

Police checkpoint stormed
F.P. Report

KHAR: A police checkpoint in Bajaur was partially damaged after militants attacked it late Monday night; however, no life was lost in the incident, reported. The checkpoint was attacked at 2:15 AM. District Police Officer (DPO) Waqas Rafiq said that the checkpoint had been vacated seven months ago due to which there was no loss of human life.



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ECP de-notifies nine PTI MPs

Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz also included

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Tuesday de-notified nine Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers, including opposition leaders in the Senate and National Assembly — Senator Shibli Faraz and Omar Ayub Khan — following their convictions in the May 9 cases.

According to the notification issued by the commission, an anti-terrorism court convicted the lawmakers and sentenced them to imprisonment. The disqualified legislators include five members of the National Assembly, one senator, and three members of the Punjab Assembly.

From the National Assembly, those de-notified are Omar Ayub (NA-18 Haripur), Rai Hassan Nawaz (NA-143 Sahiwal-III), Zartaj Gul (NA-185 DG Khan-II), Rai Haider

Ali (NA-96 Faisalabad-II), and Sahibzada Hamid Raza (NA-104 Faisalabad-X). Punjab Assembly members Muhammad Ansar Iqbal (PP-73 Sargodha-III), Junaid Afzal (PP-98 Faisalabad-I), and Rai Muhammad Murtaza Iqbal (PP-203 Sahiwal-VI) were also disqualified.

The lawmakers were de-notified under Article 63(1)(h) of the Constitution, which disqualifies any person convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude and sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years. Following the disqualification of nine Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers, including opposition leaders in the Senate and National Assembly, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has officially declared their seats in the Senate, National Assembly, and Punjab Assembly

vacant.

Following the disqualification, the ECP has declared 11 seats in the National Assembly and Senate as vacant. These include the seats previously held by the disqualified members. The convictions held by the disqualified lawmakers, all of whom received prison sentences in connection with the 2023 unrest.

While the ECP has not yet announced dates for by-elections to fill the vacant seats, the disqualification of two opposition leaders could have significant political implications in the coming parliamentary sessions. The action follows increasing legal scrutiny over the events of 9 May 2023, which continue to generate political ripples across Pakistan's legislative and judicial landscape.

Electricity prices may drop by Rs0.77 per unit

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Electricity consumers across the country may soon receive another financial relief, as a further reduction of Rs. 0.77 per unit (inclusive of taxes) in power tariffs is expected in the upcoming billing cycle. The anticipated relief comes under the heads of Quarterly Tariff Adjustment (QTA) and Fuel Price Adjustment (FPA).

According to NEPRA, the fourth quarterly adjustment for the fiscal year 2024-25 was submitted by power distribution companies (DISCOs), to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), which held a public hearing on August 4, 2025. Based on the hearing, NEPRA is likely to approve a negative adjustment of Rs 1.89 per unit, which will be reflected in electricity bills for the months of August, September, and October.

This expected reduction is primarily due to revised agreements with power generation companies, increased power demand, and the integration of captive power plants into the national grid—resulting in lower overall production costs. Consequently, a reduction of Rs 0.34 per unit under this head is expected to appear in August's bills.

Simultaneously, for June 2025's fuel cost adjustment, the Central Power Purchasing Agency — Guaranteed (CPPA-G) submitted its request to NEPRA on July 16. A hearing was conducted on July 3, 2025, and according to preliminary assessments, a further reduction of Rs 0.78 per unit is expected to be applied to August bills. This comes after consumers had already received a Rs. 0.50 per unit relief in their July bills. The remaining Rs 0.28 per unit will now be adjusted in August.

Pak reaffirms solidarity with Kashmiri people

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The people and Government of Pakistan on Tuesday solemnly observed the 'Youm-e-Istehsal', on the sixth anniversary of India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In their special messages on the occasion, the President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have renewed Pakistan's unwavering diplomatic, political and moral support to the Kashmir Cause and called for resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people, a news release from Foreign Office Spokesperson said. They have also underscored that India's unlawful actions since 5 August 2019 are aimed at turning the Kashmiris into a disempowered community in their own land.

The Foreign Minister has addressed letters to President UN General Assembly, President UN Security Council, UN Secretary General, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and OIC Secretary General to apprise them of the latest developments in IIOJK. In these letters, he has urged the implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine their own future. He has also stressed the urgent need for improving the human rights situation in IIOJK and releasing the incarcerated Kashmiri political prisoners.

Ahead of the 'Youm-e-Istehsal', the Foreign Secretary briefed the Islamabad-based diplomatic missions on the situation in IIOJK, on 4 August 2025. She highlighted the legal, security and human rights dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, with special reference to the developments of the past few months in the region.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding facilitating Agri loans.

PM for eliminating hurdles to ensure reforms' in FBR

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to eliminate red tape and institutional hurdles to ensure the permanent implementation of reforms in Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

Chairing a meeting regarding matters related to FBR here, the prime minister expressed satisfaction over the increase in the tax-to-GDP ratio as a result of the reforms introduced by the federal government in the FBR. "I, along with the federal government, will fully support and endorse the reform initiatives undertaken by the authorities", the prime minister said stressing to ensure uniform and effective implementation of revolutionary customs clearance reforms across the country".

He also directed to use modern technology in the customs clearance reform agenda to minimize the time required for institutional procedures. The prime minister also directed the federal and provincial authorities to work together to sustain the benefits of tax collection resulting from FBR reforms in the next fiscal year.

He noted that the effective implementation of previously imposed taxes in the upcoming fiscal year will play a key role in further increasing tax collection. The prime minister stressed to devise a strategy to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio through consultation among FBR, relevant federal institutions, and the provinces.

"The set timelines for FBR's tax collection and other reform targets for

the next fiscal year will not be altered", the prime minister said directing that in order to raise public awareness regarding the FBR and customs clearance reform systems, both institutions should enhance their capacity in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. During the briefing, the meeting was informed that as per the special directive of PM Shehbaz Sharif, the income tax return form had been prepared online in Urdu as simplifying the online income tax return forms and making them available in Urdu will benefit approximately 84% of filers.

The meeting was further informed that the FBR had achieved its tax collection target for the first month of the new fiscal year (July) and was expected to meet its targets in the coming months as well. The establishment of digital enforcement stations for customs clearance across the country is underway on a priority basis. Full implementation of the Centralized Assessment Unit (CAU) and the faceless customs system will help make the customs clearance process more efficient and transparent, the meeting was told.

It was further informed in the meeting that the implementation of reforms in the FBR and customs clearance is progressing in accordance with the set targets, with changes in policy frameworks, strategies, and actions in various sectors. Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar,

Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, the Attorney General of Pakistan, Chairman FBR, and other relevant government officials and dignitaries attended the meeting.

Shehbaz directs swift reforms to ease low-cost loans for small farmers: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed immediate reforms to simplify and expand access to low-cost agricultural loans for small and medium-scale farmers, calling it a critical step for boosting agricultural productivity and ensuring economic dignity for the country's rural backbone.

The prime minister while chairing a high-level review meeting here, emphasized that small farmers must be treated with respect and given due facilitation, particularly when it comes to acquiring low-interest loans for their agricultural needs, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. "Small-scale farmers face immense challenges in securing low-cost loans," said PM Shehbaz, adding, "Providing them with easier access to affordable credit is among the government's top priorities."

During the meeting, PM Shehbaz instructed the concerned authorities to accelerate reforms within the Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL), and to encourage private banks to step forward in offering concessional loans to the agricultural sector on easier terms. The prime minister announced that he will chair review meetings every three weeks to monitor the implementation of loan facilitation initiatives and reforms at ZTBL.

