

Gulbar calls on Shehbaz

GILGIT (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday met with Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Gulbar Khan and discussed key local issues, including the aftermath of recent rains and floods. During the meeting, the chief minister briefed the prime minister about the recent rains and flood situation, and informed him about the government's rescue and relief operations.



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GILGIT: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing a cheque distribution ceremony for flood affectees in Gilgit Baltistan.

Militants' attack repulsed by police in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Maidan, Lower Dir police and its Elite force effectively repulsed an attack by militants on the Gal police post in the jurisdiction of Zaimdara police station on Sunday night. According to police, the assault began at approximately 9:15 PM, with a hand grenade hurled at the post followed by firing with small arms from the direction of Meena Cricket Ground.

Personnel of Lower Dir Police and Elite Force responded promptly, engaging the attackers with retaliatory fire that continued intermittently for about two hours.

An official of the Elite Force, Alamgir Khan, sustained injuries due to the grenade blast.

He was immediately evacuated from the site via an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) to Zaimdara, and later shifted to Timergara hospital, from

where he was referred to Peshawar.

A heavy police contingent was deployed to the area following the incident. District Police Officer (DPO) Lower Dir, Abdul Salam Khalid, also arrived at the scene to supervise the situation.

The firing continued intermittently for some time, while security personnel maintained a strong defensive position to secure the post and surrounding area.

PM orders advance weather alert system for tourist destinations

GILGIT (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday stressed that an advanced weather alert system must be established for tourist destinations based on seasonal forecasts, and local populations should be resettled away from natural water passageways to help prevent emergencies in the future.

Chairing a meeting regarding the recent floods and rehabilitation work in Gilgit Baltistan, the prime minister said that keeping climate change in view, early warning systems, preparedness for relief operations, and construction of climate-resilient infrastructure in vulnerable areas should be ensured.

NDMA and the Ministry of Climate Change should jointly establish a forecasting and monitoring center for Gilgit-Baltistan in the coming months, the prime minister said adding that a comprehensive system must be developed for immediate rescue and assistance in emergency situations.

He instructed NDMA to ensure close cooperation with provincial governments and relevant institutions to enhance rescue and relief efforts.

"All rehabilitation measures for those affected by the recent monsoon must be completed promptly," the prime minister said emphasizing that a survey of damage to roads and infrastructure should be conducted, and communication links in all affected areas must be restored on a priority basis.

The prime minister also expressed sorrow over the loss of lives during recent rains and floods in the area.

Kashmir dispute resolution key pillar of Pak's foreign policy

Calls for reversing Indian unilateral actions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the just resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute was a key pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy and urged the international community to play a role to halt Indian human rights crimes in IIOJK and reverse its unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019.

The prime minister, in his message on Youm-e-Istehsal, also called for global community's role in urging India to repeal the draconian laws and implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

"On this Youm-e-Istehsal, the Government of Pakistan and I reaffirm the unwavering solidarity of the Pakistani people with our Kashmiri sisters and brothers. We reiterate our strongest condemnation of India's illegal and unilateral actions taken since 5 August 2019 to alter the demographic structure, and political landscape of Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), in complete defiance of international law, norms and principles, as well as the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council," the prime minister remarked.

Calling Youm-e-Istehsal a sobering reminder of India's rejection of peace and stability and its investment in brutality and unilateralism, he said that the continued denial of the basic human rights, dignity and identity of Kashmiris living under India's illegal and unconscionable occupation was a recipe for regional instability.

The prime minister said that India's occupation could not be sustained by any normal means, and it has thus doubled down on a nearly eight-decade regime of state terrorism and oppression.

"The brave Kashmiri people have endured this brutality with incredible dignity. Today is a day for all Pakistanis, and all peace-loving people of the world, to salute the unwavering resilience and spirit of sacrifice of the Kashmiri people."

He said that the efforts to silence the genuine leadership of the Kashmiri people were part of the wider hegemonic and extremist agenda that informs India's illegal occupation of Kashmir.

"The imprisonment of Kashmiri leaders and activists, including Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik and Masarrat Alam

Bhatt will never dim the resolve of our Kashmiri sisters and brothers. The continued defiance of Kashmiris in an environment of unending intimidation across the illegal Indian occupation is more proof of the indomitable courage of the Kashmiri people," Prime Minister Shehbaz added.

He said that India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir remained the defining conflict of the South Asia region, and the driver of India's continued rogue behavior.

"India's unprovoked aggression against Pakistan in May 2025, and its swift and comprehensive military defeat are only the latest evidence of the urgent need for the international community to ensure that the resolution of the Kashmir dispute becomes a global priority. The will and aspirations of the Kashmiri people, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions are the only path forward."

The prime minister also reaffirmed Pakistan's unflinching stance, moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people till the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination.

Pakistan, US agree to continue cooperation on areas of mutual interest

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar spoke with US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio on Monday.

The two leaders discussed a range of bilateral matters and exchanged views on current regional and international issues.

Both sides agreed to remain in contact and continue cooperation on

areas of mutual interest, the Foreign Office said in a press release.

The telephonic contact comes a couple of weeks after Dar held a meeting with US Secretary of State in Washington during his visit to the US.

Both the leaders exchanged views on a range of bilateral and regional issues.

Rubio acknowledged Pakistan's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism and appreciated its contributions to global and

regional peace.

He noted that Pakistan has consistently played a constructive role in promoting stability in the region.

Dar expressed Pakistan's desire to further expand and strengthen bilateral relations with the United States.

He voiced optimism regarding the progress being made through the ongoing US-Pakistan trade dialogue and described Pakistan as an attractive destination for

American investors.

Dar emphasised that both countries share common perspectives and aligned interests on key regional peace initiatives.

He also highlighted the role of the Pakistani diaspora in the United States, describing it as a vital bridge between the two nations.

During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors.

APC leads to inclusive consultations through jirgas: Dr Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stated that following the All Parties Conference (APC), a series of jirgas are being organized in phases. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, the provincial government is taking serious steps to maintain law and order.

After the tribal jirgas in Khyber and Orakzai, another jirga was held yesterday at the Chief Minister's House with representatives from Bajaur. During this



meeting, detailed discussions were held with tribal elders and other stakeholders regarding peace and security in the region.

Barrister Dr. Saif said that after these local tribal jirgas, a Grand Jirga will be convened. This Grand Jirga will formulate recommendations for sustainable

peace, which will then be presented to the relevant forum. He emphasized that establishing peace is the top priority of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

He further stated that the merged districts are located along the Afghan border, making coordination with Afghanistan essential to

curb terrorism. However, all measures for law and order will be taken with the trust and cooperation of the people.

Barrister Dr. Saif added that the purpose of the FATA merger was to bring the merged districts on par with other districts of the province, but unfortunately, this has not yet been fully achieved. The main reason is the lack of peace in these areas because development is impossible without peace. He said that the Chief Minister recently convened an All Parties Conference to discuss the restoration of peace in the merged districts in detail, and important decisions were made.

Tammy Bruce accused of orchestrating retaliation campaign against journalist Jalil Afridi in landmark federal case

F.P. Report

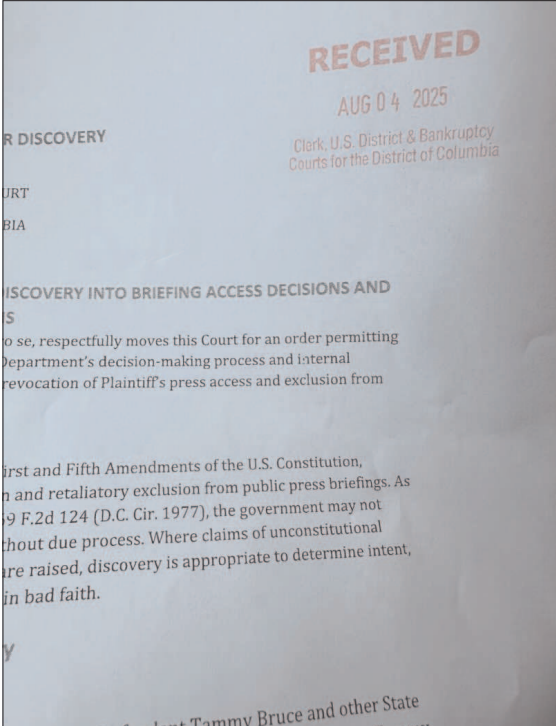
WASHINGTON DC: Veteran journalist Muhammad Jalil Afridi, Managing Editor of The Frontier Post, has filed a comprehensive legal reply in U.S. District Court, alleging that State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce led a campaign of retaliation, misrepresentation, and exclusion following his hard-hitting investigative reporting on U.S. foreign policy in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Afridi, a credentialed reporter at the White House, State Department, and Pentagon for over a decade, argues that Bruce weaponized press access procedures to silence him after he questioned U.S. involvement in Pakistani political affairs and the crypto business dealings of Gentry Beach, business

partner of Donald Trump Jr. The lawsuit, Afridi v. U.S. State Department, Case No. 1:25-cv-02118-DLF, has grown into a defining case on press freedom and viewpoint discrimination inside one of America's highest foreign policy platforms.

A. No Removal Order Existed—False DHS Narrative Used to Justify Exclusion

Afridi contends that he had a valid DOJ immigration appeal pending since April 2025, which he attached to his reply as evidence. Nonetheless, the government falsely claimed he was subject to a removal order based on unverified information allegedly received from a "building near the State Department." Afridi rebuts that no DHS enforcement office even exists near Foggy Bottom, and that



the claim is either fabricated or recklessly repeated hearsay. FOIA requests to the FBI, DOJ, and DHS were filed to investigate this claim, all of which are annexed.

AB. Behavior Allegation Refuted by Hallway Camera Footage and Witness Testimony

The State Department cited an incident where Afridi allegedly left his children unattended. In response, Afridi included evidence that his children were under supervision by a staff member named Miss Alison and were seated with him in the State Department media office. Hallway surveillance footage, he asserts, will confirm this. He also reminded the Court that he had attended briefings for over nine years without incident, and that these

accusations coincided with a broader pattern of marginalizing his questions under the Biden administration's changing foreign policy narrative.

B. Misrepresented Emotional Response

Following his exclusion, Afridi sent an email saying, "I love you all and miss you." Defendants removed the word "all" in court filings to portray it as unprofessional. Afridi clarified that it was a sincere expression of disappointment after missing a briefing for the first time in a decade. He included a full copy of the email in his exhibits, noting the government's attempt to twist his words was part of a broader effort to defame him.

C. Clean Record and Professional Conduct Over Decades

Afridi, who attended

high school and college in the United States and spent over twenty years living peacefully in the country, included documentation proving that he has no criminal record in the U.S. or Pakistan. He also cited prior interactions with officials from both Republican and Democratic administrations, including his permanent White House press badge, to demonstrate his long-standing reputation and professionalism.

D. Symbolic Protest and Suppression of Imran Khan Questions

Afridi details how his long-standing questions about U.S. involvement in the ouster of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan were ignored until Spokesperson Matthew Miller ultimately acknowledged that the U.S. had delivered warnings to

Khan's government. Frustrated by months of evasion, Afridi posted an image of a horn in symbolic protest—something the Department misconstrued as a threat.

He attached press coverage and a FOX News interview about how he had been silenced, and reiterated his role in amplifying underreported issues like Pakistan's drone policy, human rights violations, and religious tolerance in tribal regions.

E. Escalation After Bivens Lawsuit Against Tammy Bruce

On June 11, 2025, Afridi filed a separate Bivens action against Tammy Bruce personally for retaliation. The next day, he hand-delivered the lawsuit to a State Department staff member who reportedly told him, "Tammy will be very upset."

Continued on Back Page



LAHORE: U.S. Consul General Stetson Sanders admires the Mughal-era architecture during his visit to the historic Badshahi Mosque. —APP Photo

Karachi Key to country's progress: Federal Minister highlights city's role in education and Inclusion

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui while speaking at a conference titled “The Role of Professional Social Workers for Persons with Disabilities” emphasized the pivotal role of Karachi in the country's progress.

“When Karachi moves, the country moves. The University of Karachi is the heart of this city. It is the intellectual and social nucleus of this metropolis.” The event was hosted by the Department of Social Work of the University of Karachi at the KU's Chinese Teachers Memorial Auditorium on Monday. Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui recalled that in 2008, Karachi was ranked among the world's top 10 emerging cities. He said Karachi has given ordinary Pakistanis a voice in the halls of power.

The federal minister announced plans to establish more universities in Karachi and highlighted the recent opening of Hyderabad's first university in 77 years. He said that education is a right for all, but especially for those whose sacrifices gave us this freedom. Three federal universi-

ties have already been established in Karachi, and more are on the way.

“The greatest disability is to accept slavery, greed, hatred, dishonesty, and corruption. Allah created humans free and gave them the ability to remain free,” He congratulated the audience on the month of independence, reminding them that many in attendance were descendants of those who gave their lives for Pakistan's creation.

On the occasion, KU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Khalid Mahmood Iraqi emphasized that societal attitudes, lack of infrastructure, and weak government policies are major barriers to the development of persons with disabilities. “Social progress is impossible unless we give every citizen, especially those with disabilities, their rightful place in society,” He lamented that the state has outsourced its constitutional and moral responsibilities to charitable organizations, calling for a more active and accountable government.

KU VC Professor Dr Khalid Iraqi announced that the university is offering full tuition waivers for students with disabilities. “We're not just waiv-

ing fees, we're expanding academic, physical, and psychological support to ensure these students become empowered members of society.”

Another speaker, former MNA Kishwar Zehra stressed the importance of accepting and integrating persons with disabilities into decision-making forums like Parliament. “You, the students, can help pass laws that protect their rights. Serving humanity is not just noble, it's a path to divine approval.” KU's Dean of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Professor Dr. Samina Saeed reframed disability as a different way of life, not a weakness. “With the right environment, people with disabilities can succeed in every field. We must move beyond sympathy and toward recognition and empowerment.”

Chairperson of KU's Social Work Department Professor Dr. Muhammad Nadeemullah highlighted the role of professional social workers in designing sustainable solutions and advocating for resources. “They work not just with individuals, but with families, communities, and institutions to bring lasting change.”

Fugitive arrested at Lahore Airport

LAHORE (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Monday arrested a fugitive wanted in a serious criminal case at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport while he was attempting to flee to South Africa.

According to the FIA spokesperson, the arrest was made during a joint operation conducted by the FIA's National Central Bureau (NCB)-Interpol and the Immigration Wing.

The accused, Arslan Ashraf, had been declared a proclaimed offender in an attempted murder case registered at the Wando Police Station in Gujranwala. He had been evading law enforcement for the past four years.

A Red Notice had been issued by the FIA NCB-Interpol to facilitate his arrest. Following his apprehension, Ashraf was handed over to Punjab Police officials by FIA Immigration, Lahore, spokesperson added.

LWMC cleaning teams actively working in city

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) cleaning teams are actively working across the city to maintain cleanliness in public spaces.

According to LWMC sources here on Monday, in line with the direction of LWMC CEO Babar Sahib Din, cleaning staff had been deployed city-wide to ensure zero-waste activities. Sanitation workers were diligently maintaining cleanliness inside and around Tolinton market.

LWMC teams were also on duty at all major bus stands, commercial markets, vegetable markets and other public areas throughout Lahore to carry out zero-waste operations.

To enhance cleanliness facilities, attractive waste bins had been installed at Lahore Railway Station and on the central divider of Band Road, sources added.

US CG pays respects at Iqbal's mausoleum

LAHORE (APP): The newly-appointed US Consul General to Lahore Stetson Sanders on Monday visited mausoleum of the Poet of the East Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal and laid a floral wreath at the grave during his first outing after assuming charge at the US Consulate here.

The US diplomat observed silence for a minute as a symbol of respect at the grave of the national poet who gave the idea of Pakistan in his Allahabad address of 1930 and woke the Muslims of the Sub-continent up from deep slumber to wage a movement and, ultimately, win freedom from the

British rule.

Recording impression in the Visitor's Book, Sanders paid rich tribute to Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal for his visionary leadership as a philosopher, poet and politician, adding that Dr Iqbal's vision was central to the renaissance of the Muslims in the Sub-continent. ‘Iqbal's poetry was a beacon for generations to come,’ he added.

Earlier, the US Consul General Stetson Sanders was accorded a red-carpet welcome upon arrival and a contingent of the Pakistan Rangers escorted the guest to the mausoleum.

Later, US Consul

General Stetson Sanders visited the 17th century iconic Badshahi Mosque which is a masterpiece of Mughal architecture and embodies within its walls the rich history of Muslim Rule in Hindustan.

The dignitary was welcomed by the Khateeb Badshahi Mosque Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad and shown round the main chamber and other parts of the mosque.

Sanders showed keen interest in the architecture of the imperial mosque and praised the architectural heritage and art-work of the mosque. He was also briefed about the historicity of the mosque.

Sindh celebrates Independence Day with wrestling event

KARACHI (APP): President Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Sindh and Chairman of the Sindh Assembly's Public Accounts Committee Nisar Ahmed Khuhro on Monday said that the Sindh Govt is celebrating Independence Day under the theme "Ma'araka-e-Haq" with great enthusiasm, national spirit, and pride in defending the homeland.

He expressed these views while addressing the prize distribution ceremony of the traditional wrestling event Malakhra, held at Manghopir Football Ground.

Commissioner Karachi played a key role in organizing the Independence

Day programs, Khuhro noted, adding that it is a positive development that Sindh's ancient sport Malakhra was made part of the sports festival.

The event was attended by Deputy Commissioner West Zulfiqar Memon, Town Chairman Ali Nawaz Brohi, PPP District West Chairman Abid Satti, and a large number of spectators.

Khuhro emphasized that the PPP government in Sindh is actively promoting sports across the province. As part of the Independence Day and Ma'araka-e-Haq celebrations, the Sindh government is organizing sports competitions at around 150

venues.

In the Malakhra finals, senior wrestling champion Gul Dasta Khaskheli clinched victory, while junior category winners included Ghulam Hussain, Rajab Barijo, Ghulam Nabi Shidi, Umair Shidi, and Nazim Barijo.

Cash prizes were distributed among the winning wrestlers. The event organizer Behram Khaskheli was presented with a special award on behalf of Commissioner Karachi, while Ghulam Muhammad Khan received a performance award from Town Manghopir for his support, presented by Naik Muhammad Brohi.

Karachi police crackdown: 791 suspects arrested, weapons and drugs seized

KARACHI (PPI): Karachi police arrested 791 people and seized a large quantity of illegal weapons, drugs, and stolen motorcycles during an ongoing citywide operation. The weekly operation, conducted under the direction of Additional Inspector General Javed Alam Odho, involved 25 armed encounters with suspected criminals, resulting in the arrest of 44 individuals involved in various crimes. Police officials recovered 36 illegal weapons, 50 stolen motorcycles, and drugs worth millions of rupees. The operation was carried out to improve security across Karachi and counter criminal activities. The 25 encounters led to the arrest of 44 suspects involved in various crimes, adding to the total number of arrests made throughout the week.

The seizure of illegal weapons, stolen vehicles, and a significant quantity of drugs highlights the scale of this operation. Authorities have not yet disclosed the specific charges against the 791 individuals arrested. Further investigations are underway.

Governor lauds PFUJ's fight for press freedom

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, commended the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) for its 75-year dedication to press freedom, democratic principles, and human rights at a ceremony held at Punjab House, Islamabad on Monday.

The governor extolled the contributions of PFUJ's founding members, including Abrar Ahmed, Abdul Hameed Chapra, Abdul Shakoor, Minhaj Barna, and Nisar Usmani, recognizing their tireless work in advancing these crucial values in Pakistan.

The governor underscored the significant part journalists play in bolstering democracy nationwide. He affirmed his party's, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), unwavering backing for journalists, particularly during difficult periods.

PFUJ Secretary General Shakeel Ahmed recognized the PPP's consistent advocacy for press freedom and the well-being of media professionals. He reiterated the PFUJ's pledge to uphold its constitutional and democratic fight for journalists' rights.

The event, attended by a large gathering of journalists, civil society representatives, and members of various media outlets, included a cake-cutting ceremony to celebrate the PFUJ's landmark anniversary.

CM takes notice of attacks on women

LAHORE (APP): Two separate incidents of violence against women, including an alleged honour killing and an acid attack, were reported in Jhang, prompting strong condemnation and swift response from the authorities.

According to a police spokesperson, a 21-year-old woman, Dr. Ayesha, was allegedly shot dead by her brother in the name of honour. The deceased had reportedly contracted a marriage via video link, which led to tensions within her family.

In another incident, within the jurisdiction of Masan Police Station, an unidentified assailant broke into a house at night and threw acid on a sleeping female student. The victim sustained serious burn injuries and was shifted to a hospital in critical condition.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif took notice and directed the authorities to ensure the immediate arrest of the culprits and bring them to justice.

Chairperson Punjab Women Protection Authority (PWPA), Hina Pervaiz Butt, also sought immediate reports from the district police officer (DPO) Jhang.

“Women are not safe even within their own homes. This is a matter concerning the writ of the state,” she said.

Hina added that the affected student would be provided with legal, medical as well as psychological support and that both cases would be closely monitored.

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the province has become significantly safer over the past two and a half years, thanks to the unwavering dedication and sacrifices of the Punjab Police.

He made these remarks during a solemn ceremony to mark Police Martyrs' Day at the Lahore Arts Council,

Amir Muqam calls August 05 black day in IIOJK's history

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday called August 05, 2019 was a sad day in the history of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) that day India scrapped its special status and bifurcated it into two so-called 'Union Territories.'

In a message on YouTube-Istehsaal (5 August 2025), the minister said that the prime objective of India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 05, 2019 was to undermine the internationally-recognized status of IIOJK and to convert the Kashmiri Muslims into a disempowered community in their own land.

Ever since, Amir Muqam stated that the Indian government had taken scores of measures, aimed at changing the demographic structure and political disposition of the IIOJK. Some of the newly-introduced or modified laws, notably, pertain to issuance of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris and ownership of

land and property by the outsiders, he added.

“The delimitation of electoral constituencies has also been changed and the Lieutenant Governor has been given more powers in the administrative matters,” he said.

