds of cases were lodged after PTI supporters, protesting the party founder Imran Khan's arrest, staged protests across the country in May 2023. They allegedly vandalised the military installations and state-owned buildings, besides attacking the Lahore corps commander's residence.

The riots broke out after the arrest of Khan from the premises of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in a graft case. Several PTI leaders and workers were released on bail after their arrests, while many remain behind bars.

The deposed prime minister, who was ousted from power via the opposition's no-confidence motion in April 2022, has been behind bars since August 2023 as he was facing a slew of charges ranging from corruption to terrorism.

Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz among others handed 10-year jail term

A special anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Faisalabad last week sentenced several PTI leaders, including National Assembly Opposition Leader Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz, Zartaj Gul and others to 10 years in prison each in connection with a case registered in the aftermath of the May 9 mayhem at the Civil Lines Police Station.

In its verdict, the special ATC sentenced 108 individuals of the total

185 accused, which also includes Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief MNA Sahibzada Hamid Raza, who has been handed 10 years imprisonment.

The court also acquitted former PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry, Zain Qureshi and Khayal Castro in the May 9 case.

In the second case registered at the Civil Lines Police Station, the anti-terrorism court sentenced 28 out of the 32 accused and acquitted four individuals.

A total of 107 people were named in the case, of which 32 were tried. Among those acquitted are Fawad Chaudhry, Zain Qureshi and Khayal Castro.

In another case related to the May 9 violence registered at Ghulam Muhammadabad Police Station, the court sentenced 60 individuals, while seven of the 67 accused were acquitted.

The court also handed down a three-year jail term to Junaid Afzal Sahi in the aforementioned case.

PTI to launch countrywide movement for democratic rights from tomorrow

SWABI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is all set to launch countrywide movement for constitutional and democratic rights from tomorrow.

It was stated by senior PTI leader and former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser in a statement issued from Swabi on Sunday.

The PTI leader emphasised that the movement

will remain within the boundaries of the law and the constitution.

He added that PTI founder was arrested on August 5 two years ago and the day would be marked as 'Black Day'.

Asad Qaiser demanded the release of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi on bail, calling it their constitu-

tional and legal right.

"The courts are not independent and are functioning under government pressure," he said.

He added that PTI will not allow any kind of state oppression against the party workers.

He also called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin

Gandapur to prevent any such crackdown.

"Justice must be provided to the PTI founder, and all pending cases should be decided without delay," he added.

Qaiser announced that on August 5, PTI supporters will carry the national flag along with white flags and party flags to mark the day peacefully.

Death toll from rain-related incidents across Pakistan climbs to 299

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) reported on Sunday that the death toll from monsoon-related incidents across Pakistan has climbed to 299, up from a previously reported 234.

The ongoing monsoon season, which began in late June, continues to bring widespread destruc-

tion.

According to updated NDMA data, at least 299 individuals have lost their lives due to torrential rains and flash floods, with 715 others sustaining injuries. Among the deceased are 140 children, 102 men, and 57 women. The injured include 239 children, 204 women, and 272 men.

The report further

detailed that 1,676 houses have been damaged, of which 562 have been completely destroyed. Additionally, 428 livestock were lost due to the flooding.

Since June 26, NDMA teams have rescued and evacuated 2,880 people from affected areas. Relief operations are actively ongoing, with over 13,000 essential items distributed

so far. These include nearly 2,000 tents, more than 1,100 food packs, over 1,200 kitchen kits, hundreds of blankets, mattresses, life jackets, hygiene kits, and de-watering pumps.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), meanwhile, has issued a fresh alert for more rainfall across the country.

Pakistan, China discuss to further strengthen economic cooperation

BEIJING (KMS): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, met with Mr. Lu Hao, President of China's Development Research Center (DRC) and Centre for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD).

During the meeting, both sides discussed further strengthening economic cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal stated that strong economic collaboration between Pakistan and China is key to national development. He remarked that

CPEC has transformed the everlasting friendship between Pakistan and China from political cooperation into a comprehensive economic and social partnership.

He emphasized that Pakistan is eager to learn from China's economic and reform successes, and termed China's scientific planning as a guiding light for achieving long-term and sustainable development.

The Minister noted that under the Uraan Pakistan program, the country's economy is moving toward stability, with the target of becoming a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2035. He further stated that

all indicators of Pakistan's economy are showing positive trends, a fact also acknowledged by international institutions. He mentioned that the policy rate has declined from 23% to 11%, while the Pakistan Stock Exchange has crossed 140,000 points.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal pointed out that China imports nearly 2 trillion dollars worth of goods annually, while Pakistan's share remains negligible.

He added that Pakistan seeks to expand trade and exports with China and that gaining access to Chinese markets is a key economic objective. Referring to past challenges, the Minister high-

lighted that political instability and lack of policy continuity had hindered the country's development process.

On this occasion, Minister Lu Hao expressed confidence in Pakistan's strategy to build an export-led economy.

During the meeting, it is agreed upon to enter into a partnership and cooperation agreement between Ministry of Planning and China's Development Research Center. Under the agreement, China will support Pakistan's economic development through joint research, training programs, and expert exchanges.

PM pays tribute to police for countering terrorism

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif lauded the police force for ensuring public peace and order and conducting hundreds of operations in the war against terrorism to counter enemy's designs to cause insecurity in the country.

In a message on the occasion of Police Martyrs' Day, he said, "Today, we pay tribute to the brave officers and men of our police who, regardless of the weather conditions remain active in the performance of their duty away from their loved ones and sacrifice their lives to maintain law and order in every corner of the country. Today, we also salute the great families of our martyrs who sacrifice their future for us."