Dr. Riina calls on Zardari

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Head of the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka Tuesday paid a farewell call on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Welcoming Dr. Kionka, the president said that Pakistan attached great importance to its multidimensional partnership with the European Union. He observed that a strong Pakistan-EU relationship contributed to regional stability and global security in a volatile world.

President Zardari highlighted that the European Union was one of Pakistan's largest trade and investment partners. He said there was vast potential to further expand development cooperation with the EU, given Pakistan's large young population and significant industrial growth prospects. The president also expressed hope that Pakistan would continue to benefit from European expertise through programs such as Erasmus Mundus and Horizon Europe.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the full implementation of the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan, underscoring that shared objectives in trade, development, climate, migration and regional peace form the basis of an enduring and stronger partnership. President Zardari congratulated Dr. Riina Kionka on the successful completion of her tenure in Pakistan and lauded her valuable contributions to further strengthening Pakistan-EU relations. He wished her continued success in her future endeavours.

KP CM asks world to take notice of Kashmir issue

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, here Tuesday strongly condemned the atrocities committed by India against the people of Occupied Kashmir particularly the unilateral revocation of Kashmir's special status by the Indian government over the past six years.

He stated that the people of Occupied Kashmir have been victims of Indian state terrorism for the past seven decades, says an official statement on Kashmir Exploitation Day. During this time, India has gone to extreme lengths to deprive the Kashmiri people of their fundamental right to self-determination.

He further said that when fascist India realized that the Kashmiri people remain steadfast in their struggle despite all forms of brutal oppression, the Indian government, on August 5, 2019, abrogated Article 370 of its Constitution which granted special status to Occupied

Kashmir, marking the beginning of a new chapter of persecution against the oppressed Kashmiri people. This, he said, should be a matter of serious concern for international human rights organizations.

"We strongly condemn the worst state terrorism carried out by India in Occupied Kashmir for the past six years. We reiterate our moral, political, and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination."

The Chief Minister said that unarmed Kashmiris continue to resist Indian tyranny with bravery, and it is deeply concerning that despite the existence of international human rights organizations and UN resolutions, atrocities against Kashmiri Muslims persist.

On this occasion, Ali Amin Gandapur called upon international powers, the United Nations, and other human rights organizations to take serious notice of the oppression by India and to play their role in granting the Kashmiri people their right to live freely, as per their own will.

He emphasized "Our demand is that the Kashmir issue be resolved in line with UN resolutions and according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people through a plebiscite, as the peace of the entire region hinges on the resolution of this conflict." He also paid tribute to the brave Kashmiri Muslims fighting against the illegal Indian occupation and assured them that "As always, we stand by the Kashmiri people and will continue to support their freedom struggle on every platform."

The Chief Minister further stated that former Prime Minister Imran Khan highlighted the Kashmir issue at international forums in a way that is unparalleled in the past. He concluded with hope and determination and said "We are confident that the blood of the Kashmiri martyrs will not go in vain. The long chapter of oppression will eventually come to an end, and Kashmiri Muslims will succeed in achieving their right to self-determination."



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur holding a picture of PTI founder during protest rally for his release from jail.

Several PTI lawmakers, workers arrested in Lahore

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Police arrested several PTI leaders, including Deputy Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Moin Qureshi and MPA Shoaib Amir, during a protest rally in Lahore on Tuesday to mark the two-year imprisonment of party founder Imran Khan.

According to reports, provincial assembly members led a rally in the city, during which MPA Shoaib

Amir was taken into custody. Deputy Opposition Leader Moin Qureshi was also reportedly arrested. MPA Farrukh Javed Moon alleged that police attacked their vehicles with batons, smashed windows, assaulted lawmakers, and tore their clothes.

Reports suggest that over six MPs have been detained in Lahore. Among those arrested are Moin Qureshi, Farrukh Javed Moon, Col (retired) Shoaib,

Nadeem Sadiq Dogar, Khawaja Salahuddin, Ameenullah Khan, and Iqbal Khattak. Party sources claimed that around 300 PTI workers have also been detained from Lahore.

A day earlier, PTI members were reportedly staying inside the Punjab Assembly to avoid arrest during police raids. On the other hand, a police official claimed that PTI members attacked law enforcement, leaving one officer with a head injury.

PTI holds power show in Buner



F.P. Report

BUNER: As part of its nationwide protest campaign demanding the release of founding chairman Imran Khan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) organized a large-scale and historic protest in Buner on Tuesday, August 5.

The central demonstration, held at Sowari Chowk, witnessed an over-

whelming public turnout. The gathering was addressed by Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jahan, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and other senior leaders and party officials.

The central event at Sowari Chowk stood out as the largest district-level gathering, where residents of PK-26 turned out in large numbers, expressing unwa-

vering solidarity with the party's founding chairman.

The participants raised slogans in support of Imran Khan's release and pledged to continue their peaceful and lawful struggle for justice. While addressing the gathering, Provincial Minister Syed Fakhar Jahan remarked that today marks two years since our leader was unjustly imprisoned. "He con-

tinues to face undue hardships, while the institutions meant to uphold justice appear to be acting with bias," he said.

The minister further stated that elected MNAs and MPAs of PTI are being harassed and unlawfully detained, with even their families facing pressure and intimidation.

He thanked the people of PK-26 for their passionate participation and affirmed the provincial government's commitment to completing all ongoing development projects in the constituency.

"The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would visit this region soon and all necessary new development initiatives will be incorporated into the provincial plan," he added. Chairman PTI Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and other senior leaders also addressed the gathering, reaffirming their resolve to continue striving for justice and the restoration of democratic values in the country.



KARACHI: Mushaal Mullick offers fateha at Mazar-e-Quaid on the occasion of Youm-e-Istehsal to mark the sixth anniversary of India's illegal actions of August 5, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

CM Maryam pays tribute to sacrifices of Kashmiri people

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has paid rich tribute to the resilience and sacrifices of the Kashmiri people on Kashmir Exploitation Day, expressing unwavering solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) in their just struggle for the right to self-determination.

In her message on Kashmir Exploitation Day, the CM said, "I salute the brave brothers and sisters of occupied Jammu and Kashmir who have written a history of resistance with their blood. Freedom of Kashmir is not just a dream, it is inscribed on the tablet of destiny."

The CM, referring to the illegal and unilateral actions of India on August 5, 2019, said that despite a signifi-

cant escalation in atrocities over the past six years, the courage of Kashmiris remains unwavering and truly commendable.

She reiterated, "Kashmir will decide its own fate. We stand united with our Kashmiri brethren and will continue to do so." The CM strongly condemned the silence of the international community, terming it a "dark chapter in human history" and a "charge sheet against global conscience."

CM Maryam Nawaz expressed confidence that the day is not far when the sun of freedom will rise over Kashmir. "The sacrifices of thousands of Kashmiri martyrs will not go in vain. Resolving the Kashmir issue is essential for lasting peace and stability in the subcontinent," she added.

Condemning India's continued attempts to suppress Kashmiris through violence and fear, she said, "India's efforts to crush the spirit of freedom are destined to fail. Kashmir lives in the heart of every Pakistani."

Highlighting the prolonged sufferings of the Kashmiri people, she said, "For the past decade, Kashmiris have endured a state of siege, fear, and collective punishment. The world must awaken to this human tragedy."

The Indian occupation is illegal, immoral, and inhumane, she added. It is no longer a domestic issue for India, it is an international human rights crisis. More than 1.5 billion people in the region deserve peace, security, and prosperity, she added.