Furthermore, the minister said that the salience of Kashmiri identity, culture and language was being diluted. The Indian measures in IIOJK since August 5, 2019 constitute a breach of the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, especially Fourth Geneva Convention.

Today, Amir Muqam said that India was bent upon silencing every voice that challenges its occupation of IIOJK as thousands of Kashmiri leaders and activists remain behind the bars for last several years while the local media had been muzzled. He said, “Under draconian counterterrorism and emergency laws, the Indian forces enjoy impunity to kill any person and destroy any property. Confiscation of property and demolition of houses are the latest additions

to the list of India's brutal tactics. I salute the people of IIOJK, who are facing the Indian oppression with great valor and courage.”

He said that the dismal human rights situation in IIOJK calls for the immediate attention of the international community, adding that the reports/statements by the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, OIC-Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, UN Special Procedures, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International had repeatedly exposed the human rights abuses in IIOJK.

He urged the international community to ask India to improve the human rights situation in IIOJK, release the political prisoners, and implement the UN Security Council resolutions. For its part, the minister concluded that Pakistan will continue to extend its complete political, diplomatic and moral support for the Kashmiri's struggle for realization of their right to self-determination.

KMU awards MPhil degrees to Afghan doctors



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Two Afghan doctors, Dr. Fakhruddin and Dr. Ali Muhammad, have successfully completed their MPhil in Oral Pathology under the supervision of Dr. Ihsan Ullah at the Institute of Pathology and Diagnostic Medicine

(IPDM), Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar. They are the first Afghan nationals to achieve this milestone.

Expressing their gratitude, both doctors extended special thanks to their supervisor Dr. Ihsan Ullah, Director IPDM Prof. Dr. Yasir Yousafzai, and Vice

Chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq. They pledged to return to Afghanistan and dedicate their services to the selfless care and treatment of the ailing population in their homeland.

On this occasion, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq congratulated Dr. Fakhruddin and Dr. Ali Muhammad on their achievement and conveyed his best wishes for their future endeavors. He expressed confidence that they will serve as ambassadors of Pakistan in Afghanistan.

Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq also announced that PhD admissions in Oral Pathology for Afghan students will soon be opened, offering enhanced opportunities for higher education and research in this vital field. As a gesture of goodwill, he presented both graduates with translated copies of the Holy Quran.

SPSC conducts first-ever CBT for lecturer posts

E.P. Report

HDERABAD: Sindh Public Service Commission has always put forward meritocracy, transparency and impartiality during its recruitment process. The biggest example of such is achieving the highest feat through the conduct of Computer Based Test on 04.08.2025 successfully.

The CBT system was inaugurated by the Honorable Chief Minister Sindh, Mr. Murad Ali Shah, on July 17, 2025 at the SPSC Head Office, Hyderabad. This bold step towards digital governance represents a significant leap forward in modernizing recruitment processes.

In today's major accomplishment, SPSC conducted three different Computer-Based Tests for the post of Lecturer (BPS-17) (Biology), (Pakistan Studies), and (Islamic Studies) in Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) under School Education & Literacy Department.

The entire process was executed smoothly, efficiently, and securely, ensuring a fair and conducive testing environment for all candidates. The result for the post of Lecturer Biology (BPS-17) has been announced soon after the culmination of the Test vide Pres release dated 04.08.2025.

The announcement of the

result shows that Sindh Public Service Commission has deferred all claims of nepotism, favoritism and corruption in all its forms. The Computer-Based Testing (CBT) system is introduced as part of its broader digital transformation and transparency agenda.

The response from candidates was overwhelmingly positive. Many expressed deep appreciation for the SPSC's efforts to enhance transparency, eliminate delays, and ensure convenience through digital innovation.

The CBT initiative is not just a technical upgrade—it is a powerful statement of SPSC's mission to uphold the principles of good governance and public trust.

Punjab has become significantly safer after police sacrifices: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the province has become significantly safer over the past two and a half years, thanks to the unwavering dedication and sacrifices of the Punjab Police.

He made these remarks during a solemn ceremony to mark Police Martyrs' Day at the Lahore Arts Council,

Alhamra, on Monday.

The IGP, along with Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman, addressed the gathering and paid tribute to the legacy of the fallen heroes.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Usman remarked, “Punjab Police have laid down their lives on 353 out of 365 days in a year, only 12 days have passed

without martyrdom.”

The IGP highlighted that since 2017, 712 families of police martyrs have been provided with residential plots and financial assistance for house construction.

He said the initiative to provide homes to martyrs' families began after the 2017 Charing Cross tragedy under directives from the then prime minister and chief minister Punjab.

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

The following project positions are vacant for construction supervision of projects in the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Legal Specialist: LLB from HEC recognized university and preferably having 17 years relevant experience in Government/Semi-Government Departments

Office Manager: MBA with Bachelor Degree in Computer Science from HEC recognized University having minimum of 06 years relevant experience in Banking Sector

Office/Account Assistant: BS in Economics preferably MPhil from HEC recognized University.

Terms and Conditions: Application clearly mentioning position applied for and a brief CV in response to eligibility criteria can be submitted through email: farooq.ajk91@gmail.com latest by **August 13, 2025**. Only Selected candidates shall be called for Walk-in-Interviews. Organization reserves the right to cancel/reject any application without giving any reason. No TADA will be paid.

PROJECT MANAGER

farooq.ajk91@gmail.com



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Ameen Khan Gandapur presenting cash award to a special student for taking brilliant marks in Matric examinations.

Chief Secretary chairs weekly governance review meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A weekly governance review meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah. The meeting was attended by administrative secretaries of various departments and other relevant officials.

During the session, detailed discussions were held on the ongoing initiatives by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government aimed at improving transparency and efficiency in governance. The Chief Secretary emphasized the province's firm commitment to promoting paperless governance to enhance transparency and reduce paperwork in official operations.

It was informed that the e-Office system has been implemented across departments, enabling the issuance and processing of e-summaries. From July 1 to August 1, a total of 302 e-summaries were submitted by 30 departments. During the past week alone, 16 departments sent 54 e-summaries to high ups. Furthermore, training

on the e-Office system has been completed in 35 departments, which is expected to further enhance its effectiveness. Another key area of discussion was the government's environmental initiatives at tourist destinations. A report presented by the Tourism Department highlighted that since May 2025, 424 out of 663 hotels and restaurants have upgraded their wastewater and sewerage systems to ensure environmental protection. Ongoing operations are being carried out in the jurisdictions of Galiyat, alike.

The meeting also reviewed the weekly status of essential commodity prices. A comparative analysis of the prices of wheat flour, ghee, pulses, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, and sugar was presented. Directions were issued to district administrations in areas showing significant discrepancies between retail and wholesale prices to stabilize rates and ensure public relief.

Additionally, the meeting reviewed the progress of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects, the Annual Development Programme (ADP), initiatives by the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA), the Good Governance Roadmap, tourism development, actions by the Land Use and Building Control Authority, e-procurement reforms, and anti-encroachment operations.

The Chief Secretary concluded the meeting by directing the relevant authorities to ensure timely completion and effective monitoring of all initiatives to further strengthen governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Shahab Ali Shah expresses solidarity with Kashmiris

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir, observed on August 5th, we express our full solidarity and heartfelt support for our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who continue to suffer under India's illegal occupation and oppressive regime.

India's unilateral and illegal revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A in 2019 was not only a blatant violation of international law and United Nations resolutions but also a grave assault on the political, cultural, and demographic identity of the Kashmiri people.

We pay tribute to the courage, sacrifices, and unyielding struggle of the Kashmiri people, who continue their struggle for self determination. Their sacrifices will never go in vain.

The government and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Kashmir. We call upon the international community and human rights organizations to hold India accountable for its unlawful actions and gross human rights violations.

ment's environmental initiatives at tourist destinations. A report presented by the Tourism Department highlighted that since May 2025, 424 out of 663 hotels and

Kumrat, Kaghan, Upper Swat, and Kalash Development Authorities to conserve natural resources and provide a clean and healthy environment to tourists and locals

Kundi recognizes achievements of women with Bint-e-Hawa Awards

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has emphasized that women are equal partners in the development of society and the country. He said that women in the province are excelling in every field and that the Pashtun culture has always upheld the dignity and respect of women.

The Governor was addressing the Bint-e-Hawa Achievement Awards ceremony as the chief guest at the Governor's House in Peshawar on Monday. The event honored outstanding women from various sectors including health, education, social work, sports, literature, journalism, IT, and science.

"Pashtun society has always given women a position of honor and respect," the Governor remarked, adding that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always championed women's rights through practical measures.

He also announced the establishment of the first Women University in Bannu to serve the southern districts of the province.

Prominent personalities in attendance included MPA Asma Alam, founder of Bint-e-Hawa Forum Alamzaib, and former provincial ombudsperson Rakhshanda Naz. The Governor presented awards to talented women, while Lifetime Achievement Awards were given to Rakhshanda Naz, Farzana Ali, and Nasreen Aman for their exceptional contributions.

Governor Kundi congratulated all award recipients and commended the Bint-e-Hawa Forum and its sponsors for encouraging talented women across diverse fields.

He said that this award ceremony is evidence of the province's values that recognize and appreciate women's roles, not only in family matters but also in social and professional spheres.

He paid tribute to Pakistan's first elected female Prime Minister, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, calling her a global role model for Pakistani women.

"Benazir Bhutto is remembered for her dignity, courage, and leadership. The Benazir Income Support Programme is a reflection of her visionary commitment to empowering women," he said.

Governor Kundi stressed that true development and prosperity cannot be achieved without empowering women.

"Women's empowerment and youth engagement are central to my agenda as Governor," he said, adding that new initiatives will be introduced to promote the province's talented youth, especially female athletes.

At the conclusion of the event, the Governor also presented awards to the organizers of the Bint-e-Hawa Forum for their efforts in recognizing and celebrating women's achievements.

Concerns over anti-encroachment drive Ex-Governor holds key meeting with Deputy Commissioner

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former Governor Haji Ghulam Ali has emphasized that the district administration, police, and traders are all integral parts of the same society. Where concerns and apprehensions arise, it is essential, as a civilized nation, to sit at the table for dialogue and find peaceful and lasting solutions.

He expressed these views while speaking to the media following a detailed meeting with Deputy Commissioner Sarmad Saleem, accompanied by Chairman of the Sarhad Business Alliance and former provincial minister Syed Zahid Ali Shah. The meeting focused on issues faced by traders due to the ongoing anti-encroachment operations.

During the meeting, various problems faced by the business community, recent operations, and administrative matters were thoroughly discussed. The former governor and the leadership of the Business Alliance presented the concerns of the traders and business owners to the Deputy Commissioner. They highlighted that a lack of coordination between the city district government, the administration, and the trading community is leading to misunderstandings. A comprehensive strategy is necessary to eliminate these issues.

Several key proposals were put forward during the meeting, on which there was a broad consensus. It was decided that a joint session would soon be held between the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, the Mayor of Peshawar, and representatives of the business community. The goal is to address the unease and concerns surrounding the ongoing operations and to improve the overall business environment in the city by restoring trust.

Former Governor Haji Ghulam Ali reaffirmed his commitment to defending the legitimate interests of the business community at all forums and assured that all possible steps would be taken to enhance security, development, and the overall business climate.

Why would one climb mountains?

Omer Arshid Khan

I suppose I need to get this off my chest. It has been a long time coming.

The memory is still vivid-an old British man's eyes scanning me from head to toe, his smug smirk cutting through the cold air as he asked where I was from. There was something in his tone, as if he knew more about my homeland than I ever could. It struck me like a slap, left me stunned and speechless.

It was our last day, returning from K2 Basecamp. Two of us had chosen to take the Gondogoro La Pass, a towering 5,600-meter mountain that would have three days off our return. We were told it was deadly, that there would be no middle ground: either we would succeed, or we wouldn't return at all.

After trekking for seven hours from Concordia, we reached Ali Camp in the afternoon, exhausted and half-frozen. We slept as the camp was being set up,



when he appeared again-the same old British man. He motioned me to step aside, told me to follow him, and I did. When we finally reached safety at the bottom, I asked him how he knew the way.

That was when he looked at me again with that same piercing gaze. "Where are you from?" he asked.

"Pakistan," I said softly. "Born and raised." "Which city?"

"Abbottabad."

He chuckled lightly. "Ah, yes... since they built the motorway bypassing the city, I don't get to visit as often. But I practically live in Pakistan. It's my sec-

malities in distant cities, I knew I could not let that happen. This was not the time for polite words and banquets. The only way to celebrate "summit" is by climbing. This was a time for footsteps on the mountain. For adventure. For courage. For reclaiming what is ours.

I fought to divert the entire budget toward trekking and mountaineering expeditions to build a culture, to plant a seed that would grow into something bigger than ceremonies ever could.

Because the truth is, no Pakistani has ever conquered Tirich Mir. It is our mountain, yet we stand as strangers at its feet. For 75 years, we have looked up in awe, never daring to reach the summit.

This initiative-three basecamp expeditions, including one solely for women, culminating in a final summit attempt-is about more than one climb. It is about showing the world that we can. That our people can train, equip, and lead. That young Pakistanis

by foreign companies and it is among one of the costliest adventure sports in the world.

That British Tour Operator is cashing out our very own mountain and has made a living out of it for over 25 years. It's his entire career to bring young enthusiasts to Pakistan and have them climb one of our mountains. He's charging each of these participants in pounds, dollars and euros. If we had been able to do it, this money would have turned out in our own hands. But we have not yet been able to build up that trust level where an adventurer would trust us with their lives. That's the whole point. To be able to build up this level of trust among our own people. Bringing to Pakistan the level of expertise and technical skill. We would have cost less for such an adventure, if we had been able to build up our own economy around this game.

And to be able to sow this seed is my own personal adventure. Beyond the



only to wake up in the evening to a sea of climbers and trekkers-the ones who had summited K2 two nights ago. That was when I saw him for the first time-a British man, nearing his 60s, haggling with porters over the price per kilo of extra baggage, clutching a manual weighing machine as though he belonged here more than we did. He had trail of young foreign climbers beside him.

That night, we set off at 11:00 p.m. for the summit attempt, a snake-like line of climbers tied together by ropes, no room to pause, no room for error. Step by step, breath by labored breath, we moved in the pitch black of night, only headlamps cutting through the void. I somehow made it ahead of the line, leading the way upward, my hands numb on the ropes, my forearms screaming.

At 3:30 a.m., we reached the summit of the pass, but there was no time to celebrate. We had just 15 minutes to switch our gear and begin the descent, a near-vertical drop, even more treacherous than the ascent. Loose rocks hurtled downwards, breaking the noses of two climbers, who-despite blood streaming down their faces-had no choice but to continue. We had to make it through before dawn, before the sun awakened the mountains and unleashed the avalanches that would surely bury us alive.

By 6:00 a.m., I reached the end of the fixed ropes, only to lose the trail completely. Alone and unsure, I stood still, my mind racing,

and home, I've been bringing groups here for over 25 years. And only recently, in the last couple of years, have I started seeing Pakistanis out here in the high mountains. Finally... you people are beginning to own your mountains."

His words seared straight into my heart. He was right. For decades, our mountains have been owned, climbed, and celebrated by Europeans, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans-everyone but us. After 75 years of independence, we still had not produced a truly great mountaineer, someone who could lay claim to these peaks as our own.

Last year, having been posted as Director in Culture & Tourism Authority, I was reminded of this promise I made to myself 3 years ago. That conversation returned to me like an echo from the mountains. To reclaim our mountains_ that was the call.

Tirich Mir-the highest peak of the Hindu Kush, standing at 7,705 meters-was declared the icon of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By 1950, this was the highest that humans have climbed. Mount Everest was later conquered in 1952.

This was the true mark of human endeavor and to celebrate its 75th anniversary, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa declared 2025 as the year of Tirich Mir and approved 100 million to celebrate this year.

When I saw the plan to "celebrate" it with symposiums, exhibitions, and for-

can capture the emerging global market for adventure tourism rather than watching others profit off our homeland.

Mountaineering is a deadly sport, yes. But the world has changed. Modern equipment, oxygen systems, and expertise have made these climbs accessible but to those who wish to taste the extreme, just once, before returning home with a story that will echo for generations. This is an opportunity for us. A gold mine hidden in plain sight.

Through these expeditions, local porters, cooks, and guides-people who have lived their entire lives in the shadows of these mountains-are earning livelihoods and gaining experience. From them will rise the future high-altitude porters and adventure companies that will take Pakistan forward. This is just the beginning, a spark to ignite a fire.

Western companies charge the starting price of 35,000 dollars per person for Mount Everest and K2 climbs. Normal price goes much higher and hovers around 50,000 dollars per person.

Except porters, none of this money lands in either Nepal or Pakistan. Even in that quarter, Nepal takes the lead, where western companies prefer Nepali sherpas to Pakistani porters. Except Porters with their per kg per km regulated weight, all of this money is being exchanged in foreign countries.

All of high-altitude equipment is being made

call of duty, I would go ahead and lead this summit attempt myself. Pakistan's very own Mr. Sirbaz Khan_ already a great name in the mountaineering community_ has been hired to guide this expedition to the top. This is because you got to lead from the front. You cant expect others to dream, while you don't dare.

To climb Tirich Mir is not about glory or fame. It is about planting a flag in our own hearts, telling ourselves and the world that these mountains are not just backdrops to foreign climbers' stories. They are ours.

Well, this is Pakistan's very own Summit Expedition, and it can go many ways. Mountaineering is a deadly sport and probability of its failure is always very high.

It may be remembered that the spirit of those who have dared will not fall into silence. It will remain etched in the frozen winds of Tirich Mir, whispering to every climber who sets foot on its slopes. For these mountains are not merely stone and snow-they are the spines of our identity, the quiet keepers of our history, the guardians of a dream we have yet to fulfill.

This is but one small step to reclaim what is rightfully ours. The mighty mountain calls at last, and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has risen to answer its timeless summons. And that, perhaps, is reason enough to climb.

Writer is Director Tourism Authority

I have immense love for my homeland

Dr. Waqar Ahmad Khan



I have immense love for my homeland.

No matter how far I am, my heart always beats for Pakistan.

Those who leave their country just for the sake of earning money are not lovers of the homeland; they are traders.

A patriot never distances himself from the love of his country.

I am proud to say that I am a Pakistani.

Wherever I go, I introduce myself as a Pakistani.

I try my best to present Pakistan's

true and positive image to the world.

Today, the world does not look at the economy of a country, but at its people's character.

If the people are sincere and honest, the world will come to invest even in a desert.

Today we have left the values of truth, loyalty, honesty, and integrity. We do not stand with the truth out of fear or pressure.

Thousands of people bear injustice but remain silent.

This silence is what is killing us from within. Hatred only ruins the soul.

The real honor lies not in wealth or positions, but in character.

Only Allah grants honor.

He never approves of the arrogant.

The moment a person becomes arrogant, that's when his downfall begins.

A wise person is one who learns from others' experiences and mistakes.

The true strength of a nation lies not in weapons but in its youth, who are its real assets.

If our youth realize their responsibilities, no power on earth can stop Pakistan's progress.

Human beings should always stay humble.

The heart that fears Allah is never misled.

He always finds the right path.

What is love for the homeland?

Ask the mother whose son was martyred at the border.

Ask the sister whose brother sacrificed his life for the country.

Ask the father who buried his son wrapped in the national flag.

The foundation of any nation lies in the strength of its faith.

Today, we have deviated from our faith and that's why we are in decline.

It's time for us to wake up, recognize our enemies, and safeguard our youth from drugs and immoral content.

The enemies of Pakistan have waged a psychological war against our youth.

Our job is to make them aware and save their future.

May Allah grant us sincerity, love for our country, and strength to raise our homeland's flag high in the world.

Writer is from Bishkek (UK-ISM)



In brief

Police Martyr's Day F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police Martyrs' Day was observed with reverence and respect in District Mardan through various programs. The day began with a blessed gathering of Quran recitation at Mardan Police Lines, followed by a ceremonial salute at the Martyrs' Memorial. DPO Mardan, Zahoor Babar Afridi, received the salute, laid flowers, and offered Fateha for the martyrs. A central ceremony was held at Ilyas Gracey Marquee here on Monday where tributes were paid to the selfless martyrs of the police. The event was attended by Commissioner Mardan, Deputy Commissioner, political and social leaders, traders' community, media representatives, dignitaries, police officers and personnel, martyrs' families, and officials from other departments. Addressing the occasion, Commissioner Mardan Division Nisar Ahmad Khan said that police martyrs had written a golden chapter in history by sacrificing their lives for the protection of the country and nation. Their sacrifices could never be forgotten. Every member of society was responsible for respecting and honoring their families, he added. DPO Mardan, Zahoor Babar Afridi, said that police martyrs were the pride and true heroes of the nation. They sacrificed their lives to ensure peace, rule of law, and public safety in the country. Their sacrifices conveyed the message that serving the country and protecting the public was not about reward or fame but a matter of faith, duty, and honor.

One killed, two injured

FAISALABAD (APP): A scuffle between two groups left a man dead and two others critically injured at a nearby village of Mamukanjan police station on Monday. According to Rescue-1122, the brawl took place over a land dispute in Chak No 494-GB where three people who were working in their fields were attacked by the rival group. As a result, Muhammad Amin, 40, was killed while Muhammad Arshad and Noor Ahmed suffered bullet injuries. The rescue team sifted the body to Mamukanjan police station while the injured were shifted to the THQ hospital, Tandlianwala.

Work reviewed

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner Tank Muhammad Yousaf visited the under-construction warehouses of the food department located on Tank Road to take stock of ongoing work. According to the district administration, he reviewed the nature, quality, and pace of the ongoing construction work. During inspection, he directed the concerned officials and engineering staff to expedite the construction process and ensure the project was completed as soon as possible so that public needs can be addressed in a timely manner. He said the government was according priority to complete development projects on time in the public interest, while ensuring transparency and quality standards are maintained. He also stated that there would be no compromise on construction quality, and those who complete their tasks within deadlines would be appreciated.