"In the war on terrorism, more than 8,000 police officers and men sacrificed their blood for the sake of the homeland and, as a frontline defence force, saved millions of children of the country from orphanhood as their children became parentless," he added.

He said recently, five elite force soldiers were martyred while conducting an operation against dacoits in Rahim Yar Khan. "Thousands of police martyrs, including these martyrs, are our pride," he remarked.

He said, "Pakistan Police has demonstrated its professional capabilities all over the world and the medals and awards won at the recent World Police Summit 2025 are a clear proof of this. The use of modern technology in policing for the establishment of public peace and order and successful prevention of crime is heartening, as it will make the safety of citizens more sound and effective."

"The role of police remained vital in the establishment of anti-terrorism forces in all four provinces, joint operations and cooperation with the Pakistan Army and Rangers, during natural disasters and other emergencies, due to which the citizens' perspective towards the police has improved and the performance of the police has enhanced significantly," he observed.

In the past years, the prime minister said the police conducted hundreds of operations in the war against terrorism to foil the enemy's intentions of creating insecurity and chaos in Pakistan.

"From the beaches of Gwadar to the soaring mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan, every police officer assigned to protect the country is a source of pride for me and the entire nation," he added.

BIJING (AFP): China and Russia began joint naval drills in the Sea of Japan on Sunday as they seek to reinforce their partnership and counterbalance what they see as a US-led global order.

Alongside economic and political ties, Moscow and Beijing have strengthened their military cooperation in recent years, and their relations have deepened since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

The "Joint Sea-2025" exercises kicked off in waters near the Russian port of Vladivostok and would last for three days, China's defense ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

The two sides will hold "submarine rescue, joint anti-submarine, air defense and anti-missile operations, and maritime combat."

Four Chinese vessels, including guided-missile destroyers Shaoxing and Urumqi, are participating in the exercises alongside Russian ships, the ministry said.

After the drills, the two countries will conduct naval patrols in "relevant waters of the Pacific."

China and Russia have carried out annual drills for several years, with the "Joint Sea" exercises beginning in 2012.

Last year's drills were held along China's south-

ern coast.

The Chinese defense ministry said Friday that this year's exercises were aimed at "further deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership" of the two countries.

China has never denounced Russia's more than three-year war nor called for it to withdraw its troops, and many of Ukraine's allies, including the United States, believe that Beijing has provided support to Moscow.

China insists it is a neutral party, regularly calling for an end to the fighting while also accusing Western countries of prolonging the conflict by arming Ukraine.

Advertising on social media UK threatens jail for people smugglers

LONDON (Reuters): People smugglers who use social media to promote their services to migrants seeking to enter Britain illegally could face five years in prison under plans announced by the government.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government is under huge political and public pressure to cut the number of migrants arriving illegally in small boats from France. More than 25,000 people have made the crossing so far this year.

Analysis by the Interior Ministry showed around 80% of migrants arriving on small boats had used social media during their journey to find or communicate with people smugglers.

Under a new offence, which will be added to legislation already passing through parliament, individuals who post online to advertise services that facilitate a breach of immigration laws will face fines and prison sentences of up to five years.

It is already an offence

to facilitate illegal immigration to Britain, but the government said its latest plan would give law enforcement agencies another option to disrupt the criminal gangs that profit from organising the crossings.

Last month, the government launched a new sanctions regime allowing it to freeze assets, impose travel bans and block access to the country's financial system for individuals and entities involved in enabling irregular migration.

Aseefa inspects houses built for flood victims



F.P. Report

KARACHI: First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, accompanied by Sindh Health Minister Dr. Azra Pechuho, visited the houses

built for flood victims under the Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affected program in Village Khadim Hussain Shar (UC Abdullah Lund), Taluka Daur, District Shaheed Benazirabad. On

this occasion, she met with affected families and distributed ownership certificates to the female heads of households.

Later, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, accompanied by Health Minister Dr. Azra Pechuho, also visited Village Faiz Muhammad Pathan (UC Abdullah Lund), where she inspected the houses constructed under the same scheme, met with affected families,

and distributed ownership certificates.

The First Lady also laid the foundation stone of the Benazir Girls School in Taluka Daur, 60 Mile. The school will offer primary and secondary education for girls and will feature 45 classrooms, modern libraries, laboratories, and other educational facilities. Provincial Health Minister Dr. Azra Pechuho also attended the ceremony.

Athens mayor clashes with Israel ambassador over antisemitic graffiti

ATHENS (AFP): The mayor of Athens became embroiled in a war of words Sunday with the Israeli ambassador to Greece who accused city authorities of not doing enough to clean up antisemitic graffiti.

Ambassador Noam Katz told the Kathimerini daily in comments published

Sunday that Israeli tourists felt "uncomfortable" in Athens because the mayor Haris Doukas does not act against "organized minorities" who put up anti-Jewish graffiti.

Doukas responded with hours on X: We have proved our strong opposition to violence and racism

and we do not take lessons in democracy from those who kill civilians."

"Athens, capital of a democratic country, fully respects its visitors and supports the right of free expression of its citizens," the Socialist PASOK party mayor added.

"It is revolting that the

ambassador concentrates on graffiti (that is clearly wiped off) while an unprecedented genocide is taking place in Gaza," Doukas added.

Greece, as well as several other European nations, has seen a number of left-wing led pro-Palestinian demonstrations.