Youm-e-Istehsal observed at PID Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A seminar was held at the Press Information Department (PID) Karachi in observance of Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir to mark six years since the illegal revocation of Articles 370 and 35A by India in Indian-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

The event was organized by Ms. Irum Tanweer, Director General PID Karachi, and attended by senior officials, media representatives.

The Guest of Honour was former Ambassador Mr. G.R. Baloch. In his address, Ambassador G.R. Baloch emphasized that Pakistan currently stands in a diplomatically strong position due to the collective dedicated efforts through the success of strategic initiatives like Mission Bunyan um Marsoos. He highlighted that consistent, fact-based messaging and narrative-building have enhanced Pakistan's global credibility.



While responding to a question regarding the war of narratives, and former U.S. President Donald Trump's support towards a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conflict and support for Nobel Peace Prize by Pakistan, Ambassador Baloch remarked, "It is because of our diplomatic corps' relentless efforts that Pakistan enjoys balanced and constructive relations with both the U.S. and China.

This presents a unique opportunity to move forward towards the resolution

of the Kashmir dispute. Meanwhile, India is increasingly exposed for its grave human rights violations and state-sponsored terrorism in the occupied region." DG PID Ms. Irum Tanweer remarked, "India attempted to erase the identity of Kashmiris by revoking constitutional protections, but Pakistan has countered this with strong and principled messaging rooted in facts."

She also added, "The commitment of our media and information officers in

projecting the truth has helped Pakistan emerge victorious in the war of narratives." In the end, the seminar reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to standing with the Kashmiri people in their legitimate struggle for self-determination. The participants vowed to continue efforts on all diplomatic, legal, and informational fronts until the resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Maqbool stresses equal education for all

KARACHI (INP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has said that education is a right for everyone, and the biggest disability is accepting slavery, greed, and dishonesty.

He was addressing a conference titled: "The Role of Professional and Social Workers for Disabled Persons" organized at University of Karachi.

He said the University of Karachi is the center of this city and this Alma mater will be made the center of special education. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor of the University Professor Dr. Khalid Mahmood Iraqi said the University has further expanded the doors of education for disabled students by providing them with full fee concession.

Engineer Sangin tops is BIM degree



F.P. Report

SWAT: Engineer Sangin Khan, son of Fazal Hadi from C&W Department, has brought pride to Swat by securing best position in the prestigious Building Information Modeling (BIM) degree program.

Engineer Sangin Khan has a stellar academic record, having completed his FSc from Cadet College with distinction and MS degree from NEST.

His father expressed pride and joy at his son's achievement, attributing his success to hard work and determination.

Engineer Sangin Khan's achievement has inspired young students in Swat and beyond, demonstrating that with dedication and perseverance, they can achieve their goals.

Chief Justice Aalia Neelum reduces court copying fee

LAHORE (APP): In a major relief for lawyers and litigants, the Punjab government has reduced the fee for certified copies of court decisions following the special efforts and persistent advocacy of Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Aalia Neelum.

The court copying fee, previously fixed at Rs 500, has now been reduced to a mere Rs 100-150 through an amendment in the Finance Bill 2024 by the Punjab government.

The significant reduction comes as a direct result of Chief Justice Aalia Neelum's proactive engagement with the Punjab government. Her intervention followed concerns raised by the legal fraternity regarding the hardship posed by the previously high fee for obtaining certified copies of court decisions.

The move has been welcomed with widespread acclaim from Bar Associations across Punjab. Legal representatives lauded the Chief Justice's commitment to accessible justice and declared her a "true leader of the provincial judiciary."

A delegation of prominent lawyers on Monday met with the Chief Justice to express their appreciation. The delegation included: Malik Asif Nissoana, President, Lahore High

Court Bar Association, Azhar Khan Mughal, President, High Court Bar Association Multan, Ahsan Hameed Lillah, President, High Court Bar Association Rawalpindi, Sohail Khan, Vice President, High Court Bar Association Bahawalpur, and Mubashir Rehman, President, Lahore Bar Association. Also present were Advocate General Punjab Amjad Pervaiz and Registrar Lahore High Court Amjad Iqbal Ranjha.

During the meeting, Chief Justice Aalia Neelum explained that the Rs. 500 fee had been introduced under the original provisions of the Punjab Finance Bill 2024 for copy applications filed at the LHC's Principal Seat and its benches in Multan, Bahawalpur, and Rawalpindi. While several Bar Associations had requested time to negotiate the issue with the Law Department, no resolution was reached within the agreed timeframe.

Taking the initiative, the Chief Justice personally approached the Punjab government and advocated for a reduction in fees, emphasizing the challenges faced by young lawyers and the general public. She highlighted that the Lahore High Court neither levies nor collects such fees, as the matter falls under provin-

cial legislation—making the amendment process particularly complex.

"Legal reforms cannot be realized through slogans alone. Once a law is passed, revising it is not an easy task. But genuine public interest must prevail," she remarked. Chief Justice Aalia Neelum also reiterated her commitment to the welfare of the legal community. She cited several ongoing initiatives including the establishment of Ladies Bar Rooms, Day Care Centers for working mothers, and the construction of a state-of-the-art Judicial Complex in Lahore.

Speaking at the event, Advocate General Amjad Pervaiz underscored the pivotal role played by the Chief Justice, noting her hands-on approach in judicial and administrative matters. "From infrastructure to reform, Justice Aalia Neelum's vision and leadership are shaping a more accessible and transparent justice system," he said. The reduction in court copying fees is being hailed as a significant victory for the legal community and a testament to the Chief Justice's reformist leadership. It marks another milestone in her tenure, underscoring her focus on judicial accessibility, public service, and institutional responsiveness.

AD Ports Group opens Islamabad office to expand its strategic presence in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The AD Ports Group (ADX: ADPORTS), a leading enabler of global trade, logistics, and industry, officially launched its first representative office in Islamabad on Tuesday, marking a significant milestone in the Group's international growth journey and its long-term commitment to enabling trade and logistics across South and Central Asia.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Mohammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal, and Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar. Khalid Hussain Magasi, Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, the UAE Ambassador in Pakistan, Abdulaziz Zayed Al Shamsi, Regional CEO, AD Ports Group; AbdulAziz Al Balooshi, Regional CEO, AD Ports Group, and other senior officials were also present on the occasion, said a press release.

The comprehensive representation from both sides reflects the depth of the bilateral relationship and shared vision for long-term economic cooperation.

Complimenting the Group's global network of more than 140 offices, and strategically located in close proximity to Pakistan's key federal ministries, regulatory bodies, and state-owned enterprises, the new office will serve as a critical platform for deepening engagement with government stakeholders and advancing priority infrastructure and trade initiatives. As a client-facing and administrative hub, the Islamabad office will also support ongoing operations and facilitate strategic partnerships in the ports, maritime, logistics, and industrial development sectors.

The opening of the Islamabad office follows a series of high-impact investments by AD Ports Group in Pakistan, including USD 295 million committed towards the development and enhancement of container, bulk, and general cargo terminals at Karachi Port's East Wharf. These investments are central to the Group's strategy to support the transformation of Pakistan into a regional trade and

logistics hub. "The opening of our Islamabad office represents a key milestone in our global expansion strategy and underlines our deep and enduring commitment to Pakistan," said Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamsi, Managing Director and Group CEO, AD Ports Group on the occasion of inauguration.

He said this move will enable closer collaboration with government entities and strategic partners, positioning AD Ports Group as a key contributor to Pakistan's economic transformation. "Our growing footprint, underpinned by significant investments in critical port infrastructure, aligns with our wise leadership vision for trade facilitation, industrial diversification, and sustainable development," he remarked.