District Admin Kohat achieves maor milestone

F.P. Report

KOHAT: District Administration Kohat has successfully posted the notified services on its official website, https://kohat.kp.gov.pk/page/services_2, in compliance with the Section 9 of the Right to Public Services Act 2014. This significant achievement is a testament to the administration's commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance. Under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner Kohat, Abdul Akram Chitrali, the district administration has taken a major step towards ensuring ease of access to public services for the citizens of Kohat. The online portal provides a one-stop-shop for citizens to access various services provided

by the district government and the line departments.

As per Section 9 of the Right to Public Services Act 2014, the portal displays crucial information for each notified service, including the Designated Officer, responsible for providing the service, Service Time Limit within which the service will be delivered, Appellate Authority responsible for addressing appeals related to the service and the Final Appellate Authority i.e. The Chief Commissioner, Right to Public Services Commission, who serves as the final authority for appeals.

This transparency will enable citizens to track the progress of their applications and ensure that services are delivered in a timely and efficient man-

ner. The district administration's efforts to promote transparency and accountability are commendable, and this achievement is a significant step towards ensuring that citizens' rights are protected and promoted.

The DMO Kohat, Right to Public Services Commission, Tashfin Israr, and Deputy Director IT Kohat, Farman Khan, deserve special appreciation for their tireless efforts in making this initiative a success.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat asked the citizens to take advantage of this online portal and access the services they need with ease. This initiative is a significant step towards promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability in the district.

Karak University holds 12th Senate meeting

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak convened its 12th Senate Meeting at the Higher Education Department Peshawar. The meeting, chaired by the Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi, focused on discussing and approving the actual budget 2023-24, revised/actual budget for the Financial Year 2024-25 and the budget estimates for 2025-26.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khalily presented a comprehensive overview of the University's progress over the past decade. He highlighted significant financial and academic advancements, including the establishment of General Endowment and Pension Endowment Funds aimed at ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

Treasurer Hafiz Ismail Khan presented the actual budget for the FY 2023-

24, revised/actual budget for 2024-25 and outlined the budget estimates for 2025-26. He emphasized that the University has undertaken a third-party audit and actuarial study to ensure financial accuracy and reliability.

The Senate members after detailed discussion approved the budget and appreciated it. Provincial Minister Meena Khan Afridi commended the University's management for their efforts in maintaining financial stability and expressed a commitment to fostering a stronger research culture.

The Vice Chancellor acknowledged the Minister's efforts in addressing the challenges faced by universities in the province.

Justice Rtd Abdul Aziz Kundi, Registrar Dr. Muhammad Rashad Khattak, Director QEC Dr. Muhammad Anwar Marwat, Director Academic & Research Dr. Fasih Ur Rehman, Additional Registrar

Abdus Salam, Dr. Ghani Ur Rehman, Lecturer Umair Ud Din, Director ORIC Dr. Muhammad Zubair, Mr. Sahibzada, and other distinguished attendees including MNA Shahid Ahmad, MPA Khurshed Khattak, representatives from the Secretary Establishment, Secretary Finance, Secretary HED, and HEC Nominee Ms. Samina Durani were present at the meeting.

The Vice Chancellor expressed his appreciation for Minister Meena Khan Afridi's proactive role in resolving university-related issues and ensuring institutional progress.

The meeting was efficiently supported by Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak's administrative team, including Deputy Registrar Ilyas Tehseen, Deputy Registrar Establishment Naveed Gul Bukhari, Budget Officer Tahir Gul, Accounts Officer Muhammad Izhar and Muhammad Jan Rajjar.

Establishment of Women Facilitation Center hailed

Hafiz Muhammad Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: The establishment of a Women Facilitation Center at the Municipal Committee Hafizabad has been hailed as a commendable initiative by the Local Government, marking a practical step towards Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision of a "Clean Punjab."

This newly inaugurated center is proving to be significantly helpful in resolving municipal issues faced by women in a comfortable and accessible environment. During a recent visit to the facility, Focal Person Aqsa Rasheed and Center In-charge Ms. Irsa welcomed prominent social activists Sajida Faryad and Nighat Khan, engaging in a detailed discussion about the center's utility and performance.

They explained that the center enables women to approach relevant authorities directly without hesitation. Services offered include resolution of complaints regarding street and drainage cleaning, timely garbage disposal, birth registration, issuance of computerized Nikah Nama (marriage certificates), building map approvals, installation and repair of streetlights, and various sanitation issues.

Social workers Sajida Faryad and Nighat Khan expressed appreciation for the initiative, particularly emphasizing that the center is led by a female officer. This, they said, fosters empathy and understanding, making it easier for women to communicate their problems and seek solutions confidently.

They further noted that the presence of this facility has started raising awareness among women, encouraging them to

engage directly with the municipal committee and take active steps toward resolving their civic concerns.

Public and social circles have termed this facilitation center a much-needed step in the right direction and expressed hope that this model will be expanded to other areas. Such replication would enable more women to participate effectively in the local government system and play a meaningful role in community development.

HAFIZABAD: On the occasion of Police Martyrs Day, a solemn and impactful ceremony was held at Gymkhana Hall Hafizabad under the direction of District Police Officer Atif Nazir and chaired by DSP Headquarters. The event paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of police martyrs who laid down their lives for the safety and sovereignty of the nation.

The ceremony was attended by families of the martyrs, police officers and personnel, and prominent individuals from various walks of life. The core purpose of the program was to remember and honor the brave souls who sacrificed their lives for the homeland.

During the event, DSP Headquarters Hafizabad personally met with each martyr's family, expressing deep respect, gratitude, and presenting them with commemorative gifts as a token of appreciation. A dignified banquet was also arranged for the attendees in their honor.

Addressing the ceremony, the DSP stated, "It is an honor for me to sit alongside the families of our brave martyrs. Their welfare is our top priority, and the doors of the DPO office are always open for them. We will never forget their heroic sacrifices."

GC University Hyderabad holds seminar

HYDERABAD (APP): Government College University Hyderabad organized a thought-provoking seminar titled "Marka-e-Haq" in connection with the ongoing Independence Day celebrations.

The seminar was held today in the university's Main Assembly Hall, drawing a large number of faculty members, students, and staff.

The Vice Chancellor of GC University Hyderabad, Prof. Dr. Amjad Ali Arain, presided over the seminar.

In his keynote address,

he highlighted the significance of Independence Day and the historical relevance of the theme "Marka-e-Haq", reflecting on the sacrifices rendered during the Pakistan Movement and the continued struggle for justice, truth, and national integrity.

"Our independence is not merely a historical achievement, but a continuing responsibility to uphold truth and justice in every sphere of life," said Vice Chancellor Dr. Amjad Ali Arain.

The seminar featured scholarly insights by Prof.

Dr. Abdul Razaque Larik, who emphasized the ideological foundations of Pakistan and urged the youth to carry forward the mission envisioned by the founding fathers.

"Marka-e-Haq is a reminder that truth and justice must always guide our national character," said Dr. Larik.

Another notable speaker, Dr. Hassan Rashid, engaged the audience with his reflections on the current challenges facing Pakistan and the role of education in shaping a resilient and conscious society.



KARAK: Provincial Minister for Agriculture Maj. (ret) Muhammad Sajjad Barkwal offering dua after laying foundation stone of agriculture research center.

Green, white spirit takes over DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): As the nation gears up to celebrate Independence Day on August 14, the streets and marketplaces of Dera Ismail Khan have come alive with patriotic fervor.

Numerous stalls have been set up across the city, especially along busy roadsides and in major markets including Circular road, Topanwala Bazaar, Muslim Bazaar, Gomal Market, Mian Commercial Market, Tank-Adda, Multan road, Sheikh Yousaf road and Bannu road. These stalls offering a wide range of Independence Day merchandise.

The vibrant stalls, adorned in green and white, are adding charm to the city's commercial centers, drawing large crowds, particularly children and families. From national flags of all sizes to decorative bunting, badges, caps, and themed dresses, vendors are offering everything a patriotic shopper could want.

Many stall owners say business is picking up as excitement builds in the lead-up to the national holiday. "We set up this stall just three days ago, and already many items are selling out quickly — especially children's dresses and small flags," said Awwal Khan, a local vendor near Topanwala Bazaar.

Youngsters are especially enthusiastic, dragging parents from one stall to another in search of the perfect outfit or flag. "My son insisted on buying a green shirt and matching cap," said Saud Ismail, a resident of Gilani-Town.

Apart from merchandise, many stalls are also playing patriotic songs, adding to the festive atmosphere. Several schools and community groups have also begun rehearsals for rallies, parades, and other events planned for the day.

Adding to the patriotic display, people across the city are also decorating their vehicles and motorcycles with national flags, stickers, and colorful artwork. The wagons, rickshaws and even bicycles can be witnessed being decorated in green and white. Some enthusiastic youth are even painting entire bikes with national symbols and slogans, turning the streets into a mobile celebration.

"This is our way of showing love for Pakistan," said Yousaf Ali, a college student applying green and white paint to his motorbike.

Bugti expresses solidarity with Kashmiris

QUETTA (APP): Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has strongly condemned India's actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and expressed unwavering solidarity with the Kashmiri people on the occasion of Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir to be observed on August 5. In a statement issued here Monday, the Chief Minister described August 5, 2019, as a "black day" in the history of Kashmir, marking the day when India unilaterally revoked the region's special constitutional status under Article 370.

He termed the move illegal and a blatant attempt to further cement India's oppressive control over the disputed territory.

DHQ Hospital Timergara Young doctors voice concern over irregularities

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: The Young Doctors Association (YDA) on Monday leveled serious allegations of financial misconduct and administrative malpractice against the Medical Superintendent (MS) of District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Timergara.

During a press conference at Timergara Press Club, YDA President Dr. Najeebullah, along with Dr. Waqar Alam and Dr. Rafiullah, accused the MS of bypassing the official Sehat Card procurement committee and purchasing medical equipment worth Rs 23.5 million without transparency. They alleged record tampering and said several doctors were transferred in retaliation for raising their voices against the irregularities.

The doctors cited specific examples of overpricing, such as a camera purchased for Rs 5.5 million despite a market value of Rs 1.5 million. Chemicals worth Rs 6.7 million were reportedly procured for a casualty lab, though no revenue record exists. They also claimed that ultrasound tests were

being conducted at Rs 200 per patient, but the income was undocumented.

Additionally, the YDA alleged that an ultrasound machine was unjustifiably removed from the Gynae department and that medicines bought under the Sehat Card were of sub-standard quality. The MS was also accused of illegally charging fees for issuing medical certificates.

Despite these claims, the YDA said the district administration and anti-corruption departments remained silent. They demanded an impartial probe and called for the MS to relinquish his DDO powers, suggesting they be handed over to the principal of Timergara Medical College. The association warned that failure to investigate would lead them to announce further action through a general body meeting.

In response, Dr. Bakht Zada Akhunzada, MS of DHQ Hospital Timergara, denied the allegations, calling them baseless and an attempt to malign the hospital administration. He told journalists that the issue of the doctors' transfer was in court and he

would abide by the legal outcome.

Regarding the corruption accusations, Dr. Akhunzada claimed that the YDA representatives were avoiding their duties and using blackmail tactics to pressure the administration. STRAY DOGS: Mutahar Zaib Khan, a local leader of the Awami National Party (ANP), raised concern over the growing menace of stray dogs in the Shamsi Khan area of Talash. In a statement issued Monday, he said the rising population of stray dogs in bazaars and residential areas had become a major safety hazard.

He said several residents, including children, had been bitten recently. Stray dogs were not only attacking people but also creating traffic hazards. In a recent incident, a car driver attempting to avoid a dog ended up hitting a motorcyclist, causing serious injuries.

Zaib urged the Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) Timergara and the health department to conduct a dog control operation in the area to prevent further harm to the public.

Protecting natural water resources Govt to take action against hotels in Galiyat

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: In order to protect the natural water resources in the scenic Galiyat Valley, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to take strict action against hotels and commercial buildings in the region that fail to comply with environmental and sewerage regulations.

The decision has been taken on the directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. In order to implement the chief minister's directives, Secretary Tourism Dr. Abdul Samad issued instructions to all the departments concerned, asking them to show no leniency to the violators.

The natural water resources in the area have been threatened by improper sewage disposal from hotels and guesthouses. The authorities have, however, reported that compared to the past, the sewerage-related issues in Galiyat have been reduced to a minimum.

The officials said that the government has adopted zero-tolerance policy towards non-compliance with sewerage regulations. Notices are served to hotels that do not follow proper procedures, which may be fined or even sealed altogether.

In recent years, the dumping of untreated wastewater into natural streams had become a major concern, polluting clean water sources and endangering public health.

However, officials claim that around 80 percent of the problem has now been resolved. New and recently built hotels are incorporating properly designed sewerage systems that comply with government standards, including dedicated water tanks and fully sealed drainage systems to prevent contamination of nearby natural water resources.

Sanitary Inspector at Galiyat Development Authority, Tanveer Hussain said that GDA by-

laws strictly govern the construction of new buildings. Every construction plan is reviewed by the GDA Building Plan Approval Committee to ensure that appropriate sewerage arrangements are in place before construction is approved, he said.

He further said that complaints had been received in the past about the contamination of natural water due to improper waste management by hotels. In response, several hotels were fined, served with notices or sealed as a punitive measure, he added.

Hussain went on to say that 80 percent of hotels now have improved sewerage systems and that the remaining issues will be addressed soon. He maintained that regular inspections of hotel sewerage systems are underway and similar inspections of commercial and residential buildings will begin soon as part of broader efforts to improve sanitation and protect the environment in the tourist valley.

RSO Hazara pledges support for youth development

HARIPUR (APP): Regional Sports Officer (RSO) Hazara, Ahmad Zaman, has reiterated the commitment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports Department to empowering youth and resolving their issues through concrete and focused measures. He emphasized that the department is prioritizing the welfare, training, development, and support of athletes by utilizing all available resources.

Speaking during a visit to the Khalabat Badminton Club, Ahmad Zaman highlighted that sports fields are not merely for recreation but are vital symbols of national development and

unity. "We aim to see these grounds bustling with activity where athletes not only have access to modern facilities but also benefit from the guidance of qualified coaches and a proper training environment," he said.

The RSO took a detailed review of the badminton court's facilities and interacted with the players. The athletes warmly welcomed his visit, calling it a source of encouragement. They also shared the challenges faced by the club, upon which Ahmad Zaman assured them that their concerns would be addressed promptly.

Encouraging the players

to stay committed, the RSO urged them to channel their energy into improving their skills, upholding discipline, teamwork, and consistent hard work to make their region and country proud at both national and international levels.

He further said that sports offer the best avenue for engaging youth in constructive activities and integrating them into the national mainstream. Ahmad Zaman announced that regional sports competitions and training camps will soon be organized across Hazara Division, providing equal opportunities to talented youth from all areas.



Trump’s deadline for the Kremlin looms but Putin shows no sign of making concessions

NEW YORK (AP): The coming week could mark a pivotal moment in the war between Russia and Ukraine, as U.S. President Donald Trump’s deadline for the Kremlin to reach a peace deal approaches — or it could quietly pass without consequence.

Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff was expected in Moscow mid-week, just before Trump’s Friday deadline for the Kremlin to stop the killing or face potentially severe economic penalties from Washington.

So far Trump’s promises, threats and cajoling have failed to shift the Kremlin’s position, and

the stubborn diplomatic stalemate remains in place. Meanwhile, Ukraine is losing more territory on the front line, although there is no sign of a looming collapse of its defenses.

Trump’s envoy is expected in Moscow. Witkoff is expected to land in the Russian capital on Wednesday or Thursday, according to Trump, following his trip to Israel and Gaza.

“They would like to see (Witkoff),” Trump said Sunday of the Russians. “They’ve asked that he meet so we’ll see what happens.”

Trump, exasperated that Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn’t

heeded his calls to stop bombing Ukrainian cities, a week ago moved up his ultimatum to impose additional sanctions on Russia as well as introduce secondary tariffs targeting countries that buy Russian oil, including China and India.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that officials are happy to meet with Trump’s envoy. “We are always glad to see Mr. Witkoff in Moscow,” he said. “We consider (talks with Witkoff) important, substantive and very useful.”

Trump is not sure sanctions will work. Trump said Sunday

that Russia has proven to be “pretty good at avoiding sanctions.”

“They’re wily characters,” he said of the Russians.

The Kremlin has insisted that international sanctions imposed since its February 2022 invasion of its neighbor have had a limited impact.

Ukraine insists the sanctions are taking their toll on Moscow’s war machine and wants Western allies to ramp them up. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday urged the United States, Europe and other nations to impose stronger secondary sanctions on Moscow’s energy, trade

and banking sectors.

Trump’s comments appeared to signal he doesn’t have much hope that sanctions will force Putin’s hand.

The secondary sanctions also complicate Washington’s relations with China and India, who stand accused of helping finance Russia’s war effort by buying its oil.

Since returning to office in January, Trump has found that stopping the war is harder than he perhaps imagined.

Senior American officials have warned that the U.S. could walk away from the conflict if peace efforts make no progress.

Putin shows no signs

of making concessions.

The diplomatic atmosphere has become more heated as Trump’s deadline approaches.

Putin announced last Friday that Russia’s new hypersonic missile, the Oreshnik, has entered service. The Russian leader has hailed its capabilities, saying its multiple warheads that plunge to a target at speeds of up to Mach 10 cannot be intercepted. He claimed that they are so powerful that the use of several of them in one conventional strike could be as devastating as a nuclear attack.

Separately, one of Putin’s top lieutenants warned that the Ukraine war could nudge Russia

and the U.S. into armed conflict.

Trump responded to what he called the “highly provocative statements” by former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev by ordering the repositioning of two U.S. nuclear submarines.

Putin has repeated the same message throughout the war: He will only accept a settlement on his terms and will keep fighting until they’re met.

The war is killing thousands of troops and civilians.

Russia’s relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line have killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, according to the United

Nations. It has pushed on with that tactic despite Trump’s public calls for it to stop over the past three months.

On the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, Russia’s bigger army has made slow and costly progress. It is carrying out a sustained operation to take the eastern city of Pokrovsk, a key logistical hub whose fall could open the way for a deeper drive into Ukraine.

Ukraine has developed technology that has allowed it to launch long-range drone attacks deep inside Russia. In its latest strike it hit an oil depot near Russia’s Black Sea resort of Sochi, starting a major fire.



MISSOURI: Workers picket outside the Boeing Defense, Space & Security facility in Berkeley, Missouri, US, on Monday.

Hunger mounts, cemeteries grow in Sudan's besieged al-Fashir

DARFUR (Reuters): Hundreds of thousands of people under siege in the Sudanese army’s last hold-out in the western Darfur region are running out of food and coming under constant artillery and drone barrages, while those who flee risk cholera and violent attacks.

Al-Fashir, the capital of North Darfur state, is the biggest remaining frontline in the region between Sudan’s army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), under fire at a pivotal point in a civil war now well into its third year.

“The RSF’s artillery and drones are shelling al-Fashir morning and night,” one resident told Reuters. Electricity was completely shut down, bakeries were closed and medical supplies scarce, he added.

“The number of people dying has increased every day and the cemeteries are expanding,” he said.

The war between the Sudanese army and the RSF erupted in April 2023 when the former allies clashed over plans to integrate their forces.

The RSF made quick gains in central Sudan, including the capital Khartoum, but the army pushed them westward this year, leading to an intensification in fighting in al-Fashir.

The city’s fall would give the RSF control over nearly all of Darfur - a vast region bordering Libya, Chad, Central African

Republic and South Sudan - and pave the way for what analysts say could be Sudan’s de facto division.

Besieged along with the army and its allies are hundreds of thousands of al-Fashir’s residents and people displaced by previous attacks, many living in camps that monitors say are already in famine.

One doctor, who asked not to be named for her safety, said hunger was an even bigger problem than the shelling.

“The children are malnourished, the adults are malnourished. Even I today haven’t had any breakfast because I can’t find anything,” she said.

The RSF has blocked food supplies and aid convoys trying to reach the city have been attacked, locals said. Prices for the goods traders are able to smuggle in cost more than five times the national average.

Many people have resorted to eating hay or ambaz, a type of animal feed made out of peanut shells, residents told Reuters. One advocacy group said even ambaz was running out.

The RSF, which has its roots in the Janjaweed militias accused of atrocities in Darfur in the early 2000s, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Many residents fleeing the city have sought shelter in Tawila, about 60 km (40 miles) west. Some of those who made it told Reuters

they were attacked by groups of RSF fighters along the way.

“We fled to Shagra (village) first before getting to Tawila and they attacked us again,” 19-year-old Enaam Abdallah said.

“If they find your phone, they take it. Money, they take it. A donkey or anything, they’ll take it. They killed people in front of us and kidnapped girls in front of us,” she said.

On Monday, Emergency Lawyers, a human rights group, said at least 14 people fleeing al-Fashir were killed and dozens injured when they were attacked in a village along the route.

Tawila is hosting more than half a million displaced people, most of whom have arrived since April, when the RSF stepped up its assault on al-Fashir and attacked the massive Zamzam displacement camp to the city’s south.

But Tawila offers little aid or shelter, as humanitarian organisations are stretched by foreign aid cuts.

People who arrived there told Reuters they receive small amounts of grain, including sorghum and rice, but amounts were varying and insufficient.

Sudan is in the throes of the rainy season, which in combination with poor living conditions and inadequate sanitation has led to an outbreak of cholera.

Since mid-June, aid group Medecins Sans

Frontieres has treated 2,500 cases of cholera, a spokesperson told Reuters.

Some 52 people have died from the disease, according to the Coordinating Committee for Displaced People, a Sudanese advocacy group that operates across Darfur.

Vaccines needed to stem the outbreak, if provided, will take time to arrive given the rains.

An assessment by the Norwegian Refugee Council found that only 10% of people in Tawila had reliable access to water, and even fewer had access to latrines. Most families report eating one meal a day or less, the organisation said.

“We don’t have houses to protect us from the rain and we don’t have tarps. We have to wait for the rain to stop for the children to sleep,” mother-of-four Huda Ali said as she sat among roofless shelters made of straw.

She said she tried to make sure her children washed their hands and only ate food that had been properly heated.

The United Nations called for a humanitarian pause to fighting in al-Fashir last month as the rainy season began, but the RSF rejected the call.

Fighting has also raged across Sudan’s Kordofan region, which borders Darfur, as the two sides fight to demarcate clear zones of control amid stalled mediation efforts.

South Korea starts removing anti-North Korean loudspeakers on border

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korean authorities began removing on Monday loudspeakers blaring anti-North Korea broadcasts along the country’s border, Seoul’s defence ministry said, as the new government of President Lee Jae Myung seeks to ease tensions with Pyongyang.

Shortly after he took office in June, Lee’s administration switched off propaganda broadcasts criticising the North Korean regime as it looks to revive stalled dialogue with its neighbour.

But North Korea recently rebuffed the overtures

and said it had no interest in talking to South Korea.

South Korea’s dismantling of the loudspeakers from Monday is just a “practical measure to help ease tensions between the South and the North,” the ministry said in a statement on Monday.

Soldiers could be seen unplugging loudspeakers, mounted together like a wall, and taking them down, photographs provided by the defence ministry show.

The countries remain technically at war after the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce and rela-

tions have deteriorated in the last few years.

Propaganda broadcast through loudspeakers across the border has been used by both sides as relations between South and North Korea have ebbed and flowed over the years.

In 2018, the then President Moon Jae-in dismantled the loudspeakers as his administration agreed to stop every hostile act that could be a source for military tensions.

But last year former conservative leader Yoon Suk Yeol restarted propaganda broadcasts and

blasts of K-pop music in retaliation for North Korea sending balloons to the South filled with trash amid heightened tensions.

Since Seoul suspended its own loudspeaker broadcasts in June, North Korea appears to have stopped its broadcasts, which had disturbed South Korean border residents for months, officials in the South say.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, recently said, however, that South Korea’s decision to stop the broadcasts was “not the work worthy of appreciation”.

Hong Kong cancels passports and bans financial support for 16 overseas activists

HONG KONG (AP): Hong Kong authorities on Monday strengthened a crackdown on 16 overseas-based activists who were previously targeted by bounties on suspicion of endangering national security, implementing measures that include banning financial support to them and canceling passports for most of them.

The activists were among 19 people who were targeted with arrest warrants in July for alleged roles in Hong Kong Parliament, a group the police called a subversive organization abroad. The organization is not the city’s official legislature and its influence is limited.

Three of the original 19 activists were already targeted by similar measures last year.

Secretary for Security Chris Tang banned providing funds or economic resources to the 16 activists, including Victor Ho, Keung Ka-wai, Australian academic Chongyi Feng and U.S. citizen Gong Sasha, the Hong Kong government said in a statement.

Travel documents were canceled for 12 of the 16 who hold Hong Kong passports.

The government also prohibited properties from

being leased to the people on the list or forming joint ventures with them. Anyone violating the orders risks a penalty of up to seven years in prison.

The 16 activists are hiding in the U.K., the U.S., Canada, Germany, Australia, Thailand and Taiwan, among other regions, the government said, accusing them of continuing to engage in activities endangering national security.

The notice also accused them of intending to incite hatred against Beijing and Hong Kong through smear and slander.

“We therefore have taken such measures to make a significant impact,” the statement said.

Beijing imposed a national security law on the

territory in 2020 that has effectively wiped out most public dissent following huge anti-government protests in 2019. Many activists were arrested, silenced or forced into self-exile.

The measures announced Monday were issued under the powers granted by Hong Kong’s homegrown national security law enacted last year.

The arrest warrants issued in July have drawn criticism from foreign governments, including the U.S., the U.K. and the European Union. Police offered rewards of 200,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$25,480) to 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$127,400) for information leading to their arrests.

In a July statement, U.S.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio condemned the moves.

“The extraterritorial targeting of Hong Kongers who are exercising their fundamental freedoms is a form of transnational repression,” he said. “We will not tolerate the Hong Kong government’s attempts to apply its national security laws to silence or intimidate Americans or anyone on U.S. soil.”

The Hong Kong office of the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded by opposing criticism from foreign politicians, insisting the actions were legitimate.

The governments in Beijing and Hong Kong said the security laws were necessary for the city’s stability.



Lithuania’s finance minister to lead caretaker government

VILNIUS (Reuters): Lithuania’s President Gitanas Nausėda appointed Finance Minister Rimantas Sadzius as acting prime minister on Monday until a new cabinet has been sworn in, following the resignation of Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas.

The prime minister formally handed in his government’s resignation, after announcing on Thursday he would step down amid pressure to do so over his business ties to a company owned by his sister-in-law.

“I instruct Rimantas

Sadzius to act as prime minister until a new government is formed,” Nausėda said in a decree published by his office.

Analysts expect that the next prime minister will also be picked by Paluckas’ Social Democrat party, the largest group in parliament with 52 out of 141 seats.

Parliament, which must approve the selection, is due to next meet on September 10 after its summer recess.

With the Social Democrats lacking an overall majority, any suc-

cessful candidate for prime minister will need to seek the support of their coalition partners, centre-left For Lithuania and populist Nemunas Dawn, which often disagree with each other.

Outgoing prime minister Paluckas had been criticised by opposition parties in the Baltic country for business dealings in which a company he co-owns sold electric batteries to another firm owned by his sister-in-law, in a deal financed by a government agency.

Paluckas has denied any wrongdoing.

The prime minister, in a statement on Thursday, said his past mistakes had hindered the work of his government, prompting his “quick and confident decision” to resign.

Paluckas’ sister-in-law’s company last month said it would decline the government funding but denied wrongdoing, saying it made purchases from Paluckas’ business following an open tender.

The For Lithuania party on July 30 threatened to quit the ruling coalition unless Paluckas resigned, saying his position was untenable.

UAE summer temperatures surge near record highs after hottest ever spring

DUBAI (Reuters): The United Arab Emirates is facing surging temperatures this summer after its hottest spring ever, with temperatures soaring close to record highs at the start of August, according to data from the National Centre of Meteorology (NCM).

The extreme heat in the Gulf country is part of a broader global trend, as rising temperatures continue to reach new heights. Last year was

the hottest ever recorded worldwide when global temperatures exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial era levels.

The temperature surge followed the UAE’s hottest April and May on record, the NCM said.

On August 1, the temperature in the desert town of Sweihan hit 51.8 C (125.2 degrees Fahrenheit), the highest since 2021, the NCM said. This was just shy of

the UAE’s all-time high of 52.1 C (125.8 F) set in July 2002, also in Sweihan.

Inland areas repeatedly experienced daily temperatures above 50 C in June and July, while seaside urban centres like Dubai and Abu Dhabi consistently posted highs in the mid-forties.

The NCM expects the rest of the summer to remain hotter than usual, forecasting August temperatures 0.25 C to 0.5 C

above average.

While the NCM has warned residents to limit sun exposure and avoid being outdoors during peak hours, such precautions aren’t always possible for those in outdoor industries, like construction and agriculture.

“We are whining while sitting in the air-condition... they (outdoor labourers) are working actually 24/7 in this heat,” said Yasir Shahad, a visitor from Australia.

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

Email: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

ICE's culture of secrecy has nothing to do with safety

Tae Heung “Will” Kim, a scientific researcher who has lived in the US since he was 5 and who holds a valid green card, travelled to his native South Korea recently for his kid brother’s wedding.

But when Kim attempted to re-enter the country, immigration officials blocked him at San Francisco International Airport, taking him into custody. He got no explanation and no access to his attorney, Eric Lee, who said his client slept in a chair for seven days. The agency recently confirmed in a statement to the Washington Post that “This alien is in ICE custody pending removal proceedings,” according to the Tribune News Service.

An accused shoplifter would have more rights than have been afforded Kim, who is researching a vaccine for Lyme disease as he pursues a PhD at Texas A&M University. A toxic combination of secrecy, arrogance and an unsettling recklessness is pervading a newly emboldened Immigration and Customs Enforcement as it pursues President Donald Trump’s goal of mass deportation at any cost.

Agents’ identities are secret; they appear in public wearing black ski masks and street clothes while conducting raids and roundups. Their cars are unmarked. Courtroom arrests have become commonplace.

Once in the system, detainees’ locations can be difficult to determine, leaving family and friends frantic. Those who dare to ask for a warrant or identification may find themselves charged with obstructing or even assaulting an officer, as happened to hospital staffers in Oxnard, California. The cruelty - and the fear it creates - has become an essential part of ICE operations.

In his first term, Trump laid the groundwork for greater secrecy and less public accountability with a 2020 memo that designated ICE a security/sensitive agency, on par with the Federal Bureau of Investigation or Secret Service. Months earlier he had done the same for Customs and Border Protection.

The change ensured that names and personal information of not just agents, but all employees, would be kept secret and not subject to public information requests.

In his second term, ICE has become resistant to congressional oversight. Democrats who question agency officials get flippant or downright curt answers. Lawmakers who attempt oversight by visiting detention centres have found themselves turned away.

Newark, New Jersey, Mayor Ras Baraka was arrested for attempting to enter such a facility in his own city.

At a Los Angeles news conference, US Senator Alex Padilla of California was forcibly removed and later taken to the ground and handcuffed because he approached Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem with a question.

She claimed not to have known him, even though he is the ranking member on the Senate’s judiciary subcommittee on immigration and border safety. None of this is normal, nor should it be.

I spoke to Steven Thal, a respected Minnesota immigration lawyer with 42 years of experience, for perspective on how much ICE’s practices have changed.

“We’re in uncharted waters,” he told me. “I haven’t seen anything like this - to this extent - in all the time I’ve practised.”

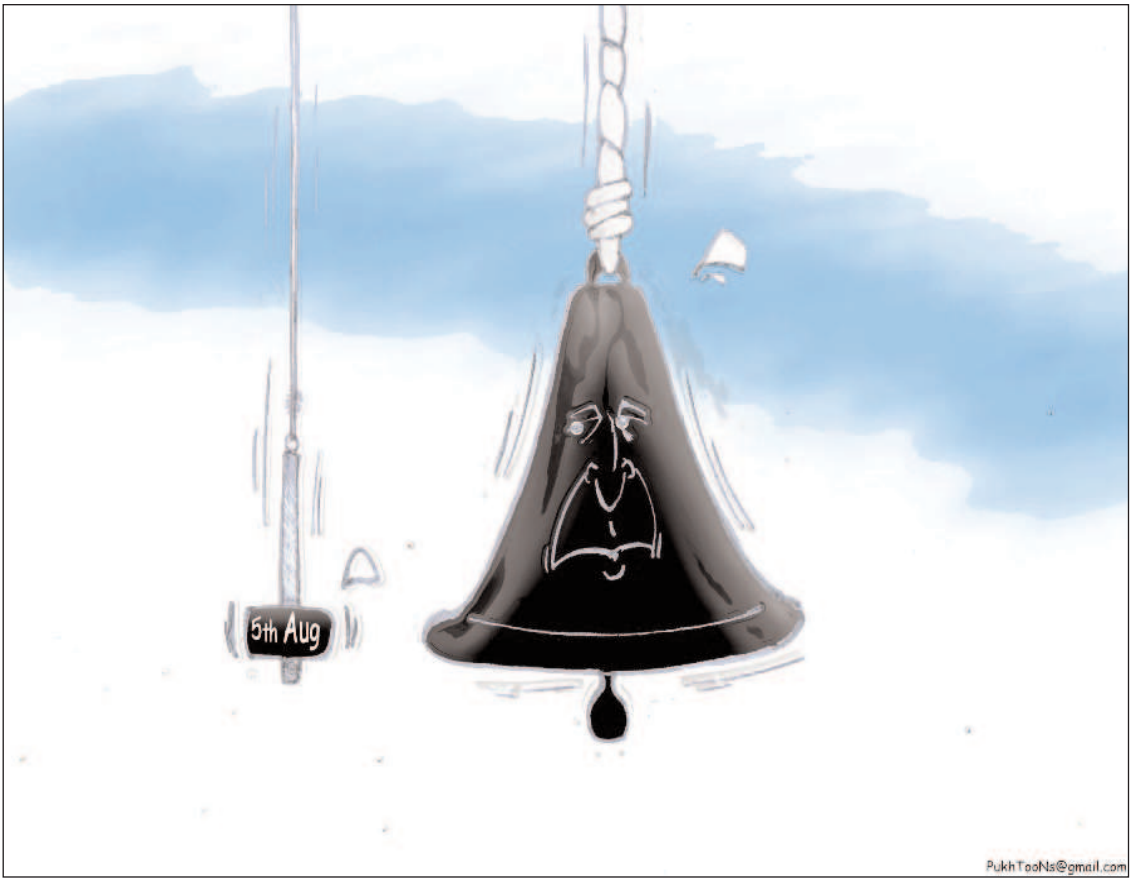
“I get calls every day from people - even citizens - who are afraid to travel. Calls about denaturalization,” he said. “Agents with masks or uniforms? No proper identification? That never used to happen. How would you even know you’re not being kidnapped? There is a roughness now that comes straight from the top and has infiltrated through the agency.”

Meanwhile, a backlog in hearings has gone from bad to epic. Thal has one asylum case that’s been pending for seven years, another for 10. He says the backlog now stands at 3.4 million cases, according to the Transitional Regional Access Clearinghouse, a national database for immigration.

And little wonder: between Trump administration firings, retirements and transfers, a reported 106 immigration judges have left since January; there are about 600 left in the US today. The backup has contributed to massive overcrowding in detention centres. In June, a record 59,000 immigrants were being held in centres across the country. According to a CBS report, that put the system at over 140% capacity. Nearly half of those being detained had no criminal record. Fewer than 30% had criminal convictions.

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The real reason the West is warmongering against China

Jason Hickel and Dylan Sullivan

Over the past two decades, the posture of the United States towards China has evolved from economic cooperation to outright antagonism. US media outlets and politicians have engaged in persistent anti-China rhetoric, while the US government has imposed trade restrictions and sanctions on China and pursued military build-up close to Chinese territory. Washington wants people to believe that China poses a threat.

China’s rise indeed threatens US interests, but not in the way the US political elite seeks to frame it.

The US relationship with China needs to be understood in the context of the capitalist world system. Capital accumulation in the core states, often glossed as the “Global North”, depends on cheap labour and cheap resources from the periphery and semi-periphery, the so-called “Global South”.

This arrangement is crucial to ensuring high profits for the multinational firms that dominate global supply chains. The systematic price disparity between the core and periphery also enables the core to achieve a large net-appropriation of value from the periphery through unequal exchange in international trade.

Ever since the 1980s, when China opened up to Western investment and trade, it has been a crucial part of this arrangement, providing a major source of labour for Western firms – labour that is cheap but also highly skilled and highly productive. For instance, much of Apple’s production relies on Chinese labour. According to research by the economist Donald A. Cleveland, if Apple had to pay Chinese and East Asian workers at the same rate as a US worker, this would have cost them an additional \$572 per iPad in 2011.

But over the past two decades, wages in China have increased quite dramatically. Around 2005, the manufacturing labour cost per hour in China was lower than in India, less than \$1 per hour. In the years since, China’s hourly labour costs have increased to more than \$8 per hour, while India’s are now only about \$2 per hour. Indeed, wages in China are now higher than in every other developing country in Asia. This is a major, historical development.

This has happened for several key reasons. For one, surplus labour in China has been increasingly absorbed into the wage-labour economy, which has amplified workers’ bargaining power. At the same time, the current leadership of President Xi Jinping has expanded the role of the state in China’s economy, strengthening public provisioning systems – including public healthcare and public housing – that have further improved the position of workers.

These are positive changes for China – and specifically for Chinese workers – but they pose a severe problem for Western capital. Higher wages in China impose a constraint on the profits of Western firms that operate there or that depend on Chinese manufacturing for intermediate parts and other key

inputs.

The other problem, for the core states, is that the increase in China’s wages and prices is reducing its exposure to unequal exchange. During the low-wage era of the 1990s, China’s export-to-import ratio with the core was extremely high. In other words, China had to export very large quantities of goods in order to obtain necessary imports. Today, this ratio is much lower, representing a dramatic improvement in China’s terms of trade, substantially reducing the core’s ability to appropriate value from China.

Given all this, capitalists in the core states are now desperate to do something

*****Ironically, Western governments sometimes justify their opposition to China on the grounds that China’s exports are too cheap. It is often claimed that China “cheats” in international trade, by artificially suppressing the exchange rate for its currency, the renminbi. The problem with this argument, however, is that China abandoned this policy around a decade ago. As the International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist Jose Antonio Ocampo noted in 2017, “In recent years, China has rather been making efforts to avoid a depreciation of the renminbi, sacrificing a large amount of reserves. This may imply that, if anything, this currency is now overvalued.” China did eventually permit a devaluation in 2019, when tariffs imposed by the administration of US President Donald Trump increased pressure on the renminbi. But this was a normal response to a change in market conditions, not an attempt to suppress the renminbi below its market rate.*****

to restore their access to cheap labour and resources. One option – increasingly promoted by the Western business press – is to relocate industrial production to other parts of Asia where wages are cheaper. But this is costly in terms of lost production, the need to find new staff, and other supply chain disruptions. The other option is to force Chinese wages back down. Hence, the attempts by the United States to undermine the Chinese government and destabilise the Chinese economy – including through economic warfare and the constant threat of military escalation.

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This may imply that, if anything, this currency is now overvalued.” China did eventually permit a devaluation in 2019, when tariffs imposed by the administration of US President Donald Trump increased pressure on the renminbi. But this was a normal response to a change in market conditions, not an attempt to suppress the renminbi below its market rate.

The US largely supported the Chinese government in the period when its currency was undervalued, including through loans from the IMF and World Bank. The West turned decisively against China in the mid-2010s, at precisely

goods, medicines, computers, aircraft and so on. This forces the “Global South” into a position of dependency, so they are forced to export large quantities of their cheapened resources in order to obtain these necessary technologies. This is what sustains the core’s net-appropriation through unequal exchange.

China’s technological development is now breaking Western monopolies, and may give other developing countries alternative suppliers for necessary goods at more affordable prices. This poses a fundamental challenge to the imperial arrangement and unequal exchange.

The US has responded by imposing sanctions designed to cripple China’s technological development. So far, this has not worked; if anything, it has increased incentives for China to develop sovereign technological capacities. With this weapon mostly neutralised, the US wants to resort to warmongering, the main objective of which would be to destroy China’s industrial base, and divert China’s investment capital and productive capacities towards defence. The US wants to go to war with China not because China poses some kind of military threat to the American people, but because Chinese development undermines the interests of imperial capital.

Western claims about China posing some kind of military threat are pure propaganda. The material facts tell a fundamentally different story. In fact, China’s military spending per capita is less than the global average, and 1/10th that of the US alone. Yes, China has a big population, but even in absolute terms, the US-aligned military bloc spends over seven times more on military power than China does. The US controls eight nuclear weapons for every one that China has.

China may have the power to prevent the US from imposing its will on it, but it does not have the power to impose its will on the rest of the world in the way that the core states do. The narrative that China poses some kind of military threat is wildly overblown.

In fact, the opposite is true. The US has hundreds of military bases and facilities around the world. A significant number of them are stationed near China – in Japan and South Korea. By contrast, China has only one foreign military base, in Djibouti, and zero military bases near US borders.

Furthermore, China has not fired a single bullet in international warfare in over 40 years, while during this time the US has invaded, bombed or carried out regime-change operations in over a dozen Global South countries. If there is any state that poses a known threat to world peace and security, it is the US.

The real reason for Western warmongering is because China is achieving sovereign development and this is undermining the imperial arrangement on which Western capital accumulation depends. The West will not let global economic power slip from its hands so easily.

The unfinished business in the Balkans

Luke Coffey

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that dominated headlines in the first half of the 1990s. Three decades later, the Balkans, located in southeastern Europe, remains the primary area of unfinished business for Euro-Atlantic integration.

While some countries in the region have joined major Western institutions such as the EU and NATO, others remain outside the fold. Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo are not part of either the EU or NATO. Meanwhile, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Albania are NATO members, but are still waiting on EU membership. In recent years, little progress has been made in advancing their accession prospects.

As a result, the region continues to represent a source of instability not just for Europe, but also for the broader transatlantic community. Apart from Ukraine, no other region poses a more persistent geopolitical challenge for Europe.

This is not just a European problem. Following the violent wars of the 1990s that accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia, the US played a decisive role in helping stabilize the Balkans — through peacekeeping forces, sustained diplomatic engagement, and eventually the Dayton Agreement itself. At the time, Washington recognized that instability in the Balkans could quickly spiral into broader conflict.

Today, however, both the US and Europe appear unwilling — or perhaps unable — to engage seriously in the region. The lack of strategic attention has created a vacuum.

This should be cause for concern. Much of Europe’s instability over the past century has originated in the Balkans. The First

focused on infrastructure and energy. Moscow has actively exploited ethnic tensions and political divisions to distract Western policymakers and prevent further Euro-Atlantic integration.

One of the reasons the Balkans remain such a challenge is the lack of credible, sustained effort by NATO and the EU to bring the remaining countries into the Euro-Atlantic community. After years — sometimes decades — of vague promises about eventual membership, public frustration is mounting. This creates fertile ground for disinformation, resentment, and foreign meddling.

It is time for the West to re-engage meaningfully in the Balkans. NATO and the EU should craft clear strategies and realistic roadmaps for eventual accession tailored to each country’s unique circumstances. Policymakers must restore credibility to the idea that integration is possible, not merely aspirational.

And whether or not President Donald Trump likes it, the US will have a role to play — as it has since the 1990s. In fact, his first administration made modest but real progress in the region. One major accomplishment was brokering the partial normalization agreement between Serbia and Kosovo under the so-called Washington Agreement in 2020.

Another significant achievement was the resolution of the long-standing name dispute between Greece and North Macedonia, paving the way for the latter’s accession to NATO. This, combined with Montenegro’s NATO membership in 2017, marked a major expansion of the alliance in the Western Balkans during Trump’s first term — one that enhanced regional security and reduced space for Russian influence.