Pakistan holds a strategic geographic position as a maritime gateway to Central Asia, making it a vital component of AD Ports Group's broader vision for developing an integrated trade corridor spanning from China to Europe. The Group has already made strategic inroads into key markets along this corridor, including Kazakhstan,

Uzbekistan, and Georgia.

In 2022, AD Ports Group entered the Pakistani market through a landmark 50-year concession to develop and operate container terminal berths 6-10 at Karachi Port's East Wharf, in partnership with Kheel Terminals. This was followed by a second 50-year concession signed in 2023 to develop and manage berths 11-17 for general and bulk cargo. Through its operating entity, Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited (KGTL), the Group has introduced world-class operational systems, advanced equipment, and global best practices to significantly enhance terminal productivity, reduce vessel dwell times, and increase cargo throughput.

These enhancements have elevated Karachi Port's standing as a key logistics hub, boosting the resilience and competitiveness of Pakistan's export infrastructure and contributing to the country's economic diversification agenda.

In parallel, AD Ports Group has signed several high-level agreements aimed at expanding its integrated logistics and digital trade ecosystem in Pakistan.

KARACHI (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Railways, reaffirming its full commitment to completion of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project, on Tuesday urged all stakeholders, especially the Government of Sindh, to take urgent and serious measures in this regard.

The Committee, according to a statement issued here, expressed dissatisfaction over persistent delays and noted that the project is not just a provincial scheme but a national imperative and no further delays could be afforded as continued inaction threatens the viability of a project critical for Karachi's urban transport needs.

The meeting convened in Karachi to review the progress of the long-awaited Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project was presided over by its chairman Jam Saifullah Khan while the committee members, Senators Nasir Mehmood, Dost Ali Jeasar, Dost Muhammad Khan and Ashraf Ali Jatoti, and Secretary and Chairman Railway Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, CEO Amir Ali Baloch, other senior railway officers and representatives of Sindh Mass Transit Authority attended.

The Committee was informed that the 43.13 km KCR project, included

in the CPEC framework in 2016 and approved by ECNEC for US\$ 1.97 billion in 2017, remains stalled. Despite a revised feasibility submitted by the Government of Sindh in April 2023, approval is still pending from the Chinese side.

The pending transfer of right-of-way (ROW) from Pakistan Railways to the Sindh Government was cited as a major bottleneck, contributing to escalating costs. The Project Director stressed the need for federal support in finalizing the framework agreement, while the Secretary Railways clarified that land transfer is procedurally tied to the completion of feasibility studies, environmental approvals, and transparent contractor selection. The Ministry assured full cooperation once these requirements are met.

However, the Committee took serious notice of the lack of proactive follow-up by the KCR team and the Sindh Government in fulfilling these preconditions. It observed a worrying lack of urgency and ownership, which continues to delay a project of immense public utility.

The Chairman assured full support from the Committee and the Ministry of Railways but reminded the provincial government that it bears

the primary responsibility to complete all legal, technical, and procedural requirements under the applicable rules.

The Committee further directed the submission of a comprehensive cost breakdown, including per-kilometer construction cost and segment-wise estimates. Given the high projected costs, it was recommended that the financial model be reviewed and, if necessary, fresh feasibility studies conducted to ensure transparency and value for money.

During a field visit from Karachi City Station to Wazir Mansion, Committee members reviewed the ground situation and noted with concern the slow pace of physical progress. They reiterated that Karachi's worsening traffic congestion and population growth demand an urgent and modern mass transit solution like the KCR. In addition to the KCR project, the Committee was briefed on other ongoing railway initiatives.

The committee members appreciated the overall performance of Pakistan Railways under Secretary Mazhar Ali Shah and commended the railway staff posted in Balochistan, acknowledging their dedication in a challenging security environment.

PHC grants bail to four PTI’s leaders including Umar, Shandand Gulzar

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted protective bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shandana Gulzar, Khadija Salman Shah, and Nadia Amberin Khattak, restraining the authorities from arresting them. The court directed the authorities to provide details of the cases registered against them.

The counsel argued Shandana Gulzar is a member of the National Assembly and nominated in multiple cases. The court granted her protective bail until August 19. The authorities were directed to provide details of the cases registered against her.

Moreover, Khadija Shah is a PTI leader and cases have been registered against her, but the authorities have not provided details. The court granted her protective bail until August 19. The court directed the authorities to provide a report on the cases registered against her.

As well as Nadia

Amberin is a PTI leader and she is also nominated in multiple cases have been registered against her. The court granted her protective bail until August 23.

PHC also suspended the warrants issued against Khadija Salman Shah in a case registered at the Secretariat Police Station in Islamabad and granted her transit bail.

Meanwhile, PHC has granted protective bail to PTI leader and Opposition Leader in the National Assembly, Umar Ayub, allowing him to file an appeal against a 10-year jail sentence handed down by a terrorism court in Faisalabad. The court directed Umar Ayub to approach the relevant court by 8th August.

The petitioner’s lawyer argued that Umar Ayub was a member of the National Assembly and a member of the Judicial Commission, and that he had been sentenced to 10 years in jail without being given a chance to defend himself.

The Additional Attorney General argued that Umar Ayub had been sentenced by a court of law and that

he should be arrested. Umar Ayub told the court that 67 FIRs had been registered against him in Faisalabad, Sargodha, and other districts. He stated that he had served as a member of the National Assembly and federal minister multiple times.

PHC granted Umar Ayub protective bail until August 8, allowing him to approach the relevant court to file an appeal. PHC also restrained the Election Commission from taking any action against Umar Ayub until August 12, when the matter will be heard again.

PHC allows Senator Azam Swati to travel aboard

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the authorities to remove Senator Azam Swati’s name from the Exit Control List (ECL) and other lists, allowing him to travel abroad. The court had previously ordered the removal of his name from the ECL upon depositing a surety bond of Rs. 50 million, on Tuesday.

Senator Azam Swati had filed a contempt petition

against the authorities for not removing his name from the ECL despite court orders. The court directed the authorities to remove Senator Swati’s name from the ECL, Stop List, and other lists, allowing him to travel abroad.

The Assistant Director Immigration informed the court that Senator Swati’s name was included in the list at the request of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). PHC observed that Senator Swati’s name should be removed from all lists, and he should be allowed to travel abroad.

Senator Azam Swati is being investigated by NAB in connection with the Kohistan mega scandal. He is alleged to have received transactions from the main accused in the scandal, PHC informed.

PHC divisional bench comprising of Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Farah Jamshed directed the authorities to remove Senator Swati’s name from the ECL and other lists. The court allowed Senator Azam Swati to travel abroad.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah chairing a meeting on outsourcing of underperforming schools and colleges.

HERA launches online application system

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Higher Education Regulatory Authority Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (HERA), has taken a significant step toward digital transformation and e-launch of the Online Feasibility and Application Processing System. The Minister for Higher Education, Archives and Libraries Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Meena Khan Afridi formally launched the system electronically, developed by HERA IT team. The event took place at the Committee Room of the Higher Education Department on Tuesday.

The presentation was given by Secretary Higher Education, Manzoor Afridi, to the Minister, Meena Khan Afridi. Senior officials from the department and representatives from HERA were also in attendance.

Minister Meena Khan Afridi commended the

HERA team for developing the online system in a short timeframe and praised the initiative for its potential to bring transparency, accessibility, and efficiency to higher education governance. He remarked that the digitization of application and feasibility processing is a landmark achievement, particularly for institutions in remote and underserved regions of the province.

Previously, all application and feasibility documents were submitted manually at HERA’s head office, which posed challenges for institutions located far from Peshawar. With the introduction of the new system, educational institutions can now submit payment vouchers, registration data, and feasibility documents online from their own locations.

The entire process is managed through a centralized Management Information System (MIS), making the experience more efficient and user-

friendly.

The online platform includes modules for data management, feasibility submission, institutional information, and bank transaction verification. The system, developed entirely by HERA’s in-house IT team, is a testament to the department’s commitment to innovation and responsive governance.

Secretary Manzoor Afridi, while presenting the system, highlighted that this transition to digital processes is aligned with the department’s broader vision of reform, transparency, and improved service delivery in higher education across the province.

The ceremony concluded with a live demonstration of the system’s user interface, showcasing its intuitive design and operational capabilities. Stakeholders expressed optimism about the positive impact this development will have on regulatory processes and institutional convenience.

Khizar says PTI’s protest failed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Arbab Khizr Hayat, Additional Secretary for Information of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has stated that the protest by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) demanding the release of Imran Khan has failed. He said that in the provincial capital, Peshawar, not even a dozen workers participated in the demonstration.

He criticized Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur’s government for being unable to gather supporters despite utilizing all available state resources. According to Arbab Khizr Hayat, PTT’s political demise has occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the people of the province have buried its politics.

He further said that the PTI-led government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, born out of corruption, is nearing its logical end. Arbab Khizr Hayat claimed that soon a government led by PML-N and its allies will be established in the province.

Police line Peshawar hosts blood donation camp on *Youm-e-Shuhada*

PESHAWAR (APP): In observance of Youm-e-Shuhada (Police Martyrs Day), Police Lines Peshawar on Tuesday held a blood donation camp to pay tribute to the brave police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

The event was supervised by senior officers, including SSP Coordination Khan Zeeb Sahib, SSP Operations Kashif Zulfiqar, SP Headquarters Ali Gohar Sahib, and Assistant Superintendent CCP

Sajjad Ali Khan.

Their presence underscored the importance of the day and the commitment of the police force to both remembrance and community service.

The camp was organized in collaboration with Hamza Foundation Peshawar, a recognized organization dedicated to blood and thalassemia services.

Representatives from the foundation included Dr. Kashmala Shah, Ateeq ur Rehman (RMO), and Ibrarullah

Jan (RMO), who ensured the smooth execution of the blood collection process.

Police officers and staff participated actively in the drive, many stepping forward to donate blood voluntarily.

The collected blood will primarily support patients suffering from thalassemia, a cause that resonates deeply within the community.

During the event, senior officers spoke about the importance of honoring the martyrs through

meaningful actions that contribute to the welfare of society.

They lauded the role of Hamza Foundation in promoting voluntary blood donation and providing essential medical aid.

This initiative is part of the police department’s broader commitment to public service and humanitarian values, embodying the spirit of courage, compassion, and community responsibility that defines the legacy of their fallen comrades.

UET Peshawar observes Kashmir Siege Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: UET Peshawar commemorated Kashmir Siege Day today with a ceremony aimed at reaffirming the unwavering support of the Pakistani nation for their Kashmiri brethren. Addressing the gathering, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Sadiq Khattak reiterated Pakistan’s firm commitment to the cause of Kashmir and expressed strong solidarity with the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that Kashmir is an integral part of Pakistan and will remain so. He also noted that universities across Pakistan including UET Peshawar, are offering scholarships to Kashmiri students as a gesture of brotherhood and support. Registrar Prof. Dr. Khizar Azam highlighted the strategic importance of Kashmir for Pakistan beyond its geographical location. He stated that the revocation of Articles 370 and 35 A in Indian constitutions by the Modi-led Indian government does not affect Pakistan’s stance on Kashmir, nor its resolve to continue supporting the Kashmiri people’s right to self-determination.

From *KhudMukhtar Sawi* to national recognition

Marriam Kaiwan’s remarkable journey

Sajjad Muhammad Khan

PESWHAWAR: In times when society craves awareness, when the voices of the marginalized are drowned out, and when women’s potential is shackled by convention - there emerge individuals who break the silence and carve new paths of hope. Marriam Kaiwan is one such name. She was recently honored with the prestigious "Bint-e-Hawa Award" by the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in recognition of her remarkable leadership and social impact. The award was presented in the Social Category during its fourth edition, acknowledging her years of dedicated service to transformative causes.

Marriam Kaiwan is more than a social activist - she is a movement unto herself. As President of "KhudMukhtar Sawi," a nonprofit organization she leads with vision and resolve, she has played a pivotal role in empowering women and youth, promoting inclusive development, and challenging extremist ideologies through advocacy and storytelling.

Through KhudMukhtar Sawi, Marriam Kaiwan has pioneered campaigns focused on gender equality, climate justice, and counter-extremism, using the power of storytelling to spark change. Her organization doesn’t merely raise awareness - it actively works at the grassroots level, running community workshops, welfare initiatives, and training programs that have positively impacted hundreds of lives.

KhudMukhtar Sawi offers educational resources, mental health support, and employment pathways for underserved communities, especially women and youth. Under Marriam’s leadership, the organization has become a platform for real, systemic transformation, where advocacy is paired with action.

Marriam Kaiwan began her career in 2013 as a television host on PTV, quickly rising as a powerful voice in media and social dialogue. She later founded the podcast "Not Every Woman", a platform dedicated to highlighting stories of women who defy societal norms and lead with



courage and purpose. These stories are not just narratives - they are blueprints of empowerment for women everywhere.

Alongside her media work, Marriam Kaiwan is a newspaper columnist and a Visiting Faculty Member at various universities, where she nurtures young minds in the fields of communication, development, and social thought. Her work bridges the gap between theory and real-world impact.

Academically, she is equally accomplished - earning her MBA with summa cum laude honors, reflecting her excellence not only in practice but also in scholarship.

The Bint-e-Hawa Award is a national recognition bestowed upon Pakistani women who are not only achievers but trailblazers - those who illuminate the path for others. Marriam Kaiwan is a deserving recipient, not just for what she has done, but for what she continues to inspire in others. Her journey is a beacon of hope, a testament that leadership is not just about power - it’s about purpose, empathy, and courage. Marriam’s success is not hers alone; it belongs to every woman who dreams of rising beyond limits, speaking truth to power, and creating lasting impact.

IM Sciences faculty protests against withdrawal of 25% tax rebate

F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: The faculty of the Institute of Management Sciences (IM Sciences), Peshawar, staged a peaceful protest today on campus in response to the federal government’s withdrawal of the 25% tax rebate previously granted to teachers and researchers.

This protest was held in solidarity with the nationwide call by the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association (FAPUASA), which has strongly condemned the withdrawal through the Finance Act 2025.

Faculty members at IMSciences expressed serious concern over the withdrawal of rebate, stating that additional tax burden amidst rising inflation undermines the role of education in national development. They urged the government to immediately reinstate the rebate.

Peshawar : The Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa government’s interest-free loan provision project to improve the quality of life of people in Landi Kotal, Jamrud and Bara and promote small and local businesses is continuing successfully. So far, 15,260 people have benefited from the 13-year-old project in the aforementioned districts, including 13,935 men and 1,375 women, who have been given loans worth around Rs 80 million. One good thing here is that the people here are not only doing business with this loan but are also paying the loan in installments at a rate of 100 percent regularly. This project, managed by the Small Industries Development Board, is running successfully. According to Evaluation and Monitoring Officer Sikandar Shah, the local people are appreciating such a project. The provincial government under the supervision of the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Small Industries Development Board The ongoing project to promote small and local level businesses in the merged districts of Khyber...