Trump, now back in the Oval Office, has made

*****Serbia’s assertiveness has also opened the door to increased involvement by Russia and China. Beijing’s role is largely economic, focused on infrastructure and energy. Moscow has actively exploited ethnic tensions and political divisions to distract Western policymakers and prevent further Euro-Atlantic integration. One of the reasons the Balkans remain such a challenge is the lack of credible, sustained effort by NATO and the EU to bring the remaining countries into the Euro-Atlantic community. After years — sometimes decades — of vague promises about eventual membership, public frustration is mounting. This creates fertile ground for disinformation, resentment, and foreign meddling.*****

World War began with an assassination in Sarajevo. In the early years of the Second World War, the region played a pivotal role as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy competed for influence. And in the 1990s, ethnic and religious violence killed hundreds of thousands, many of them civilians, across Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo.

Unfortunately, the challenges in the region are far from resolved.

Today, Serbia arguably presents the greatest destabilizing potential in the region. Serbian leaders, especially President Aleksandar Vucic, often invoke the idea of a “Serbian world.” This concept suggests that ethnic Serbs living outside Serbia’s modern borders, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro, deserve a special status or even direct protection from Belgrade.

This mindset has dangerous implications for the region’s fragile peace. Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its complex internal structure and the Serb-dominated entity of Republika Srpska, are particularly vulnerable. Kosovo, too, continues to face periodic flare-ups. Montenegro, though more stable, has seen political turmoil in recent years that sometimes taps into the same ethnic divisions.

Serbia’s assertiveness has also opened the door to increased involvement by Russia and China. Beijing’s role is largely economic,

global diplomacy a core theme of his second term. He has shown interest in brokering ceasefires and peace deals in conflicts from Southeast Asia to Central Africa. The Balkans should be on that list. There is no reason why the US, working with European allies, cannot convene a new round of high-level diplomacy aimed at resolving some of the region’s most pressing disputes, especially between Serbia and Kosovo, and within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The 30th anniversary of the Dayton Agreement should be a moment for reflection, but also for renewed commitment. The success of Dayton was never supposed to be the end of the story. It was meant to be the beginning of a longer process of political normalization, economic development, and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Sadly, that process has stalled. But it is not too late to finish the job.

As Washington, Brussels, and London remain understandably focused on Ukraine, they must not ignore another part of Europe with a long history of instability — and vast untapped potential. A stable, secure, and integrated Balkans would strengthen the entire Euro-Atlantic community. It would also send a powerful message to adversaries that Europe is united, resilient, and committed to completing the work it began 30 years ago in Dayton.

Fair climate finance requires debt reform

Mohamed Adow

When delegates from around the world convened in Bonn, Germany, for the 62nd session of the UN Climate Change Subsidiary Bodies, the specter of sovereign debt loomed large. For African countries, in particular, debt is no longer a problem unfolding in parallel with escalating climate shocks and widening development deficits, but rather the key obstacle to effective crisis responses. Debt reform and climate finance are two sides of the same coin.

According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, African countries owe \$655 billion in external debt, while debt-service payments have more than doubled since 2010, driven by rising interest rates and currency depreciation. This year, the continent's collective debt-service bill will amount to a whopping \$79 billion. In 2023, 34 African countries spent more on debt service than on health or education, let alone disaster relief or green infrastructure.

Comprehensive debt cancellation is a prerequisite to progress on sustainable development. But it is only the beginning. Shaped by colonial power dynamics, the global financial architecture is practically designed to entrench inequality. When issuing loans to developing economies, institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank often impose conditions that constrain these countries' fiscal space and hardwire austerity into domestic policy. Short-term relief thus comes with long-term shackles.

Many believe that mobilizing private investment is the key to closing the climate finance gap. "Derisking" climate finance and attracting private capital through tools such as green bonds and blended finance are among the G20's flagship priorities. The decision on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, made at COP29 in Baku

last year, likewise emphasizes the importance of private sector participation.

South Africa, which assumed the G20 presidency in December 2024, has echoed this approach. For example, at the G20 finance ministers' meeting in February, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa called on the private sector, together with international financial institutions and

unpredictable and expensive.

According to the ONE Campaign, the average interest rate on bonds for African countries in 2021 was 5.78 percent, compared to 1.14 percent on loans from the World Bank. These countries will pay \$56 billion in additional interest over the lifetime of loans contracted in 2017 to 2021, compared to what

ing economies. Ramaphosa — who has voiced support for reforming global credit-rating systems — should help spearhead this process.

At the same time, however, we must recognize the limits of private capital, particularly when it comes to financing for adaptation and loss and damage. There is no substitute for a major expansion of grants and public financing.

The real issue is that private finance is structurally biased against the Global South, owing partly to fundamental flaws in sovereign risk assessments. If the private sector is to help close the climate finance gap without trapping developing countries in cycles of repayment and dependency, we must first resolve the information asymmetries that enable credit rating agencies and institutional investors to define "risk" in ways that penalize developing economies. Ramaphosa — who has voiced support for reforming global credit-rating systems — should help spearhead this process. At the same time, however, we must recognize the limits of private capital, particularly when it comes to financing for adaptation and loss and damage. There is no substitute for a major expansion of grants and public financing. The responsibility for tackling biases in the global financial system falls on the entire international community — not least the advanced economies that are now cutting their climate aid budgets.

development banks, to implement "innovative financing and insurance mechanisms" aimed at scaling up funding for disaster prevention and post-disaster reconstruction.

But the private sector has long struggled to engage effectively in climate negotiations or identify viable projects that serve climate, development and commercial objectives simultaneously. Since the infrastructure projects that are needed to strengthen climate resilience mature over a period of 20 to 30 years, countries need reliable access to long-term finance. But credit markets operate on three to five-year time horizons, meaning that borrowers often end up scrambling for more capital, which can be both

they would have paid if they had borrowed at World Bank rates. The much-touted "blended finance" model does not solve this problem, because it often combines public and private funds in ways that leave countries exposed to credit market risk.

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The responsibility for tackling biases in the global financial system falls on the entire international community — not least the advanced economies that are now cutting their climate aid budgets. Nonetheless, African countries must take more responsibility for driving change.

Africa has often failed to take a unified approach to global issues and maximize its collective bargaining power. Consider the Baku to Belem Roadmap — a joint initiative by the COP29 and COP30 presidencies to deliver at least \$1.3 trillion in climate finance annually by 2035. Though the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat and the COP30 presidency began

regional consultations on the roadmap in February, inviting stakeholders to share their input, Africa has not submitted an aligned position or set of recommendations.

Meanwhile, many African countries pursue bilateral debt deals in isolation, while others are entangled in opaque and protracted restructuring processes like the G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatments. Zambia's debt restructuring, for example, dragged on for more than three years.

What is needed now is for African countries to build a consensus around a common agenda that links COP30 to the G20. Priorities must include comprehensive debt cancellation for climate-vulnerable countries; the reform of credit rating systems and capital cost structures that unfairly penalize African economies; and the greater use of instruments such as grants to finance climate action. A global taxation regime, which could use revenues to fund resilience in developing economies, should also be on the table.

Such efforts should build on existing initiatives and proposals, such as the proposed UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt, which would offer a credible, cooperative and rights-based approach to debt reform. The Africa Climate Summit, convening in Addis Ababa this September, will serve as an important moment to cement progress and speak with a unified voice in advance of COP30.

Along with South Africa, the African Union — now a permanent member of the G20 — should play a leading role in this process, steering global debates toward the creation of a financial system that reflects today's multipolar realities, not the colonial dynamics of the past. This is a matter of justice, not charity. And, with developing economies on the front line of the climate crisis, it could not be more urgent.

UK military rhetoric is not matching fiscal reality

Martin Ivens

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves rules out raising taxes in the autumn — though few believe her. Something's got to give.

UK prime ministers have a habit of over-promising and under-delivering on military commitments. Starmer's Conservative predecessors squandered the Cold War peace dividend for over a decade even as Russia rearmed and attacked its neighbors.

Wishful thinking can also lead to embarrassment. Starmer recently proclaimed "a coalition of the willing" ready to take the place of the US in policing a ceasefire in Ukraine by dispatching a "reassurance force." Washington, however, refused to offer air cover — and in any case

that sank its Tory predecessor.

To be fair, the SDR has met a mostly warm reception from military specialists. At least it puts the focus back on the European theater — previous reviews suggested fanciful scenarios in which British aircraft carriers, without a full complement of aircraft and naval escorts, might be deployed to Asia. With commendable honesty, the authors of the recent report also own up to "the hollowing out of the armed forces warfighting capability" and cite inadequate stockpiles of munitions after years of "underinvestment."

Without a rapid improvement in military housing and in the absence of conscription, army numbers are unlikely to rise.

Labour's backbenchers oppose projected welfare reductions. Meanwhile, the economists warn that the bond market won't countenance more borrowing to pay for guns or butter — gilt yields remain elevated amid jitters over the Trump administration's ballooning deficit. Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves rules out raising taxes in the autumn — though few believe her. Something's got to give. UK prime ministers have a habit of over-promising and under-delivering on military commitments. Starmer's Conservative predecessors squandered the Cold War peace dividend for over a decade even as Russia rearmed and attacked its neighbors. Wishful thinking can also lead to embarrassment. Starmer recently proclaimed "a coalition of the willing" ready to take the place of the US in policing a ceasefire in Ukraine by dispatching a "reassurance force."

Washington, however, refused to offer air cover — and in any case the British Army has shrunk to 70,000, levels last seen before the war with Napoleon — so the UK can no longer assemble an expeditionary force. The best it can offer Ukraine is a support mission. As for crippling the Russian war effort, the UK, like other European nations, sanctioned Russian oil and gas after its invasion of Ukraine. But according to a new study by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, the value of Russian crude oil and liquid natural gas shipped under British ownership or insurance since the war began tops £200 billion (\$270 billion). A dark fleet of ships working for the Russians supplements the trade.

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The government is wary of severing these links for fear of triggering another energy price rise spiral and a round of the ruinous inflation and cost of living crisis

With its suggestion that the UK should build up its maritime forces — namely the Trident nuclear deterrent and the commissioning of 12 new attack submarines — the SDR implies the UK is set on going back to a strategic stance familiar to Churchill and his contemporaries in 1914, known to historians as the "British Way of Warfare," avoiding a continental military commitment at scale.

Today, however, the Royal Navy no longer rules the waves as it did in 1914. That means cutting back on the rhetoric and working closely with allies to deploy the few troops available for land-based conflict. "This is a once-in-a-generation inflection point for collective security in Europe," concludes the SDR. Unless British public opinion changes, however, the UK's neglect of its military needs and obligations looks set to continue.

The Gulf can build future success by looking to the past

Maria Hanif Al-Qassim

In the Arabian Gulf, there is an understandable fascination with the future: smart cities, AI clusters, and economic zones that promise diversification beyond oil. But amid this forward momentum, we risk forgetting that the Gulf's economy was once thriving not because of central planning or industrial zoning, but because of something far more organic: trust, adaptability, and deeply human connections.

Before the modern nation-state drew hard borders across the Arabian Peninsula and southern Iran, the Gulf was part of a far older and more fluid geography. Communities in places such as Qeshm, Dubai, Muscat, and Bandar Abbas did not simply trade — they lived, moved, worked, and married across regions. Their strength lay not in homogeneity or formality, but in intersectionality: the convergence of professions, identities, and roles within and across households and communities.

In my research on the history of trade in the Gulf — families with ancestral and economic ties stretching across the region — I found that their livelihoods were anything but linear. One person might be a pearl diver during the season, a scholar the next, and an informal arbitrator within his community when called on. Women, too,

played roles beyond the domestic: managing household finances, facilitating trade relationships, and anchoring family ties across shores. These were not exceptions; they were features of a society that understood economic

through relationships: between tribes and towns, merchants and craftsmen, men and women, elders and youth. The economy was informal, yes — but it was remarkably efficient, precisely because it was interconnected.

my thrive in the past — and what can make it thrive again — is something harder to quantify: intersectional connectedness.

The UAE's recent experience building a national food cluster offers a powerful example. Launched in

Today, when we talk about economic clusters, we tend to speak in terms of infrastructure. Zones are carved out, incentives are layered in, and success is measured in contributions to the national economy and employment targets. These are all important. But what made the Gulf economy thrive in the past — and what can make it thrive again — is something harder to quantify: intersectional connectedness. The UAE's recent experience building a national food cluster offers a powerful example. Launched in 2024, the cluster was developed not as an isolated zone, but as a living ecosystem built on values deeply rooted in Gulf tradition. It prioritized trust, adaptability, and collaboration — not just between government and private sector, but across farmers, logistics providers, regulators, entrepreneurs, and researchers. The goal was not just economic output, but a shared sense of purpose and mutual accountability.

resilience as a communal endeavor, grounded in social versatility and collective trust.

There was no formal "cluster strategy" — but the Gulf functioned like one long before the term existed. People, skills, goods, and ideas came together not through infrastructure, but

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preneurs, and researchers. The goal was not just economic output, but a shared sense of purpose and mutual accountability.

This approach echoes the pre-oil way of doing things in the UAE: where public and private blurred, where roles overlapped, and where economic activity was embedded in the rhythms of community life. The food cluster did not just revive a sector; it revived a mindset.

And that mindset is more relevant now than ever. In an age of fragmentation — where technology often isolates, and sectors compete for attention and resources — intersectionality is not a soft value but a strategic asset. It is what allows ecosystems to adapt, what allows people to participate meaningfully in change, and what anchors innovation in lived experience rather than in abstraction.

As we build the next phase of the Gulf's economic transformation, let us not only look outward — to global competitiveness or cross-border trade. Let us look inward, at the web of relationships that have always been our strength. Because long before we had clusters, we had community. And when communities are connected across lines of class, role, geography, and function — that is when real prosperity begins.

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 politi-

cal 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 of France in convening the conference and rallying international efforts around a clear peace initiative based on UN resolutions cannot be overstated. Their commit-

ment 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 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 unanimous-

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

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.

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 comprehensive 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.



PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 1,017 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,017.66 more points, a positive of 0.72 percent, closing at 142,052.65 points against 141,034.99 points last trading day.

A total of 666,372,806 shares were traded during the day as compared to 609,708,910 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 42.924 billion against Rs 50.552 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 482 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 247 of them recorded gains and 206 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 29 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Energycico P:K with 53,705,314 shares at Rs 7.39 per share,

Pak Int. Bulk with 50,585,832 shares at Rs10.44 per share and Bank of Punjab with 30,628,274 shares at Rs 13.90 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 242.26 per share price, closing at Rs 7,907.56, whereas the runner-up was Al-Abbas Sugar Mills Limited with Rs82.72 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,070.98.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs708.25 per share closing at Rs 26,832.75 followed by Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs161.66 decline in its share price to close at Rs33,225.67.

Rupee gains 06 paisa against US Dollar

The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 06 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.65 against

the previous day's closing Rs 282.71.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 284.8 and Rs 285.3, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 4.06 to close at Rs 326.75 against the last day's closing of Rs 322.69, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen went up by 04 paisa and closed at Rs 1.91, whereas an increase of Rs 2.54 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 375.21 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 372.67.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 02 and 01 paisa to close at Rs 76.95 and Rs 75.35,

respectively.

Gold surge by Rs500 to Rs359,500 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs500 on Monday and was sold at Rs359,500 against its sale at Rs359,000 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs 429 to Rs.308,213 from Rs 307,784 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat went up to Rs 282,529 from Rs 282,145.

The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs3,9530 and Rs 3,389 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$5 to \$3,368 from \$3,363 whereas silver increased by was traded at \$37.20 against \$37.01, the Association reported.



ISLAMABAD: President & CEO Askari Bank Zia Ijaz and CEO HBL Zarai Services Amer Aziz exchanging documents after signing MoU.

Pakistan, Bangladesh to boost trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan met with the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, Md. Iqbal Husain Khan, to explore deeper bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, logistics, and industrial linkages.

During the meeting, High Commissioner Khan shared insights from his recent visits to Pakistan's industrial hubs, noting enthusiastic engagement from local business chambers, said a release issued here on Monday.

The discussions focused on Bangladesh's growing industrial needs, particularly for Pakistani coal and limestone to support its power generation and soda ash production.

Key points of discussion included boosting agricultural trade, particularly Pakistan's imports of pineapples from Bangladesh and potential exports of mangoes, pending final technical approvals.

The discussions also covered opportunities in textiles, mineral exports like high-quality limestone from Sindh, and Halal-certified meat products, with both sides committing to address logistical challenges and streamline business visa processes to facilitate smoother trade exchanges.

Minister Jam Kamal emphasized the strategic potential of the relationship, stating: "Through focused collaboration in energy, logistics and food security, Pakistan and Bangladesh can develop a transformative economic partnership that benefits our entire region."

The meeting concluded with commitments to establish sector-specific business linkages and streamline trade mechanisms in the coming months.

Hearing in sugar cartel case rescheduled

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has rescheduled the rehearing of the cartelization case against the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) and its member mills, following requests from their legal counsels.

The hearings, initially fixed for August 4-7, 2025, will now take place from September 22-25, 2025, said a release issued here on Monday.

The adjournment was sought on the grounds that over fifty mills have filed appeals against the CAT order in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, while others cited unavailability of legal representatives due to the Supreme Court's summer recess.

While the CCP had scheduled day-to-day hearings in line with the directions of the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT), it has allowed a one-time postponement in the interest of fairness and to ensure due opportunity for all parties to present their case.

The Commission will not entertain further delays, and in case of non-appearance or repeated adjournment requests, ex-parte proceedings may be initiated.

The proceedings pertain to show cause notices issued in November 2020 to PSMA and its member mills for alleged cartelization and anti-competitive conduct.

Hearing notices were most recently issued on July 9, 2025, in compliance with CAT's May 21, 2025 order, which directed the Commission to rehear the matter before a Member or Chairperson not part of the original bench.

Askari Bank and HBL Zarai Services sign MoU

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Askari Bank Limited and HBL Zarai Services Limited have signed a MoU to promote financial inclusion and modernise agricultural practices across Pakistan. The collaboration aims to improve farmers' access to financial services, advanced agricultural inputs, and technical advisory by utilizing each other's capabilities and develop synergies. The MoU was signed by Zia Ijaz, President & CEO of Askari Bank, and Amer Aziz, CEO of HBL Zarai Services, during a ceremony attended by senior executives from both organisations.

HBL Zarai Services Limited, a one-stop solution provider for the farming community offers agricultural inputs, mechanisation services, crop offtake, and agronomic advisory through its fast-growing network of HBL Zarai Deras and HBL Zarai Dost Shops across Pakistan's farm lands. Under

the partnership, Askari Bank will refer its agri clients to HBL Zarai for tailored support in enhancing farm productivity, adopting modern techniques, improving crop quality and sale of harvest at the farm level.

Speaking at the signing, Zia Ijaz, President & CEO of Askari Bank, said that, "The partnership reflects AKBL's commitment to support the farming community by leveraging our financial solutions in partnership with HBL Zarai Services. We aim to create real, on-ground impact for farmers enabling the availability of agri credit at the grass root."

Amer Aziz, CEO of HBL Zarai Services, said that, "We wholeheartedly welcome strategic alliances with like-minded corporations and financial institutions that have the will and capacity to play a role in the transformation of the agricultural sector in Pakistan. This alliance with Askari Bank will surely

benefit our core farmer group in the short and long term."

As part of the arrangement, Askari Bank and HBL Zarai Services will jointly utilise the HBL Zarai Deras as knowledge hubs for farmers. The partnership will promote best farming practices and provide integrated services, including the facilitation of farm inputs and equipment, crop offtake (based on quality), and digital payment solutions for loan-linked services. The initiative also aligns with national efforts to expand the reach of formal financial services to rural communities, supporting the broader goals of inclusion and agricultural transformation.

The MoU marks the beginning of a strategic partnership between the two organisations, underscoring their shared commitment to rural development and economic prosperity for farmers as well as the country at large.

Pakistan earns \$878m by exporting transport services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$878.295 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the first eleven months of the fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

This shows an increase of 25.06 percent as compared to \$702.303 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the period under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed an increase of 1.34 percent, going up from \$100.952 million last year to \$102.305 million.

Among the sea transport services, the exports of

freight services rose by 60.56 percent from \$53.787 million last year to \$86.359 million whereas the exports of other sea transport services, however, decreased by 66.19 percent from \$47.165 million to \$15.946 million, the PBS data revealed.

The exports of air transport also increased by 25.77 percent going up from \$574.910 million last year to \$723.079 million during July-May 2024-25.

Among the air transport services, the exports of passenger services decreased by 4.01 percent, from \$409.428 million to \$392.999 million, whereas the exports of freight services surged by 140.89 percent, from \$11.235 million to \$27.065 million, in addition, the export of other air transport services witnessed

an increase of 96.45 percent from \$154.245 million to \$303.014 million.

Meanwhile, the exports of road transport services during the period under review witnessed a growth of 67.09 percent going up from \$22.715 million to \$37.955 million during the period under review, it added.

Among the road transport services, the exports of freight services witnessed a surge of 42.70 percent from \$3.665 million to \$5.230 million, while the export of other road services increased by 71.79 percent from \$19.050 million to \$32.725 million.

The export of postal and courier services also increased by 301.39 percent, from \$3.725 million to \$14.954 million, the data revealed.

Markets rise as traders US data boosts rate cut bets

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Most stock markets bounced on Monday as the chances of US interest rate cuts following a big miss on US jobs creation offset concerns about the world's top economy.

The broad advances followed a sell-off on Wall Street in reaction to the non-farm payrolls data, which compounded news on Friday that dozens of countries would be hit with levies ranging from 10 to 41 percent.

With the date of implementation for the tariffs pushed back to Thursday, focus will be on talks this week between Washington and other capitals on paring down some of the tolls.

Traders were taken by surprise by figures showing the US economy created just 73,000 jobs in July -- against 104,000 forecast -- while unemployment rose to 4.2 percent from 4.1 percent. Job gains from June and May were also revised down by nearly 260,000.

The figures stoked concerns that Trump's tariffs are beginning to bite, with inflation also seen pushing back towards three percent. The reading also saw the president fire the commissioner of labour statistics, accusing her of manipulating employment data for political reasons.

Bets on the Federal Reserve cutting interest rates at its September meeting shot up following the jobs numbers, with some analysts predicting it will go for a 50-basis-point reduction, rather than the regular 25 points.

Yields on US Treasury bonds fell sharply as investors priced in the cuts. Asian investors started the day on the back foot but fought back as it wore on.