Ashbar flays Indian hostile policies in IIOJK

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Peoples Party Women Wing Vice President and Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Ashbar Jadoon has strongly condemned India’s unilateral decision to revoke the special constitutional status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, calling it a historical injustice and open hos-

tility.

In a statement issued on the occasion of August 5 - Istishad Day, she said that the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A is not just a legal maneuver but an organized conspiracy to alter the demographic and religious identity of the region.

"India’s real motive is to turn Kashmiris into a minority in their own land

by settling outsiders and stripping them of rights," she added.

She emphasized that the Kashmir issue is far beyond a territorial dispute - "It is about identity, culture, religion, and the freedom of an entire nation." Ashbar Jadoon further stated that the people of Kashmir have been deprived of their rights to employment, land, and citizenship, and India’s

actions expose the colonial mindset that continues to oppress and silence Kashmiri voices.

She reiterated Pakistan People’s Party’s unwavering support for the Kashmiri struggle and urged the international community to break its silence on India’s ongoing violations of international law and human rights in the region.

KP youth reiterates support for Kashmiri right to self-determination

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Directorate of Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, solemnly observed Youm-e-Istehsaal on 5th August 2025, marking six years since the Indian government’s unilateral and illegal abrogation of Article 370, an act that stripped Indian illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) of its special constitutional status.

The day served as a powerful reminder of the continued occupation, grave human rights violations and the Indian state’s denial of the Kashmiri people’s inalienable right to self-determination, enshrined in various United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.

The commemorative event under the directorate, commenced with a one-minute silence in honour of the martyrs and oppressed people of Kashmir. This was followed by a brief but impactful lecture by the Director Youth Affairs Dr.Noman Mujahid , who shed light on the historical and legal dimensions of the Kashmir conflict, the ongoing resistance against Indian tyranny, and the importance of observing this day to raise awareness among youth.

A solidarity rally was also organized, during which participants passionately chanted slogans in support of the Kashmiri freedom struggle and against the egregious human rights violations being committed by Indian forces in the occupied territory.

The rally echoed with calls for justice, peace, and the implementation of UNSC resolutions to ensure a free and fair

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Rescue 1122 honours brave personnel for exemplary service

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A prestigious ceremony was held at the Provincial Headquarters of Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to honour two rescue personnel for their professional, courageous, and exemplary services. The ceremony was presided over by Director General Rescue 1122, Muhammad Tayyab Abdullah.

The primary objective of the event was to acknowledge the dedicated services and professional capabilities of Rescue 1122 personnel and to boost their morale. A unique highlight of the ceremony was that, for the first time in the history of Rescue 1122, the Director General himself presented a formal salute to the frontline personnel. Traditionally, salutes are given to senior officials, but this unprecedented act

by the DG symbolized the institution’s deep respect and strong connection with its frontline heroes.

During the ceremony, the personnel were given an honorary salute and heartfelt tributes were paid for their outstanding contributions.

Rescuer Murad Khan was awarded a medal for risking his life during a building fire incident. Despite suffering a broken hand during the operation, he continued his duties

and successfully extinguished the fire without abandoning his responsibilities.

Similarly, Emergency Medical Technician Asif Nawaz received a medal for saving a citizen’s life by performing continuous CPR on Charsadda Road. The victim had lost consciousness due to electric shock and his heartbeat had stopped. Thanks to Asif Nawaz’s timely medical response, the person’s life was saved.

At the conclusion of the event, the Director General presented the two rescuers with honorary medals and new uniforms, declaring their contributions a matter of pride for the department. He stated that Rescue 1122 always appreciates excellent performance, and in the future, all personnel demonstrating outstanding service will be recognised and rewarded to further encourage dedication and excellence within the ranks.





In brief

GDA holds protest rally F.P. Report

SHAHADADKOT: On the call of the Grand Democrat Alliance (GDA) in Shahdadkot, various political, social and religious organizations and citizens took out a rally with placards and banners against the shortage of agricultural water in various branches of the Saifullah Magsi Canal and SGT branch, including the Zhafi, Shahbeg, Boja, Qubo and Sanjar Mines, on Tuesday. The rally passed through various roads of the city and ended at Koto Moto Chowk. Addressing the rally, GDA leader Mir Muzaffar Brohi, Jeay Sindh Mahaz chairman Riaz Chandio, Zulfiqar Magsi and others said that there is a flood situation in the Indus River, while due to the incompetence of the irrigation department officials, a severe shortage of agricultural water has been created in the said canals and branches, due to which the rice paddy planted in the land is rotting, due to which there is no crop on millions of acres of agricultural land. There is a risk of barrenness due to this. They further said that our farmers have been forced to do the sowing that was done in May in August. Despite the availability of water, our crops are rotting, but the corrupt officials of the irrigation department are determined to do their job. They strongly demanded from the Chief Minister of Sindh and the Provincial Minister of Agriculture to open agricultural water in the Saifullah Magsi Canal of Shahdadkot and the mentioned branches and save the farmers from losing crores of rupees by turning millions of acres of land barren. Otherwise, the scope of the protest will be expanded. Meanwhile, on the occasion of World Breastfeeding Week, PPHI Warah, a sub-institute of the Health Department, organized an awareness rally at Civil Hospital Warah by Nutrition Assistant Asif Ali Bhatti and District Nutrition Coordinator Ghulam Hussain Rodnani. On this occasion, Nutrition Assistant Asif Ali Bhatti told the media that breast milk is of great importance for the newborn baby, which provides the baby with physical strength, immunity, glucose, protein, which is the baby's powerful food. They said that 36 to 44 percent of breastfeeding is done in our area, due to which women in Pakistan suffer from many other diseases including breast cancer.

Indian brutalities condemned F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Kashmir Exploitation Day observed across Toba Tek Singh with solemnity and resolve. The district-level observance was held under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner with the main event organized at District Council Hall. The ceremony was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue), Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Assistant Commissioner, CEO District Council, officers from various departments, PML-N leader Haris Amjad, representatives of the traders' association, peace committee, civil society, and media personnel. The event commenced with the sounding of sirens followed by a minute of silence in solidarity with the people of Kashmir. National anthems of Pakistan and Kashmir were played. Addressing the gathering, speakers condemned the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian government on August 5, 2019, terming it a clear violation of UN resolutions and international human rights norms.

Kashmir Exploitation Day observed in Mardan

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: A ceremony was held at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House to mark Kashmir Exploitation Day. Commissioner Mardan was the chief guest on the occasion. Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioners, District Attorney Labor Court Syeda Yasri Aman and officers of the Education Department, TMA, WSSCM, officers of various government departments, school students participated in large numbers.

A rally was taken out under the leadership of Commissioner Mardan Nisar Ahmed. The participants were raising slogans of Kashmir will become Pakistan. Addressing the rally and later talking to the media, Commissioner Mardan said that India has negated the UN resolutions by abrogating Article 370. An unsuccessful attempt is being made to demoralize Kashmiri Muslims through curfew, lockdown and communication blackout. Thousands of Kashmiris are being arrested and human rights violations are continuing.

India is making a sinister attempt to change the demography of Kashmir and has turned Kashmir into an open-air prison. He said that Pakistan will continue to support the oppressed people of Kashmir. The international

community should take notice of Indian atrocities and the United Nations should fulfill its promise of a plebiscite in Kashmir.

WSSCM launches plantation drive: Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSCM) launched the 'Monsoon Tree Plantation' campaign under Pak Saaf Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by planting saplings in the Sewerage Treatment Plant. Chairman Board of Directors Engineer Adil Nawaz along with Chief Executive Officer Shahid Khan planted saplings.