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Manila, Mumbai and Bangkok all rose, though there were losses in Tokyo, Wellington, Taipei and Jakarta. London, Paris and Frankfurt ticked up but Swiss shares sank more than two percent as traders there returned from a long weekend to react to Trump's 39 percent duty on the country.

US futures rose, after Friday's selloff saw the S&P 500 and Dow each lose more than one percent and the Nasdaq more than two percent -- with some also questioning whether a recent rally to multiple records has gone too far.

The dollar continued to struggle against its major peers after tanking on the jobs report.

George Brown, senior economist at Schroders, said before the jobs reading

"all signs pointed to a solid US labour market. But that has been put into question by July's US jobs report. Concerningly, both May and June were revised down by... the biggest two-month net downward revision outside of the pandemic". He added: While it is important not to read too much into one data point, especially one as noisy as non-farm payrolls, the news that job creation was below 20,000 in May and June will certainly give the Federal Reserve food for thought.

"Our base case had been for the Fed to hold rates for the rest of 2025, but any further fragility could encourage an earlier easing cycle." Investors will now be keenly awaiting every utterance from Fed boss Jerome Powell leading up to the next policy meeting, not least because of the pressure Trump has put on him to lower rates.

Observers said news that governor Adriani Kugler will step down from the bank six months early will give the president a chance to increase his influence on decision-making.

"Fed credibility, and the veracity of the statistics on which they base their policy decisions, are both now under the spotlight," said National Australia Bank's Ray Attrill.

SCCI paid tribute to police force martyrs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) paid rich tribute to the martyred police officers and jawans for their unmatched bravery and sacrifices and highlighted their vital role in the fight against terrorism.

SCCI expressed solidarity with their families and to pay homage to the services of the police department for the protection of the people.

Fazal Moqem Khan, president of the chamber, Abdul Jalil Jan, senior vice president, Shehryar Khan, vice president and members of the SCCI's executive committee in a joint statement in connection with 'Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Police', here on Monday said business community

great proud of their brave and valiant police force for the countless sacrifices.

Senior officer bearers said the unwavering dedication, unrelenting courage, and selfless sacrifice of Police personnel will be perpetually remembered and honored.

We salute our fallen heroes who have protected the nation with their sweat and blood.

SCCI said the police force's noble and selfless service has ensured the safety and security of our communities, and their legacy continues to inspire and motivate us.

We stand in solidarity with their families and reaffirm our commitment to supporting them in every possible manner.

Youm-e-Shuhada Police

serves as a poignant reminder of the immense sacrifices made by our policemen in the pursuit of peace, justice, and security.

As the sixth anniversary of India's revocation of the special status of the disputed region of illegally occupied Kashmir (IIOJ&K) to be observed today (Aug 5), the SCCI on this occasion reaffirmed its commitment toward the ongoing Kashmiris people struggle for 'right to self-determination'.

The Modi-led Indian's government unilateral decision cannot suppress the freedom movement of the people in Kashmir, senior officer bearers remarked.

They described India's actions on August 5 as a direct attack on the region's unique identity and an attempt to alter the interna-

tionally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir.

The SCCI president said the business community fully stands with Kashmiris brothers in their struggle for restoration of rights, including articles 370 and 35A.

He added that India's repressive measures would not break the spirit of the Kashmiri people.

"The sacrifices of the Kashmiri nation will not go in vain," he emphasized.

Fazal Moqem urged UN and world leaders and community to take serious note over gross human rights violation in Illegal Indian Occupied Kashmir, especially abrogation of its special status. He also called for resolution of the core issue of Kashmir as per UN resolutions.

Pak-Iran striving for ambitious bilateral trade target of \$10 billion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran set an ambitious target of \$10 billion for increasing bilateral trade by 2028 from the current volume of \$3.1 billion recorded in the Fiscal Year 2024.

In the recent visit of President of Iran, Dr Masoud Pezeshkian to Pakistan, both sides agreed to finalize the bilateral Free Trade (FTA) as already, as Pakistan and Iran have already negotiated five rounds of dialogue on the agreement to finalize it.

The Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), several rounds of negotiations had taken place between the two countries, and mutual trade lists had been exchanged, with consensus developed on trade items.

It is pertinent to mention that two countries had signed the Preferential Trade Agreement in March 2004, which was required to be reviewed to enhance more effectiveness bilateral FTA.

Iran was willing to further strengthen bilateral trade cooperation; completion of energy projects, especially the IP gas

pipeline; progress in the establishment of border markets; finalization of a free trade agreement; and collaboration on major ports and security areas.

In recent talks, both countries are already committed to regional economic and trade integration through North-South and East-West corridors that would not only connect Pakistan to Iran, but also help the former's trade and economic integration with Central Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Russia.

Now, both countries were making joint efforts to achieve the target of enhancing their bilateral trade to \$10 billion, and there was a possibility of opening a banking channel shortly.

Transit trade, including the barter trade between the two countries, could be promoted as "we have the example of mutual trade in rice and meat".

Regarding the movement on the Pakistan-Iran border, crossing points had been opened, and the two countries were committed to providing more facilities at the crossing points to

facilitate the movement of common people and transit trade.

In past both sides decided in principle to set up six border markets to promote mutual trade relations, and the Pishin border market had been completed and its inauguration was on the cards, while work on Gabd, Rimdan and Kohak markets would start soon. The Taftan-Quetta train section needed to be repaired and both Iran and Pakistan had a consensus to do that.

Meanwhile in last day addressing to the Pakistan-Iran Business Forum in Islamabad held as part of the two-day official visit of Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian to Pakistan, Federal minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan confirmed that both sides have agreed to expedite the next session of the Pakistan-Iran Joint Economic Commission, which will play a pivotal role in resolving trade issues and unlocking new areas of cooperation.

The Minister said that other key areas of focus included the removal of non-tariff barriers,

enhanced customs coordination, improved transport connectivity and border infrastructure development.

"We have significant untapped potential in minerals, agriculture, and energy sectors" and he invited Iranian businesses to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, talking to the APP here, President Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh, said that Pakistan and Iran are potential trading partners, which have huge potential for increasing bilateral economic and trade ties.

He said that the Private sector can play a significant role in increasing bilateral economic ties and building sustainable trade connectivity in regional countries.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Nasir Mansoor Quraishi, said that Pakistan and Iran can play a significant role in regional economic integration and both sides should engage the Chamber of Commerce for exchanging delegations at both sides.

Modern vocational training cornerstone of future prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has stressed the urgent need for Pakistan to invest heavily in vocational education and skills development to build a future-ready workforce capable of driving the country toward a new era of industrialization and economic prosperity.

Speaking at a gathering of trade and industry leaders at the Chamber House on Monday, alongside ICCI Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Qureshi emphasized that Pakistan's demographic dividend can only be transformed into economic strength by equipping the youth with modern industrial and technological skills.

"Massive investment in

skills, innovation, and adaptability is the need of the hour," he said. "If we empower our young generation with future-ready capabilities, Pakistan can leap forward into a new industrial era."

Appreciating the recent agreement signed between vocational training institutions of Pakistan and China, the ICCI President hailed the development as a "transformative journey" for the country's youth.

He noted that the emerging fields of artificial intelligence, robotics, big data, and green technologies are rapidly replacing traditional jobs, and that CPEC is poised to generate thousands of new opportunities requiring specialized skills.

Qureshi called on the National Vocational and

Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) to scale up its efforts to deliver high-impact skills training, not only to boost employment within the country but also to create a skilled workforce capable of earning valuable foreign exchange through overseas employment.

He further underlined that this is a pivotal moment for Pakistan's economic future, urging both the public and private sectors to join hands in converting the country's youth bulge into a youth boom.

As far as the ICCI is concerned, he concluded, "we are fully committed to this national cause and will continue to play our proactive role in building a skilled, innovative, and forward-looking workforce."



In brief

IBSA welcomes Alamgir's appointment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Billiards and Snooker Association (IBSA) has congratulated Alamgir Shaikh on his appointment to the Board of Directors of the World Pool Association (WPA). IBSA President Dr. Shehzad Waseem, along with Senior Vice President Saleem Akhtar Rana, General Secretary Muhammad Faheem Anwar Khan, and other officials expressed confidence that his inclusion will play a pivotal role in advancing cue sports across the Asian region, said a press release. They noted that Shaikh's vast experience and unwavering commitment to the sport will prove invaluable on the global stage. In an official statement, the World Pool Association announced that Alamgir Shaikh has been nominated by the Asian Confederation of Billiard Sports (ACBS) as its new representative to the WPA Board. According to the WPA, "Shaikh brings with him decades of experience in cue sports administration and has been a driving force in the development of billiards and pool across Asia. We look forward to his valuable contributions to the global cue sports community."

Sheehan banned over Lynagh incident

DUBLIN (AFP): British and Irish Lions hooker Dan Sheehan has been suspended for four matches for flattening Wallabies playmaker Tom Lynagh in Saturday's third and final Test, World Rugby announced on Monday. The 26-year-old Irishman -- who captained the side for part of the 22-12 defeat after Maro Itoje suffered a head injury -- had argued his action did not merit a citing nor was it foul play. However, an independent panel disagreed, imposing the ban, although he will miss only three games if he successfully completes a coaching intervention. "The sanction has been accepted by the player," read the judgement. "In determining foul play, the Committee found that Sheehan's actions were reckless. "The Committee found that he made head contact with the Australian player, that his action amounted to a high degree of danger and that no mitigation applied." Sheehan charged into the breakdown during the first half of the clash in Sydney, appearing to elbow Lynagh in the head. It was missed by the referee and television match official (TMO), despite Lynagh leaving the field for a head injury assessment which he failed. Sheehan will miss his province Leinster's pre-season match against Cardiff and two United Rugby Championship games with South African sides the Sharks and Stormers.

Road to FIH Hockey WC 2026

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Men's and Women's Euro Hockey Championship 2025 will be hosted by Monchengladbach, Germany starting August 8. Meanwhile, Europe's premier hockey tournament running August 8 to 17, with the champions punching their tickets to the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium & Netherlands 2026, said a press release. Both men's and women's tournaments will feature 8 teams, split into Pool A & B, with the top two from each pool advancing to semi-finals while the bottom two teams will play for classifications and world ranking points. Women's Pools- Pool A: France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands; Pool B: Belgium, England, Scotland, Spain.



LAUDERHILL: The Pakistan team poses with the trophy after winning the Twenty20 cricket series against the West Indies.

Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling C'ship to begin Aug 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship will take place from August 8 to 14 at the Leisure City Bowling Club in Safa Gold Mall, Islamabad, the Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation (PTBF) said in a statement on Monday. The PTBF has formed an organising committee to oversee the event, with Ijaz Ur Rehman appointed as chairman and Lt. Col. (Retd) Kamran Khalid Janjua named organising secretary. Held in connection with Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations, the tournament aims to promote tenpin bowling as a mainstream sport in the country and will feature top players from across the nation. Other members of the committee include Aleem Agha, Muhammad Hussain Chattha, Daniyal Ur Rehman, Rana Afzal Akhtar, Dr. Muneeb, Muhammad Mohsin, Engineer Rana Asad Ahmed Tanveer, Noor-ul-Ain, Kulsoom Ahmed and Rehana Parveen.

Netherlands to tour Bangladesh for three T20Is before Asia Cup

AMSTERDAM (Agencies): Netherlands will play their first bilateral series in Bangladesh when they arrive in the country later this month for three T20Is. The series will give Bangladesh some competitive cricket leading up to the Asia Cup, which begins on September 9. Netherlands will land in Dhaka on August 26 before heading to Sylhet, where they will train for three days before the first T20I on August 30. The second and third T20Is are also in Sylhet, on September 1 and 3. All three matches will start at 6.00pm local time. The BCB arranged the Netherlands series after India postponed their tour to Bangladesh, which was to feature three ODIs and three T20Is from August 17 to 31. It had left Bangladesh with a month of no international cricket before the Asia Cup. Initially, the BCB were also in talks with the Nepal board.

Pakistan beat West Indies 2-1 to win T20I series as injury rules out Fakhar for ODIs

LAUDERHILL (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan beat the West Indies 2-1 to register yet another T20I series victory over the hosts, with the Green Shirts suffering a setback as injury ruled out left-handed batter Fakhar Zaman from the upcoming ODI series. Pakistan put on an impressive 189/4 at the end of 20 overs after batting first in the third T20I, with opening batter Sahibzada Farhan scoring an impressive 74 runs from 53 balls while Saim Ayub made 66 from 49 balls. Hassan Nawaz scored 15 runs from seven balls. In response, West Indies were able to score 176/6 at the end of 20 overs, falling 13 runs short of the target. Alick Athanaze scored 60 off 40 balls while Sherfane

Rutherford made 51 from 35 balls to give the West Indies a chance. Sufyan Moqim returned figures of 1/20, Mohammad Nawaz 1/33 while pacer Haris Rauf finished with 1/34 from his four overs. "Series sealed with a 13-run victory in the final T20I!" the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) wrote on social media platform X. "Pakistan achieve their seventh consecutive T20I series win over the West Indies." There was some setback for Pakistan after Zaman was ruled out of the West Indies third T20I and upcoming ODI series when he suffered a hamstring injury, the PCB said. According to the PCB, Zaman picked up the injury during the 19th over of the second T20I against the West Indies while

chasing the ball in the outfield. The board said upon medical assessment, it was determined to be a mild strain. It said the aggressive batter had been provided immediate treatment by the team's medical staff. "Fakhar will return to Pakistan on the evening of August 4 and will continue his rehabilitation under the supervision of the PCB medical team at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Lahore," the PCB said. Zaman has not fare impressively in the West Indies series, managing scores of 28 and 20 during the first two T20Is. The batter got off to good starts but managed to convert his innings into half-centuries or decisive knocks. The batter is a crucial white-ball cricketer for

Pakistan, who has gotten them off to dangerous starts in ODIs and T20 formats. Zaman was ruled out of this year's Champions Trophy tournament after he suffered an oblique injury while in pursuit of a cover drive as Pakistan played against New Zealand in their opening match of the tournament. Pakistan and the West Indies kicked off their T20I series last week. After winning the opening match against the hosts, the Green Shirts lost the second match at the last ball before winning the last encounter to take the series home 2-1. Both teams will play a three-match ODI series starting from August 8 and ending on August 12. All three matches will take place in Trinidad.

Arslan Ash clinches sixth EVO Tekken title in Las Vegas



ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's renowned Tekken player Arslan 'Ash' Siddique has added another title to his name by winning the Tekken 8 tournament at the Evolution Championship Series (EVO) 2025, according to digital platform Red Bull Gaming. Siddique defeated fellow Pakistani player Atif

Butt at the premier global esports event held in Las Vegas, United States, which featured over 2,500 players as part of the Tekken World Tour and Esports World Cup qualifiers. Red Bull Gaming shared a video of the final round won by Siddique, captioning it: "SIX. TIME. EVO. CHAMPION." Siddique hails from

Pakistani team delivered a historic victory in Seoul during a special Tekken 8 event, ending South Korea's long-standing dominance in competitive Tekken esports. For years, South Korea had been the leading force in the scene until Siddique began rising to prominence by winning major international tournaments. In July 2023, he was part of the Pakistani trio that clinched the Nations Cup in Riyadh, the first-ever country-based Tekken tournament, where Pakistan remained unbeaten throughout. In August 2023, Siddique became the first professional gamer to win the Tekken 7 title four times, and also triumphed at the Uprising Korea 2023 tournament in Seoul. Over the years, Siddique has secured multiple EVO titles, including EVO Las Vegas (2019, 2023, 2024) and EVO Japan (2019, 2023), cementing his legacy as one of the greatest in Tekken history. Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore and has won international Tekken competitions after learning to play as an eight-year-old in gaming arcades in Pakistan. He was already a well-known name in local gaming circles by his teenage years. Pakistan has recently taken strides in the gaming arena, particularly in Tekken. In March, a

Swiatek becomes latest seed to fall at Canadian Open

MONTREAL (Agencies): Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek became the latest seed to fall at the Canadian Open as she suffered a surprise defeat by Clara Tauson in the fourth round. Denmark's Tauson, ranked 19th, avenged her fourth-round loss to Swiatek at Wimbledon last month with a 7-6 (7-1) 6-3 victory over the second seed in Montreal. Swiatek's exit comes after top seed Coco Gauff, two-time defending champion Jessica Pegula and fourth seed Mirra Andreeva were all knocked out. "Obviously it's really great and it shows all the hard work I've been doing has been the right thing," said Tauson, who won her third WTA title in January - her first since 2021. "I'm getting more confidence in this kind of level and feeling like I belong here a bit more. I think that really helped me today in the important points." Tauson will face Australian Open champion Madison Keys in the quarter-finals after the American saved two match points en route to a 4-6 6-3 7-5 win over Czech Karolina Muchova.



Earlier on Sunday, four-time major winner Naomi Osaka lost only one game as she outplayed Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova to wrap up a 6-1 6-0 win in 49 minutes. Japan's Osaka, a winner twice at the US and Australian Opens, is seeking her first title since returning from maternity leave early in 2024. The 27-year-old parted company with coach Patrick Mouratoglou after less than a year and is now working with Poland's Tomasz Wiktorowski, former coach of Swiatek. "I had a solid plan coming in here and it just happened to work out pretty well," said Osaka, currently ranked 49 in the world. In the men's event, Australian Alex de Minaur continued his fine form with a 6-2 4-6 6-4 win over American seventh seed Frances Tiafoe to reach the quarter-finals in Toronto. Ninth seed De Minaur, who won the Washington Open a week ago, is looking to go one better than his runners-up spot in 2023. Denmark's Holger Rune, seeded fifth, suffered a surprise exit as he was beaten 6-4 2-6 3-6 by Alexei Popyrin.

Son poised to join LAFC for potential record fee

LONDON (Agencies): Son Heung-min is expected to join Los Angeles FC for around £20m after announcing his departure from Tottenham over the weekend. The forward revealed in a news conference on Saturday that he will leave Tottenham this summer after 10 years at the club. And the 33-year-old appears poised to join Major League Soccer (MLS) in what could even be a record fee, potentially surpassing the £22.5m paid by Atlanta United to sign Emmanuel Latte Lath from Middlesbrough in February. The final details of the transfer remain in discussion but his move to LAFC is now considered subject just to the completion of paperwork and a medical. Son, who is under contract with Spurs until 2026, made what is expected to be his final appearance for Tottenham in a 1-1 pre-season friendly against Newcastle in Seoul on Sunday. He was embraced by his Spurs team-mates and the opposing Newcastle players, and they performed a guard of honour when he was substituted in the 65th minute. While Tottenham's pre-season preparations now take them to Germany to face Bayern Munich on Thursday - and a reunion with Harry Kane -Son is expected to enjoy some time in his native South Korea. Arriving from Bayer Leverkusen in 2015, Son scored 173 goals in 454 appearances for Tottenham. He was captain when Tottenham beat Manchester United in the Europa League final in May to clinch their first trophy in 17 years.

India beat England by six runs in fifth-Test thriller

LONDON (AFP): Mohammed Siraj was the hero as India beat England by just six runs in a thrilling fifth Test at the Oval on Monday to end a dramatic series level at 2-2. England arrived on the final day of the series needing just 35 runs with four wickets in hand to complete what would have been a remarkable chase of 374. But they were blown away on a morning of unbearable tension, with Siraj taking three wickets for nine runs to finish with innings figures of 5-104. The dramatic ending, India's narrowest Test win in terms of runs, was a fitting finale to an enthralling series that started on June 20. "It just shows that both teams came with their 'A' game and I am very happy to get over the line in this one," India captain Shubman Gill told Sky Sports. "When you have got bowlers bowling a spell like Siraj, captaincy seems easy." The series was also a personal triumph for Gill, who scored 754 runs, including four hundreds. England, cruising to victory on Sunday when they were 301-3, remained

favourites to win when play started under gloomy skies on Monday. Jamie Overton hit the first two balls of the day off Prasidh Krishna for four to immediately ease the pressure but the home side were soon reduced to 354-8 after Siraj struck twice to remove Jamie Smith and Overton. Josh Tongue was next to go and when injured last man Chris Woakes came in to bat with his left arm strapped up due to an injured shoulder, England still needed 17 more runs for victory. Gus Atkinson hit a six off Siraj before England got the target down to single figures. But the paceman clean bowled delirious scenes among the India team and their supporters. Non-stop drama The series started with England successfully chasing down a target of 371 to win at Headingley, India won the second Test at Edgbaston by a huge margin of 336 runs before England bounced back to win at Lord's, taking a 2-1 series lead. England's time-wasting tactics during the third Test were the first of several flashpoints in an

increasingly fiery series. In a drawn fourth Test at Old Trafford, memorable for an astonishing Indian rearguard action, England were angered by the tourists' refusal to agree a draw at the first opportunity. Both sides were hampered by fitness issues in the Oval decider, with England missing inspirational captain Ben Stokes because of a shoulder injury. "I'm bitterly disappointed we couldn't get over the line here, but I'm incredibly proud of my team and everything they've thrown into it," said Stokes. India were without Jasprit Bumrah after deciding to stick to their decision to only play the world's top-ranked Test bowler in three games of the series. But the lion-hearted Siraj, who featured in every match, seized his moment, ending the series as the leading bowler on either side with 23 wickets at 32.43. "I've always had great respect and admiration for Mohammed Siraj as a competitor," said Stokes after the bowler was named player of the match



following an overall return of 9-190. "He just keeps coming and coming and coming. You know he's going to be in the fight with you." Siraj, 31, struck with his third ball on Monday, with a nervous Smith caught behind to leave England

347-7. Overton fell next, lbw for nine to Siraj. Tailender Tongue was bowled by Krishna to leave India on the brink of victory before Siraj, appropriately, wrapped up the match. "From day one to here, everyone fought so hard so

we are very happy," Siraj said. I just wanted to make sure I hit the right areas, the wickets would fall, and anything else would be a bonus. "When I woke up I believed I could do it."

Harry Brook (111) and Joe Root (105) took the game by the scruff of the neck on Sunday. Brook's reckless dismissal was the beginning of a collapse, which ultimately proved decisive, with the home side losing their final seven wickets for just 66 runs.



In brief

IRSA releases 305,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 305,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 366,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1542.50 feet which was 140.50 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 237,000 cusecs and 193,100 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1202.75 feet, which was 152.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 24,000 cusecs and 7,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 254,400, 260,900, 296,800 and 233,000 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 31,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 45,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Commissioner directs for transfer of garbage daily

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Engineer Aamir Khattak on Monday directed officials of the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) to remove garbage from the transfer station daily. During a visit to Liaquat Bagh Transfer Station to inspect cleanliness arrangements, he instructed to elevate the station boundary walls and take other measures to prevent pollution. The commissioner said that the success of the "Suthra Punjab" drive depends on ensuring 100 per cent cleanliness at the village level. The drive was not just a cleaning campaign but a vision and a change in the lifestyle which all have to adopt. The Commissioner further directed that the village committees notified by all the Deputy Commissioners should be activated immediately so that effective monitoring of cleanliness and other activities could be made possible. He gave a clear directive that the scope of the cleaning campaign should not only be restricted to the urban areas but also to the rural areas. At the same time, the officers were instructed to launch an awareness campaign among the public so that the citizens could join this program. CEO RWMC Rana Sajid Safdar, Senior Manager Operations Dr. Hamid Iqbal and AC City Iman Zafar were also present and gave a briefing about cleanliness and garbage transfer to the commissioner.

PHA decorating Rawalpindi roads

RAWALPINDI (APP): With 10 days left in the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan, the roads of Rawalpindi decorated with national flags and bunting are giving a festive look. As per the vision of Punjab Government, the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi had been decorating the city roads to mark the occasion, a PHA spokesman said on Monday. Murree Road - the city's main artery, he said, was already giving an ambience of nationalism with waving National Flags at every pole right from the starting point in Saddar to Faizabad, he added. Moreover, he said, with green patches and flowery plants electric lights were being installed to celebrate the Independence Day in a festive way. On the special instructions of PHA Director General Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, the Authority would organize various events related to the Independence Day, the spokesman said.

Gilani calls August 5 Dark Day in modern history

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday called August 5 one of the darkest days in recent history, marking the anniversary of India's move to revoke the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in 2019.

In his message, he said that on this day in 2019, the Indian government unilaterally and unconstitutionally revoked the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), stripping the Kashmiri people of their fundamental rights and converting the entire valley into an open-air prison.

He added that the Indian authorities imposed one of the longest lockdowns in history, confining millions of Kashmiris to their homes and subjecting them to severe restrictions, oppression, and brutality. "Whether elderly or young, women or children, no one was spared from the state-sponsored tyranny."

Countless people were arbitrarily detained, and the valley was plunged into a state of absolute siege," he said. "Such cruelty has few

parallels in contemporary human history."

Gilani said that these inhumane measures sparked widespread concern across the globe. Numerous international organisations and human rights bodies raised serious questions about India's actions and its human rights record in IIOJK.

He warned that India's oppressive policies have endangered regional peace and erected significant barriers to progress, prosperity, and stability in South Asia.

Reaffirming Pakistan's long-standing and principled stance, the Chairman said, "Pakistan has consistently advocated for a peaceful and just resolution of Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. We firmly believe that war is not a solution — all conflicts must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy."

The Chairman further stressed that India's expansionist ambitions and hegemonic designs can never succeed. "Six years have passed, yet the Kashmiri people remain resolute in their legit-

imate struggle for the right to self-determination. The past six years are written with the blood of innocent Kashmiris who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their freedom," he added.

Calling upon the international community, Chairman Gilani urged global powers not to remain silent spectators. "The time has come for the world to stand for justice and pressurize India to honor UN resolutions and respect the will of the Kashmiri people," he said.

He said that the just and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute is not only vital for regional peace and security but is also essential for global stability. "India's propaganda and attempts to silence Kashmiris through force will never succeed."

The sacrifices of the Kashmiri people will never go in vain. Their struggle for self-determination will prevail. Pakistan stands united with the people of Kashmir and will continue to support them until their aspirations are fulfilled."

"The Kashmiris are not alone. Pakistan stands shoulder to shoulder with them forever."

BISP to launch pilot phase of "Sahulat Accounts"

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a major step towards financial inclusion and beneficiary empowerment, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is set to launch the pilot phase of its new direct bank account payment system—"Sahulat Accounts"—on August 13.

Under this initiative, beneficiaries in seven major districts of the country will be able to open bank accounts of their choice to receive payments directly. This marks a transformative shift from traditional cash transfer methods to a more flexible, secure, and dignified payment model.

Chairperson BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid, announced the launch while meeting a high-level joint delegation of the World Bank and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), which is currently undertaking a five-day Implementation Support Mission to Pakistan under the Crisis-Resilient Social Protection (CRISP) initiative.

Highlighting BISP's digital advancement, Senator Rubina Khalid stated that the organization had already successfully launched a Digital Wallet Payment Model and was now progressing to the next level of service delivery.

"For the first time, we are taking a practical step towards providing beneficiaries with the freedom to

choose their preferred bank for receiving payments," she said. The visiting delegation included senior experts from both the World Bank and the FCDO. From the World Bank, the team comprised Mr. Amjad Zafar Khan, Senior Social Protection Specialist and Task Team Leader; Ms. Melis U. Guven, Lead Economist and Co-Task Team Leader; Mr. Lucian Bucur Pop, Senior Economist; Mr. Javier Sanchez-Reaza, Senior Economist; and Mr. Gul Najam Jamy, Consultant. Representing the FCDO were Heidi Carrubba, Humanitarian and Resilience Advisor, and Ms. Saba Yasir Jaswal, Program Manager for BRAVE.

Secretary BISP, Mr. Amer Ali Ahmad, Additional Secretary Dr. Asmat Nawaz, and all Director Generals participated from the BISP side. During the meeting, the delegation apprised Chairperson Rubina Khalid and Secretary Amer Ali Ahmad of the mission's objectives and expected outcomes. Chairperson Rubina Khalid shared updates on BISP's ongoing reforms and future plans, including efforts to enhance digital access and broaden payment options for beneficiaries. She also informed the delegation about current negotiations with Pakistan Post to utilize its e-payment infrastructure for improved

service delivery.

"We are moving in the right direction. Through mutual consultation and regular engagement with the World Bank, we will be able to overcome all operational challenges," she added.

Secretary BISP, Mr. Amer Ali Ahmad, reaffirmed the programme's commitment to a beneficiary-centric payment ecosystem. He said BISP is piloting multiple payment models in different cities to evaluate their performance and determine the most suitable options for the end users.

Mr. Amjad Zafar Khan appreciated BISP's progress in achieving key Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) and emphasized the importance of accelerating work on remaining components.

The mission also reviewed developments in the Hybrid Social Protection Scheme (HSPS), recent enhancements in the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) survey questionnaire, and the adoption of improved methodologies for random checks of surveyed households.

The visit reflects the ongoing international support for Pakistan's efforts to develop a resilient, transparent, and inclusive social protection system that places the needs and dignity of its most vulnerable citizens at the center of policy and practice.



ISLAMABAD: A view of banner install on constitution avenue on the eve of Youm-e-Istehsal on August 5, 2025 in solidarity with the people of India's illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Iranian envoy hails Pakistan's historic hospitality

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam on Monday extended heartfelt gratitude to the government and the people of Pakistan for their 'warm, generous, and historic' hospitality during the recent high-level visit of Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian.

He, in a statement of appreciation, underscored the deep-rooted cultural, religious, and strategic bonds between the two nations, calling the visit a 'turning point' and a new chapter in Iran-Pakistan relations.

"In particular, I express my profound appreciation to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for his outstanding role in ensuring this visit was truly memorable," said Dr. Moghadam, describing the Pakistani leadership's engagement as 'historic in every sense.'

He also thanked President Asif Ali Zardari for graciously hosting the Iranian delegation at the Presidency, and paid special tribute to Field Marshal Asim Munir, Chief of Army

Staff, for his 'distinguished presence and valuable contribution' in the success of the visit.

Dr. Moghadam further acknowledged Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their 'professionalism and tireless efforts' in organizing and managing the visit at the highest level. He also extended his gratitude to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for their warm reception in Lahore, describing the visit to the historic city as 'gracious and deeply meaningful.'

A number of federal ministers were also praised for their role in finalizing twelve landmark agreements and MoUs for expanding bilateral cooperation. These included: Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Jam Kamal Khan, Abdul Aleem Khan, Muhammad Reza Hayat Hiraj and Attaullah Tarar.

"These distinguished ministers played an instrumental role in strengthening our partnership under

their respective portfolios," he said.

Calling the visit a 'significant milestone', Dr. Moghadam emphasized both sides' determination to expand cooperation across trade, infrastructure, and cultural sectors.

Highlighting the mutual goal of raising bilateral trade to \$10 billion, he said, "It is now our duty and honor - both for me and my colleagues at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan, and for our counterparts in Tehran - to translate this shared vision into tangible outcomes."

Reaffirming the strategic nature of Pakistan-Iran ties, he concluded with a powerful message, "Long live Iran-Pakistan friendship, may it endure forever."

The recent visit of President Pezeshkian - his first to Pakistan - was marked by diplomatic warmth, strong public messaging, and ambitious targets, setting the tone for closer collaboration in a region marked by evolving challenges and opportunities.

Pak, UK agree to enhance cooperation in all fields



RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan and United Kingdom (UK) on Monday agreed to enhance cooperation in all fields including defence. The agreement reached

at meeting between British High Commissioner Ms. Jane Marriott and Minister for Defence Production Muhammad Raza Hayat Harraj, said a press release

issued here. Upon arrival at the ministry, the Minister warmly welcomed the dignitary and highlighted the importance of relations of both the coun-

tries. The Minister said that Pakistan considers United Kingdom a close friend and a genuine development partner.

He pointed out that frequent interaction had been useful in coordinating our approaches to various bilateral regional and international issues.

Muhammad Raza Hayat Harraj expressed hope that Pak-UK bilateral relations will continue to evolve on principles of mutual respect, shared common interest and understanding each other's perspectives.

The British High Commissioner expressed her commitment to strengthening the UK-Pakistan relationship and working with Pakistan on shared priorities, including bilateral trade and defence production.

Dengue patrolling staffer transferred to Potohar Town

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an exclusive move to effectively combat dengue threats, Rawalpindi's Health Authority has reassigned all daily wage male and female sanitary patrol staff from Rawal Town to the Deputy District Health Officer (DDHO) in Potohar Town. The order issued contained the objective of the decision to support intensified vector surveillance and dengue prevention activities.

The spokesman District Health Authority, Dr. Waqas Ahmad while confirming the decision informed that nearly 1200 workers would report to DDHO Potohar Town.

The decision has been taken for smooth working in targeted areas. "The managerial streamlining will enhance surveillance effectiveness, in addition to ongoing efforts", said Dr. Waqas while talking to APP on Monday.

It is worth mentioning that after the escalating dengue situation in Murree, the health authority has started strict actions against violations.

Islamabad expresses solidarity with Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Capital has expressed solidarity with the people of Kashmir by highlighting unilateral and illegal action of India that stripped Kashmir of its special status by revoking Articles 35-A and 370 on August 05, 2019.

A large number of banners, flyers and digital screens have been installed across the city showing the plight and struggle of Kashmiris against the illegal occupation and violence of India for last many decades.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) took the lead in this regard, and designed and executed the branding campaign to remind the world about the Indian atrocities against the innocent and unarmed Kashmiris.

"It is not just a symbolic act, but a reminder that Kashmir remains a central issue to human rights and international justice," a CDA spokesperson told APP on Monday while highlighting objectives of the campaign which was launched in line with the

directives of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

The campaign is part of Pakistan's national observance of Youm-e-Istehsal, commemorated annually on August 5 to protest India's illegal revocation of Articles 35-A and 370 of the Indian constitution.

The spokesperson said the campaign will continue throughout the week, alongside rallies, seminars, and public awareness drives planned in collaboration with civil society and media organizations.

He said the banners and flyers containing powerful messages and slogans have been displayed across the city including D-Chowk, Constitution Avenue, Blue Area, Jinnah Avenue, Srinagar Highway, Islamabad Expressway, Faizabad, Zero Point, and G-9, declaring unwavering support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

The displayed messages have caught the

attention of motorists and pedestrians, turning concrete spaces into voices of resistance and remembrance.

"The messages inscribed on banners and flyers both in English and Urdu reflect Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmir issue," said Rizwan, a motorist crossing Seventh Avenue Interchange.

"The symbolic messages across Islamabad's flyovers not only reaffirm Pakistan's moral and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people but also serve as a visual reminder of the nation's unity on this critical issue," said Maryam Shah a passerby near Peshawar Morr Sector G-9.

August 5, 2019 marks the day when India unilaterally revoked Articles 370 and 35A of its constitution, stripping Kashmir of its special status.

Since then, Pakistan observes the day as Youm-e-Istehsal (Day of Exploitation) to denounce the illegal actions and ongoing human rights violations in the occupied territory.

Female doctor shot dead

JALALABAD (Amu TV): A female doctor was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in Jalalabad, the center of the eastern province of Nangarhar, local sources said. The attack took place in the Alfath Mina neighborhood, near the provincial police headquarters, according to the sources. Family members said she had no personal disputes with anyone and was on her way to work in her personal car when she was targeted and fatally shot.

Two die by suicide in Khost

KHOST (Amu TV): Two people died by suicide in separate incidents in Khost, local sources said, bringing the total to three cases in the province within a week. The first case occurred in the Khabashkhel area, where a young man named Shamsullah took his own life. Relatives said unemployment and economic hardship were major factors in his decision. In a second incident, a teenager identified as Noor Ahmad died by suicide in Tani district, the sources said.

Display of Mujahideen war equipment at Wardak Military Museum

MAIDAN WARDAK (TOLOnews): Officials from the Department of Information and Culture in Maidan Wardak province say that more than 200 types of handmade mines, various explosives, and military equipment used by Islamic Emirate forces in face-to-face battles and targeted attacks over the past two decades are on display at the province's "Mujahid Military Museum."

They add that the military equipment has attracted a large number of domestic and foreign visitors, with dozens of people visiting the museum daily. Ziaulhaq, the director of the Mujahid Military Museum, said: "Among the items are also those cap-

tured from the enemy. The most important displays are the ones made by the Mujahideen themselves, such as missiles, barrel mines, cement mines, pressure cooker mines, sticky mines, and handmade mines."

Shafiqullah Fazli, head of Information and Culture in Maidan Wardak, said: "Many of the people who come to visit this military museum, especially foreigners, are interested in seeing which tools were used to defeat foreign forces."

Despite being made with simple techniques and at low cost, these various types of barrel mines were known as some of the most destructive and effective explosive devices over the past two decades.

Hekmatullah Hamza, a military engineer, said: "Repairing explosive shells required minimal expense but caused significant casualties to the enemy. There were even mines that only cost 500 to 1,000 Afghani to repair, yet inflicted heavy damage."

Najmuddin, another visitor, said: "We came here and saw these military items, which were very interesting. All of them are handmade and were extensively used during the past 20 years of war. They are built very simply."

According to officials, the aim of establishing this museum is to preserve past values and raise awareness among the younger generation.

First exhibition of Kufic calligraphy inaugurated



HERAT (BNA): The Department of Information and Culture, in cooperation with the Herat Calligraphers Association, has officially launched the first exhibition of Kufic calligraphy from the first century AH, titled "The Splendor of the Pen".

The exhibition features 45 exquisite calligraphic works in various styles of Kufic script, particularly highlighting pieces from the early centuries of Islam. Sayed Shamsuddin Noorzad, the exhibition's

organizer, shared that these works were meticulously prepared over the past three years and are being displayed to the public for the first time. The event also pays tribute to the legacy of Professor Mahmood Bin Ishaq Shahabi, a prominent calligrapher from the first century AH.

Artists and calligraphers attending the event expressed their support for the initiative, noting the vital role of arts in enhancing cultural development

and inspiring creativity within society.

Mawlawi Hamidullah Ghiasi, Head of the Culture and Arts Department, emphasized ongoing efforts to foster an environment conducive to showcasing artistic talents in Herat province. The "Splendor of the Pen" exhibition is set to run for four days at the Allama Salahuddin Saljuqi Hall in Herat city and has already garnered significant interest from calligraphy enthusiasts.

Ghazni, Paktika families end 15-year feud

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A 15-year-old feud between two families from southern Ghazni and southeastern Paktika provinces has been resolved through the mediation of tribal elders, religious scholars and local officials.

Maulvi Jan Mohammad Momin, Ghazni's Borders and Tribal Affairs Director, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the dispute originated over a woman and eventually led to the killing of a man from Paktika.

The conflict involved a nomadic family from Ghazni and another from Patao village in the Waza Khwa district of Paktika.

Momin said a jirga, composed of religious scholars, successfully mediated a settlement, which both families accepted, pledging to live peacefully from now on. As part of the resolution, the victim's family was awarded one million afghani in compensation. Of this amount, 750,000 afghani were paid, while the remaining 250,000 afghani—considered compensation for the dishonor suffered by the killer's family—were forgiven.

Momin said members of both families, young and old, embraced one another in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation, vowing to live together peacefully.

He emphasized that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) is committed to preventing hostilities in the province and turning conflicts into lasting friendships.

Amanullah, a tribal elder from Nawata district, recounted the origins of the feud, saying that 15 years ago, Ghami, son of Mohammad Khan from

Waza Khwa, was killed by Jalat, son of Payendi.

He stressed the importance of continued government and tribal elder intervention in such matters, using traditional jirgas to seek peaceful resolutions.

Another jirga member, Hazrat, said that after several days of negotiations, both families formally reconciled late Saturday night, pledging to live in peace and cooperation under the spirit of brotherhood.

Hazrat expressed gratitude to the local authorities, tribal leaders and scholars for their tireless efforts in resolving the long-standing dispute.

The families also welcomed the reconciliation and praised the role played by the mediators. Payendi, a member of one of the families, said: "We lived in enmity for 15 years and believed this feud would be passed down through generations. But now, I am glad it is over."

He added, "We are thankful to the elders, scholars and officials who encouraged us to resolve this issue," promising that his family would never again seek revenge and would live in peace.

Religious scholar Gul Ahmad highlighted the value of unity and harmony in society. "Unity protects society from adversity, reduces conflict and fosters a spirit of friendship," he said. "A successful society depends on cohesion and mutual support."

Previously, a similar long-standing enmity between families in the Deh Yak and Ab Band districts of Ghazni was also resolved through tribal and official mediation.

Govt reclaims over 510,000 acres of land

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Justice has announced that more than 510,000 acres of state-owned land have been reclaimed over the past three months. The reclaimed lands are located across 16 provinces, including Nangarhar, Ghor, Paktika, Panjshir, Maidan Wardak, and Bamiyan.

Barkatullah Rasooli, spokesperson for the Ministry of Justice, said: "The Commission for the Prevention of Land Usurpation and the Reclamation of Usurped Lands has, in the past three months of the Islamic year 1446, reclaimed more than 510,447 acres of state-owned land from illegal occupiers in 16 provinces and handed it over to the relevant government departments.

These lands are located in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunduz, Jawzjan, Takhar, Ghor, Khost, Paktika, Logar, Nimroz, Panjshir, Kapisa, Sar-e Pul, Samangan, Badghis, Maidan Wardak, and Bamiyan. The majority of the land reclaimed during this period was in Nimroz, Maidan Wardak, and Jawzjan, totaling more than 372,000 acres."

The commission also reported that, over the past three months, more than 519,000 acres of state land have been identified in 27 provinces, while an additional 750,000 acres in 29 provinces remain under review.

Mohammad Zalmay Afghan-Yar, a political affairs analyst, stated: "When it comes to state-owned land, the form of governance and emphasis on political stability are crucial. The real question is: once this land is returned to the government, how will its stability and protection be ensured?"

437 acres declared state land

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Justice has registered more than 437 acres of land in Shahr-i-Naw township in Maidan Shahr city of central Maidan Wardak province as state-owned land based on documents and evidence.

The Ministry of Justice in a statement said the land in four cadastral plot areas of Maidan Shahr city was registered as state land as per order of the Central Zone Special Court for Access to Usurped Land Cases.

The statement said: "Documents submitted by the occupants were considered invalid after a careful examination and obtaining information from relevant departments and the special court decided that the 873 jeribs, 12 baswa, 8 baswa and 1 square meter of land under dispute is emirate land."

The Land Usurpation Prevention Commission has four special courts in four zones of the country to investigate Emirati lands, and one technical delegation in each province to identify and verify usurped lands.

Aid center extends support

KABUL (Khaama Press): Saudi Arabia's relief center delivered food and psychological aid to Afghan refugees near Torkham as deportations from Pakistan continue, worsening the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center has continued its humanitarian operations, distributing assistance to Afghan refugees expelled from Pakistan and vulnerable families in conflict zones.

The center reported distributing 135 food packages to Afghan migrants near the Torkham border. Additionally, 393 packages were provided to displaced families in Syria, and 1,440 packages in Sudan's eastern Sennar region, reaching nearly 10,000 beneficiaries.

These efforts highlight Saudi Arabia's sustained humanitarian outreach in response to regional displacement crises.

More international coordination is essential to ensure timely and effective support for refugees and displaced populations across conflict-affected regions.

Since late 2023, Pakistan has intensified its deportation of undocumented Afghan refugees, forcing thousands to return under difficult conditions and prompting humanitarian concern across the region.

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief), established in 2015, coordinates Saudi Arabia's global relief efforts and has provided aid in over 90 countries, focusing on food security, health, and emergency response.

Aid to flood victims provides in 4 provinces

KABUL (BNA): The Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) in partnership with ACTIDE International, has announced a financial aid initiative totaling \$673,503 aimed at supporting thousands of individuals impacted by recent floods and droughts across four provinces.

The ANDMA confirmed that assistance will be distributed in the Shahr-e-Borzorg, Tashkan, and Kash districts of Badakhshan province as part of an agreement with ACTIDE International.

Under this agreement, \$165,000 will be allocated to assist 1,100 affected families in specified districts of Badakhshan, as well as in Chal, Bangi, and Ashkamesh districts of Takhar province, and Sanjark and Goshfandi of Sar-e-Pul province. Each family will receive \$150, with an additional \$30 for unaccompanied households.