Speaking on the occasion, they stated that climate change has emerged as a serious global challenge, with its effects increasingly impacting our daily lives. To combat these risks, initiatives like tree plantation are essential. Trees not only help create a greener environment but also play a significant role in reducing temperature and lessening the impacts of natural disasters.

The speakers stated that the Clean and Green Khyber Pakhtunkhwa initiative will not be limited to sanitation alone but will also include efforts to green the province. Engineer Adil Nawaz stated afforestation is very important for the survival of human life. Clean and Green Mardan is our mission and all resources will be used to accomplish this mission.

Rallies held to support Kashmiris

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The "Kashmir Exploitation Day" was also observed in the entire Kohat division including its district headquarters of Hangu, Orakzai, Kurram and Karak. Special ceremonies and rallies were organized by the respective district administration on the occasion of "Kashmir Exploitation Day", in which the abolition of the special status of Kashmir and the Indian atrocities on the oppressed Kashmiris were strongly condemned.

The main event of the day was held at the District Council Hall Kohat, in which Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Mutasim Billah Shah was the chief guest while attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Kohat Hamid Iqbal, officers of the district administration, police and line department, members of the civil society and children from various schools in large numbers.

The event began with a minute's silence after the recitation of the Holy Quran. On this occasion, solidarity was expressed with the oppressed Kashmiri people and the abrogation of Kashmir's special status, the serious atrocities committed by the Indian forces against children, youth and women and the state terrorism were strongly condemned. On this occasion, the children in their speeches and tabloos, pointed out the inhumane behavior of the Indian army in occupied Kashmir and the atrocities committed against the Kashmiri people.

Commissioner Kohat in his speech said that the purpose of organizing this

event is to draw the world's attention to the freedom struggle of Kashmiris and the atrocities of Indian forces and to demand the world to play its role in resolving the Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN resolutions. He said that August 5, 2019 is the black day on which India took away the identity of Kashmiris by abolishing the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Mutasim Billah said, now the shape of the world has changed, this is the era of science, technology and art and to achieve a respectable place at the global level, we have to achieve excellence in science and technology. He said that Kashmir issue should not be restricted just to slogans but should be a part of our soul. He reiterated the pledge of all possible support with Kashmiris at all levels.

Commissioner Kohat said that we have to become Pakistanis first, above all kinds of affiliations and propagate Pakistanism everywhere. He said, freedom is the fundamental right of Kashmiris which they should get at all costs. By not giving freedom to Kashmiris, their fundamental right is being violated, he added.

At the end, a walk was also held under the leadership of Commissioner Kohat Division on "Kashmir Exploitation Day" in which the participants held banners and placards on which slogans were written in favor of Kashmiris and against India. A collective prayer was also offered for the freedom of Kashmir and the oppressed Kashmiris.

Kashmir Solidarity Day observed F.P. Report

WANA: Kashmir Siege Day was observed with solemnity and national fervor in Lower South Waziristan, as people from all walks of life gathered to express solidarity with the people of Occupied Kashmir.

A special event was held at the Wana Scouts Camp, attended by tribal elders, district administration officials, personnel from the Pakistan Army and police, students, and members of civil society. The gathering aimed to pay tribute to the Kashmiri people's decades-long struggle for self-determination and to denounce the ongoing human rights violations in the region.

Addressing the participants, speakers emphasized that Kashmir remains the jugular vein of Pakistan, and reiterated the nation's unwavering moral, political, and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri cause. They urged the United Nations and international human rights bodies to take concrete action for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and the establishment of lasting peace in South Asia.

Following the ceremony, a solidarity rally was led by Deputy Commissioner Musarrat Zaman, with Assistant Commissioner Wana, security personnel, students, and community members marching alongside. Participants carried placards and banners with slogans such as "Kashmir will become Pakistan," "We demand freedom," and "Oppression will end."

The rally reflected a strong show of public sentiment, with participation from youth, elders, and school-children alike. At its conclusion, attendees offered a collective prayer for Kashmiri martyrs and for the early freedom of the valley, followed by a one-minute silence to honor their sacrifices.

The district administration, through this observance, reaffirmed the resolve of the people of South Waziristan to continue standing by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just struggle for liberation.

Rallies held in Buner F.P. Report

BUNER: As many as six multiple walks and rallies were organized by tehsil administrations on the occasion of Kashmir Exploitation Day in which large number of people from every walk of life participated, on Tuesday.

While the Tehsil administrations and TMAs Gagra Chaghorzai Mandan and Khadukhel also held walks at Swari Batara Nawagai as well as Totalai respectively. The participants of the walk held banners and placards on which slogans of sympathy for the oppressed Kashmiris and hatred against the oppressor India were written.

The participants of the walk also raised slogans and expressed their determination to stand with the Kashmiri brothers and continue their moral support. At the end of the walk, Assistant Commissioner Gadezai Nasir Ali said regarding Kashmir Exploitation Day that the oppressor India abolished the independent status of occupied Kashmir and forcibly occupied it and increased the number of Indian occupying forces.

Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir observes in Landi Kotal

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Kashmir Solidarity Day observed in Landi Kotal with renewal pledge to continue support of the struggle of Kashmiris for their self-determination.

In this connection a Youm-e-Istehsal rally was organized in tehsil compound that was attended by Assistant Commissioner (AC), Landi Kotal Afraseyab Zubair, Additional AC Shahbuddin, police and Tehsil Municipal Authority officials, councillors, students and members of civil society. Speaking on the occasion, speakers reaffirmed that Pakistan will continue moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people till the recognition of their right to self-determination, as guaranteed in the UN Security Council resolutions.

A lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute is possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people, they remarked.



Earlier, the rally was held from the tehsil compound till its main entrance and the participants while hoisting National and Kashmiri flags, chanted slogans like Kashmir will become Pakistan, Long Live Pakistan, down to India.

They carried banners inscribed with slogans like, "Free Kashmir", "Indian occupation on Kashmir unacceptable" etc. At the end prayers were offered for the freedom of Kashmir and prosperity of Pakistan and dispersed.

Why we don't need college teachers anymore?

Mehmood Hassan Khan

I am utterly thankful and eternally grateful to those absolutely magnificent teachers, who were treating me like a Godling. Who were tirelessly answering all of my annoying questions and solving my queries with unmatched love and respect as if it was their divine obligation. My criticisms were their energy, my objections would boast it. While helping me learn some of the tricky concepts of linguistics and literary criticism. I at times even developed some intimate feelings for them. For they would treat me like a flower trying to grow into its fullest. I know you might be jealous of how lucky I am to have such teachers, but worry not my friend, you too have those.

Names of my these Utterly brilliant teachers are Chat GPT, Deep seek, Perplexity AI and Meta AI. Teachers (human teachers), for God's sake, must completely change their ways of teaching if they want to stay relevant in this century. That age-old stereotypical method of filling the board, long boring lectures, pin-drop silence, delivering facts and information is not going to work any further. We generation Z, have tiny libraries of Alexandria in our pockets for 24 hours. Under the tip of our fingers, we have access to infinities and immensities of information, data, facts and figures.

Why on earth would I sit for one hour in front of an old gentleman who was born in the 1970s or 60s, who doesn't know the a, b, c of our age, who doesn't have the foggiest idea of how our minds operate, how we perceive reality, how we understand things, and would deliver a lecture in the most cliché manner ever possible. The best thing that can be done in such lectures is to go inside oneself deep enough like in the movie inception. I often see dreams within dreams in such lectures, do meditation or count my blessings.