In addition to direct



financial support, the program will aid 1,326 individuals suffering from drought conditions, establish nine public awareness centers, and distribute 1,800 hygiene packages valued at \$27 each. Furthermore, the initiative includes repairing four inactive water networks in water-scarce areas of Badakhshan and distribut-

ing 580 hygiene packages worth \$640, funded by ACTIDE.

During the signing ceremony, Mullah Nooruddin Torabi emphasized the importance of effective and transparent management of these aid programs, highlighting the necessity for inter-institutional cooperation to ensure success.

He also called for a

reduction in administrative costs associated with the projects, reassuring that essential facilities have been put in place for the collaborating organizations.

Hans Johannes, director of ACTID International, pledged that the program would be executed with full transparency and efficiency, aiming for rapid implementation of the aid.

Iran executes 5 Afghan nationals in one month, rights group reports

KABUL (Ariana News): The human rights organization Hengaw has reported that Iranian authorities executed five Afghan nationals in the month of July 2025.

According to the group's statement released, a total of 96 prisoners were executed in Iran during July, with Afghan citizens among those put to death. The report highlights a

significant surge in executions compared to the same period last year.

In July 2024, at least 55 individuals were executed, while the July 2025 figures represent a 74.5% increase, amounting to 41 more executions. Hengaw stated that most of those executed last month were convicted of drug-related offenses. However, the organization

did not disclose the identities of the Afghan nationals involved, and Iranian authorities have yet to issue any official comment regarding the executions.

Earlier this year, the Iran Human Rights Organization reported in its annual review that at least 80 Afghan citizens were executed in Iran in 2024, raising serious concerns over

due process and the treatment of foreign nationals within the Iranian judicial system.

The rising number of executions, particularly of foreign nationals, has drawn renewed criticism from international human rights advocates, who continue to call for greater transparency and accountability in Iran's judicial procedures.

Deported Afghans in Kabul camp voice fears over harsh conditions

KABUL (TOLOnews): As the deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan continues, a number of recently returned individuals at the Kabul camp have voiced deep concern about their dire living conditions.

They say they are living under harsh circumstances due to lack of shelter, unemployment, and the absence of basic services.

The deportees are calling on the caretaker government and humanitarian agencies to urgently facilitate their organized relocation to provinces, provide essential aid, create job opportunities, and ensure access to education for their children.

Adina Samadi, deported from Iran, said: "Our demand is for the government to address the situation of returnees. I came by vehicle, and along the way, my mother became ill. We faced many problems and arrived late because for the past twenty days, we haven't even found a vehicle to take us to the city we want to go to, like Takhar."

Khyber, another deportee from Iran, said: "Our request is that support be



provided to returnees as soon as possible — to give them homes and means to live. Right now, we have no house; we've been sleeping here in the camp for four days, and we have nowhere to go."

Zalmay, a deportee currently residing at the Kabul camp, said the camp has become his temporary shelter, but he is due to be relocated to Kunduz, hoping that a proper facility will be available there for returning migrants.

Zalmay added: "We ask the government to help us.

Right now, we have no place to live and are staying in this camp. We don't know if Kunduz even has a camp — and if it does, will they accept us? Otherwise, we'll have no choice but to sleep by the roadside with just a blanket."

Meanwhile, the Commission for Refugee Affairs has said it is working to provide facilities for returnees from neighboring countries, particularly Iran and Pakistan. It reported that just yesterday, 544 families returned to the country through Islam

Qala.

Nazar Nazari, a migrant rights activist, stated: "The current efforts are still insufficient. There needs to be more action to address existing challenges and ensure the successful integration of returnees into society, something the Islamic Emirate must prioritize."

Earlier, the UNHCR reported that between September 15, 2023, and June 30 of this year, over 1.2 million Afghan migrants left Pakistan and returned to Afghanistan.

Ferozkoh villagers: Unsafe water causes illnesses among children

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): Residents of Shurabak village in Darah Qazi area of Ferozkoh, the capital of western Ghor province, say consecutive droughts have made access to safe drinking water increasingly difficult. As a result, waterborne illnesses such as diarrhea have become common among children.

A doctor at the provincial hospital also acknowledged a rise in diarrhoeal cases, urging families to boil water before drinking to reduce the risk of diseases.

Shurabak families call for water supply project

Ismail Karimi, a resident of Shurabak village, told Pajhwok Afghan News that repeated droughts had caused groundwater levels to fall, making it harder for people to access clean drinking water. In some cases, he said, people were forced to

drink contaminated water. He added: "It's been several years of drought. The water in our village has diminished and we now use water from springs or salty wells for drinking."

Speaking about the increase in diarrhoea cases among children, he said: "You know the weather is hot these days. Our children drink from open, polluted springs. Every household has several children suffering from diarrhoea. I've taken my own children to the doctor several times."

He urged the caretaker government and relevant organisations to implement a water supply project in the village to ensure they had access to clean and safe drinking water.

Other villagers share similar concerns

Raz Mohammad, 47, another resident of the village,

shared a similar concern.

He said that in the past two years, village wells dried up, forcing people to walk three to four kilometres to fetch water.

He added: "The well water we used two years ago, though salty, was at least available. Now those wells have dried up, and we have to bring water from far away or use river water, which was not clean at all."

He also called on the government to address the issue, saying that due to the use of unsafe water, many children and even adults in the village had contracted microbial diseases, particularly diarrhoea.

Ghor hospital doctor: Over 30 diarrhoea cases come daily

Fazl-ul-Haq Farjad, an internal medicine specialist at the Ghor Provincial Hospital, told Pajhwok that

over 30 people suffering from diarrhoea and waterborne diseases visit the hospital each day. In recent days, with rising temperatures and increased environmental pollution, the number has nearly doubled.

He said: "Unfortunately, in recent years—especially this year—the water in drinking wells has significantly decreased and is no longer safe. Most wells are shallow and easily contaminated with microbes, which lead to illnesses such as diarrhoea and vomiting."

Dr. Farjad recommended that the best and simplest way to prevent many of these diseases was to boil water before drinking. If families lack access to purification systems, he advised boiling water for at least ten minutes to kill harmful bacteria and microbes. He also mentioned

that disinfectants such as chlorine can be effective.

Official: Efforts underway to resolve the issue

Rural Rehabilitation and Development Director Maulvi Mohammad Idrees Shariati urged local residents to submit formal requests to the department.

He said they would strive to implement a safe water supply project in cooperation with aid organisations.

He added: "Most water supply projects are carried out by organisations, but this year fewer projects have been available. We ask residents of this area to submit their requests to us."

He continued if assistance was received from any supporting body, their teams would be immediately dispatched to assess the situation and take necessary steps to resolve the problem.

Peace initiatives in Bajaur, Mohmand Second major consultation held at KP CM House



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The series of regional consultative Jirgas on law and order, hosted by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, continued with the second major consultation held on Monday at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar. The Jirga wit-

nessed substantial participation from elders and elected public representatives of Bajaur and Mohmand districts.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Senator Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, the Chief Secretary, the Inspector General of Police, along with relevant commissioners, deputy

commissioners, and senior police officials also attended the session.

The Jirga held comprehensive deliberations on the prevailing law and order situation and unanimously put forward several key recommendations.

The participants stressed their firm commitment to peace, stating: "We want peace and call

upon the government to ensure it. We are ready to fully cooperate. Terrorism is the enemy of all, and we stand united against it."

They unanimously rejected any proposals for military operations or displacement, stating such actions were unacceptable.

The Jirga further recommended the formation of a broad-based and empowered Jirga, comprising representatives from the federal and provincial governments, tribal elders, and all key stakeholders, to engage in meaningful dialogue with the Afghan government and people to ensure the long-term eradication of terrorism.

Participants viewed the initiative of local Jirgas as a positive step and called for it to be made more effective so that its outcomes could benefit other regions as well.



GAZA: Palestinians wait to receive food from a charity kitchen, amid a hunger crisis, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip on Monday.

Pakistan flays storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Monday unequivocally condemned the recent act of storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli ministers, accompanied by settler groups and shielded by Israeli police.

"This sacrilege against one of Islam's holiest sites is not only an affront to the faith of over a billion Muslims but also a direct assault on international law and the collective conscience of humanity," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wrote on his X timeline.

He said that such systematic provocations by the occupying power, coupled with reckless calls for annexation imperilled the prospects for peace.

The prime minister said that Israel's shameless actions were deliberately inflaming tensions in Palestine and the wider region, pushing the Middle East closer to further instability and conflict.

"Pakistan reiterates its urgent call for an immediate ceasefire, an end to all acts of aggression, and the revival of a credible peace process leading to an independent and viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions," Prime Minister Shehbaz added.

Murad pays tribute to police martyrs

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, addressing the Police Martyrs Day ceremony at the PAF Auditorium, said that despite limited resources, his government stands firm with its brave police force, and "we honour our martyrs not just with tributes but with support, respect, and policies that secure their families' futures."

He paid a glowing tribute to the provincial Police personnel who have laid down their lives in the line of duty.

Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjari, Inspector General of Sindh Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, retired IGPs, members of civil society and families of martyrs attended the event.

The Chief Minister stated that August 4 is observed annually as Police Martyrs Day across the country to honour the immense sacrifices of police officers who have defended the lives and property of citizens, often at the cost of their own lives. He assured the families of the fallen that the government and people of Sindh will never forget their sacrifices.

"The Sindh Police is not just an institution, it is a symbol of courage, dedication, and public protection," he said.

Police Reforms: The CM highlighted the Sindh government's sustained commitment to strengthening the police force through administrative and financial autonomy. He revealed that in the current fiscal year, Rs. 3.74 billion have been allocated to police stations for operational needs. In a move towards decentralisation, the SHOs have been granted Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) powers to promote efficiency and transparency.

Mr Shah also pointed to significant improvements in law and order, noting a 67 per cent decline in vehicle thefts and a 54 per cent drop in street crimes in Karachi. These gains, he said, are a result of effective policing strategies and modern surveillance, including the installation of over 350 AI-enabled cameras under the Safe City Project, set to expand to 1,300 cameras by year-end.

Talking about Health, Infrastructure, and Welfare Initiatives, the Chief Minister detailed several new initiatives for the welfare of serving officers, including the rollout of a health insurance scheme worth Rs. 4.96 billion, which has already benefited over 15,000 police personnel. Additionally, the provincial government has invested heavily in upgrading police stations and acquiring modern equipment, including bulletproof vehicles, to enhance safety and performance in high-risk areas such as the Katcha regions. Recruitment of over 1,900 new personnel has also been completed despite budgetary challenges.

Discussing the martyrs' compensation package, Murad Ali Shah reaffirmed his government's steadfast support for the families of martyred police officers. He disclosed that 2,549 police personnel have been martyred in Sindh since 1971, including four Senior Superintendents of Police (SSP), one Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), and 22 Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSP).

"Their blood has secured our peace," he said. "We must honour their memory not just with words, but with actions," he said.

Compensation: Murad Shah said that for terrorism-related cases, the compensation package now ranges from Rs. 23.5 million to Rs. 70 million, while encounter or targeted killing cases carry payouts between Rs. 23.5 million and Rs. 60 million. Families continue to receive the salaries of the martyred officers up to their notional retirement age (60 years), along with Rs. 1 million in health insurance and housing support.

CJP Yahya Afridi announces 125-court judicial complex in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi on his visit to the Sindh High Court was briefed on the upcoming judicial complex project in Karachi, which will house 125 modern courtrooms to meet the growing demands of the city's judicial system.

During the visit, Chief

Justice Sindh High Court Justice Junaid Ghaffar presented details of the project, emphasising that the plan was developed to address the rising caseload and infrastructural needs of the judiciary in the metropolis.

Chief Justice Yahya Afridi underlined the importance of sustainable and future-oriented planning, noting that all stake-

holders must be consulted to ensure the development of an efficient and accessible judicial system. "The process of digital automation of the judicial system is already in motion," said the CJP, adding that technology would play a critical role in improving court efficiency and transparency.

He also proposed the establishment of a modern facilitation centre to serve litigants, lawyers, and the general public, making court services more accessible and user-friendly.

The judicial complex and facilitation centre are being seen as significant steps toward modernising Pakistan's judicial infrastructure and improving access to justice for citizens.

Sharjeel asks public to avoid criticising police force

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Senior Minister of Sindh and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that today marks a significant day. In our society, issues related to law and order, as well as the protection of life and property, are challenges faced by the public on a daily basis. Ensuring security and maintaining public order are the core responsibilities of our police force.

Speaking in the Sindh Assembly, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the police have long been subjected to criticism, ridicule, and allegations.

"Whenever we wish to object to something, the police are an easy target," he said. "But we seldom consider the plight of the constable who risks his life day and night for a meagre salary. Instead of acknowledging his service, we are quick to find fault."

He said the Sindh Police, in particular, had played an exemplary role across the province since 2008. This, he added, was the same force that, when granted a free hand by a people's government, achieved historic successes in restoring law and order in Sindh. Recalling the past, he noted that there were areas where people once feared stepping out after sunset, but normal

life had since returned to those localities.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said the police were not only the guarantors of public order but had also faced serious challenges, including terrorism, with remarkable courage. Citing the attack on Karachi Airport, he noted that the then Inspector General of Sindh, Iqbal Mahmood, was present on the scene in plain clothes and actively engaged in confronting the attackers. He added that the Sindh Police had also demonstrated professionalism and bravery during the assaults on the Karachi Stock Exchange and Central Police Office (CPO).

He said the Sindh Police

had successfully investigated the Safoora tragedy, the university attack, and other major acts of terrorism, which reflected the force's expertise and training. "No other provincial police force has resolved such complex and high-profile cases," he said, "and there exists no comparable example elsewhere in the country."

He added that the police had been mobilised across all fronts, from providing security at religious gatherings to conducting anti-narcotics operations and tackling street crime. Despite these diverse responsibilities, he said, the force continued to serve as the front-line in maintaining public safety.

Tammy Bruce accused of orchestrating retaliation campaign

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That same week, Bruce threatened to call security on him for asking a follow-up question. Afridi argues these events triggered the full-scale exclusion campaign, including the revocation of his press badge without hearing, warning, or due process.

F. Improper Service Claim Was Baseless

The government claimed it had not been properly served, but the Court accepted the service and set a deadline for reply. Afridi attached court orders and service confirmations, showing the State Department's objection was simply a delay tactic.

G. Pattern of Hostility and Selective Access Under Tammy Bruce

Afridi's filing cites multiple journalists—Matt Lee of AP, Said Arikat of Al-Quds, and a TRT Turkey reporter—who experienced disrespect or exclusion under Bruce's management.

Afridi asserts that Bruce showed favoritism to certain outlets while ignoring him entirely, especially when he asked about crypto meetings between Gentry Beach and Pakistan's leadership.

H. No Prior Administration Flagged Afridi as a Threat

Afridi submitted decades of briefing attendance records under spokespersons John Kirby, Heather Nauert, Morgan Ortugas, Vedant Patel, and Matthew Miller, none of whom ever labeled him a threat. The claim that he was "disruptive" only began under Bruce, reinforcing the argument of personal bias.

I. False Statement About Ankle Bracelet

Timing Raises Integrity Concerns

The State Department falsely stated that Afridi was wearing an ankle bracelet when he returned to the building on June 25, 2025. In truth, no such bracelet was installed at that time. Afridi questions who within ICE or DHS shared this false information, and whether it was orchestrated to damage his credibility. His reply emphasizes that such inaccurate claims further support the pattern of retaliation and misuse of law enforcement channels.

J. Gentry Beach Crypto Questions Suppressed Despite National Security Implications

Afridi sent six emails to the State Department about Gentry Beach, a known business partner of Donald Trump Jr., regarding his undisclosed meetings with the Prime Minister of Pakistan to discuss cryptocurrency. Afridi warned of potential Logan Act and FARA violations, but his questions were ignored, and the emails were later used to portray him as excessive.

K. Denial of Due Process in Press Badge Revocation

Afridi argues that his press badge was revoked in violation of Sherrill v. Knight and Goss v. Lopez. He received no hearing, warning, or formal explanation.

The revocation letter was signed by Assistant Secretary Michelle Exnet on July 31, 2025—over a month after his badge had already been taken.

L. Raising Voice in Briefing Is Constitutionally Protected

Afridi asserts that raising his voice in a briefing, cited by the government as "disruption," was protected symbolic speech under Texas v. Johnson and Tinker v. Des Moines. He attached videos showing other journalists raising their voices regularly—none of whom were punished or excluded.

M. Constitutional Violations Confirmed by Precedent

Afridi cites binding legal precedents in Sherrill v. Knight, Associated Press v. Budowich, Rosenberger v. UVA, and Pickering v. Board of Education, all supporting that government cannot discriminate against journalists based on viewpoint or protected activity.

N. Tears Mischaracterized as Instability

In a final emotional moment, Afridi explains that his eyes welled with tears during a briefing when outgoing spokesperson Matthew Miller jokingly said, "I wish everyone felt the same," after a colleague praised him. Afridi, having been consistently ignored, took it personally. The moment was captured on official video and later misused by the government to suggest emotional instability. Afridi responded with a peaceful email affirming his dedication to American values and jour-

nalism.

It is important to mention here that State Department has on record mentioned in court in their reply that Afridi was given hard pass mistaken considering his a U.S. citizen, a mistake which is never heard in the past.

Documented Evidence Submitted for Every Allegation

Afridi's legal reply is reinforced with a full set of annexed exhibits, including:

DOJ immigration appeal proving no removal order

FOIA requests filed with multiple federal agencies

Full email threads with State Department staff

Security camera location references

White House and State Department briefing attendance history

Photos, video links, and media coverage

A copy of his Bivens complaint and response timeline

Six targeted questions about Gentry Beach and Trump Jr.

"This is not hearsay," Afridi stated. "This is fully documented retaliation."

What's Next

The Court will now consider whether to dismiss the case or move it to discovery. If allowed to proceed, Afridi v. U.S. State Department could set a powerful precedent for journalists facing viewpoint discrimination, retaliation by government officials, and the need for transparency in press credentialing.

"Tammy Bruce may have tried to erase my voice," Afridi said, "but now the record speaks louder than ever."

President condoles with PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed his condolences to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on the death of his cousin Mian Shahid Shafi. The president arrived here at the Prime Minister's House and held meeting with the prime minister to offer fateha for the deceased, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. President Zardari prayed for the elevation of Mian Shahid's ranks in the hereafter and his family for patience. President Asif Ali Zardari also contacted Javed Shafi, the elder brother of the late Mian Shahid Shafi, over the telephone and expressed his condolences.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police commemorated Police Martyrs' Day with deep respect and solemnity across the province, paying glowing tributes to those who laid down their lives for the nation. The ceremony reflected the unwavering resolve of the police force to stand as a fortified wall against terrorism and antisocial elements in their mission to ensure peace in society.

The central ceremony in Peshawar saw participation from a large number of high-ranking officials, including KP Chief Minister Ali Amin

Gandapur, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Zulfiqar Hameed, Commandant FC Nazir Ahmad Gaara, military officers, provincial ministers Mina Khan, Qasim Ali Shah, Adnan Qadri, MNA Shandana Gulzar, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, secretaries, former IGPs, civil society members, senior journalists and representatives from the business community.

In his address, IGP Zulfiqar Hameed emphasized the sacrifices made by KP Police in transforming the dark night of terrorism into the dawn of peace. "The spirit of freedom, martyrdom, and courage runs deep in the blood of

KP's people and police," he stated. "Every officer and soldier is committed to serve this nation till the last drop of their blood."

He highlighted the historical significance of August 4 as a day to renew the pledge to never forget the martyrs. "Despite immense sacrifices and daunting challenges, KP Police have never retreated, never left any duty post, and stood firm against the enemy," he said, affirming the courage and resilience of the force.

The IGP paid rich tribute to the families of martyrs, acknowledging them as heroes whose sacrifices have elevated the honor of the police department.

More Gazans die seeking aid and from hunger

CAIRO/GAZA (Reuters): At least 40 Palestinians were killed by Israeli gunfire and airstrikes on Gaza on Monday, including 10 seeking aid, health authorities said, adding another five had died of starvation in what humanitarian agencies warn may be an unfolding famine.

The 10 died in two separate incidents near aid sites belonging to the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, in central and southern Gaza, local medics said. The United Nations says more than 1,000 people have been killed trying to receive aid in the enclave since the GHF began operating in May 2025, most of them shot by Israeli forces operating near GHF sites.

"Everyone who goes there, comes back either with a bag of flour or carried back (on a wooden stretcher) as a martyr, or injured. No one comes back

safe," said 40-year-old Palestinian Bilal Thari.

He was among mourners at Gaza City's Al Shifa hospital on Monday who had gathered to collect the bodies of their loved ones killed a day earlier by Israeli fire as they sought aid, according to Gaza's health officials.

At least 13 Palestinians were killed on Sunday while waiting for the arrival of UN aid trucks at the Zikim crossing on the Israeli border with the northern Gaza Strip, the officials added.

At the hospital, some bodies were wrapped in thick patterned blankets because white shrouds, which hold special significance in Islamic burials, were in short supply due to continued Israeli border restrictions and the mounting number of daily deaths, Palestinians said.

"We don't want war, we

want peace, we want this misery to end. We are out on the streets, we all are hungry, we are all in bad shape, women are out there on the streets, we have nothing available for us to live a normal life like all human beings, there's no life," Thari told Reuters.

There was no immediate comment by Israel on the incidents of shootings on Sunday and Monday.

Israel blames Hamas for the suffering in Gaza and says it is taking steps for more aid to reach its population, including pausing fighting for part of the day in some areas, air drops, and announcing protected routes for aid convoys.

Meanwhile, five more people died of starvation or malnutrition over the past 24 hours, Gaza's health ministry said on Monday. The new deaths raised the toll of those dying from hunger to 180, including 93

children, since the war began.

UN agencies have said that airdrops of food are insufficient and that Israel must let in far more aid by land and quickly ease access to it.

COGAT, the Israeli military agency that coordinates aid, said that during the past week, over 23,000 tons of humanitarian aid in 1,200 trucks had entered Gaza but that hundreds of the trucks had yet to be driven to aid distribution hubs by UN and other international organizations.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said on Sunday that more than 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.