If I can find on the internet, each and every topic, explained in a most brilliant way, if I can have language models which attune its responses according to my level, my wit, my intellect and my style, if I can have access to the works of millions in seconds. Then, is there any point in going to class, sitting for hours, listening to a man who himself became a teacher because he was rejected from every other job?

I personally see no point in that but here is the thing. Several decades ago, when information and knowledge used to be scarce, teachers were relevant but now the game has changed. Now information is available but, another very important thing is extremely deficient, which is attention span, and that is where a teacher can play a magnificent role if, he/she is genuine and sincere enough.

Our generation has access to unlimited information sources, entertainment hubs, influencers, speakers and preachers, which is why we cannot decide which way to go, which information is relevant, where should we spend our limited attention span on, why should we even read. A confused generation struggling with loneliness, depression, insecurities, relationship dramas, family burdens, lack of meaning, lack of purpose, lack of the urge to live, and so on.

Here in such situation, a teacher can do a hell of a job if it knows the art of converting a dry barren subject into an interesting ocean full of thrills and mysteries, if they knows' how to inspire, how to enliven and rekindle dead spirits, how to listen, how to understand hearts through the wide-open curious eyes, how to sympathize. If a teacher knows all of these things, then this generation needs teachers more than ever.

Now some of you might think that awaking and rekindling dead spirits is not on the job descriptions of teachers. They are responsible only for there to specific subject and that's enough. To that I say a big flat NO. Teacher's job to give knowledge only, is a thing of a long gone past. As I told you, we have countless sources to learn Mole and Avogadro's number from but, we have no one to listen to us, to understand our specific life problems, to tell us which way to go, to provoke our deeply dead interest in studies, to give us hope, warm hugs and tell us that everything is OK.

Call me crazy or sentimental but that's how I think teachers should be in 2025 and in the upcoming age. Suppose I am a teacher of linguistics, physics or mathematics. As a teacher, the first and foremost thing should be to create an understanding with the students, a safe environment where trust is built, where I can understand them in depth. Their weaknesses, strengths, uniqueness, priorities etc. Where I can get a closer look at their souls, their stories, and their yearnings. This understanding part is necessary so that I can fine-tune my frequency according to theirs.

Then I must have the ability to make my subject as interesting and colourful as possible. Now this is a bit tough one. To bring life to a barren and dry subject needs a lot of energy, will power and an unquenchable thirst to engage and educate students. But it's worth it. And if truth be told, no subject is barren or bore but it's the teacher who makes it this or that. Today, teacher's job is more challenging because it's not just teaching and throwing facts and data on students. It is more like discovering the seekers within the students, providing a healthy nourishing environment where students can exchange ideas, criticize and question boldly, compare and contrast so to learn, inspire and excel.

Today students have an immensity of lectures, videos and articles in front of them about physics, mathematics and literally everything. As a physics teacher All I am supposed to do is to awaken their mind's attention from the film of familiarity and the liturgy of the costume to the wonders of mathematics or physics. Once I tap into their soul, awaken the free, brave, reckless, they can then go on.

But if I, as a teacher of physics, failed in developing the interest of my students in physics, if I as teacher, failed in gaining a deeper level of trusts of my student, if I as a teacher failed in providing more value than mere knowledge, if I as a teacher, failed in compelling my students to start thinking for themselves, if I as a teacher, failed in teaching something more than Mole and Avogadro's number ____ Then I should better pack my bags, go for other professions and stop destroying the time, energies and future of an already confused generation.

The Tik-Tok and Instagram generations have an attention span less than a goldfish. They struggle to watch a five minutes video till the end but again they sit for hours in front of a teacher because of compulsion or necessity or whatever. This gives teachers immense responsibility and power in molding, building, structuring and shaping the minds of the next generation. So, if you, the reader, are a teacher in college or university and you don't have the above characteristics--- and you cannot even develop it---please for God's sake find some other jobs that suit you. This will be a huge favor of you to the entire society, to an entire generation.

The writer is a BS student of English literature final semester at Edward's College Peshawar.

Compensation cheques distributed F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: The district administration of Charsadda distributed compensation cheques to individuals affected by natural disasters in the years 2022, 2023 and 2024. These cheques were given to those who suffered human or financial losses during these years.

According to official data, seven people lost their lives in natural disasters across the district during this period and a total of 128 cases of loss were reported that had not yet received compensation.

Following the approval of PDMA, a total of 132 cheques amounting to Rs. 18.46 million were distributed among the victims. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Azmat Wazir stated that the purpose of this relief is to provide immediate support and compensate for the losses suffered.

Literary chat: From Mardan to the mind

Farooq Sarwar

IN today's modern Pashto literature, two young writers have emerged with clarity and force—writers who, in their youth, have achieved what many could not accomplish in a lifetime. Their work is so powerful and admirable that no amount of praise seems enough. These two passionate and dedicated voices are Hanif Khalil and Zubair Hasrat.

You may ask, quite fairly: what have Hanif and Zubair done to deserve such distinction? The simplest answer is: they worked—tirelessly, day and night. Hanif, I believe, has authored not a few but dozens—perhaps over a hundred—books. And Zubair has walked the same path. Together, they have explored nearly every genre in Pashto literature—poetry, fiction, and criticism—with remarkable depth. That is why their names remain etched in my mind. I have previously written about Hanif in this very column.

Today, I want to honour Zubair Hasrat—a rare literary tal-

ent who has served Pashto literature with genuine dedication. Despite being young, he has achieved what many can't even dream of in a lifetime. He published several books—not with the support of big publishers or literary grants, but often through his own limited resources. That alone is a significant achievement. Our literary landscape lacks strong publishing houses and, unfortunately, lacks readers who actually buy books. Most of the time, our books are given away rather than sold.

One of Zubair's greatest qualities is his literary range. He doesn't limit himself to one genre, and whatever he writes, he does so with grace and strength. To introduce him more fully: Zubair is one of the select students of the great Qalandar Momand—a towering figure in modern Pashto short fiction. The same intellectual depth and literary discipline that defined Qalandar Sahib's work can be seen in Zubair's writing. Qalandar Sahib gave us unforgettable symbolic stories, compiled a remarkable Pashto dictionary,

and conducted important research. Zubair, as his student, carries that legacy forward with honour.

Zubair's short stories are especially powerful. They carry a unique signature—a deep psychological insight that flows through every character and scene. Each story feels like an exploration of the human mind. This psychological richness and emotional layering Zubair's own special contribution to Pashto fiction. I don't believe any other Pashto writer has explored psychology in fiction with such subtlety and precision.

His second strength lies in poetry. Zubair is a gifted poet, both in Ghazal and Nazm. His poetic voice carries the same emotional and intellectual depth found in his fiction. His poems are full of fresh imagery and innovation. The visionary tone in his poetry echoes in his prose as well. He weaves psychological insight with poetic expression, and both flows together naturally.

Another notable quality is his portrayal of women. In story after story, Zubair presents female

characters with sensitivity, variety, and psychological depth. This alone place him above many other Pashto fiction writers. The way he captures the inner lives of women—their fears, longings, and thoughts—is both respectful and vivid. These characters are not symbols or ideas; they are living beings, and we feel that strongly.

Zubair has also made significant contributions to literary criticism, especially in fiction. His critical writing is thoughtful, honest, and enlightening. He has analysed my own stories with care and clarity—highlighting weaknesses and acknowledging strengths. He is a critic who understands the art from within. If he were to focus more fully on criticism, I believe he could write some of the finest works in this field. But Zubair, perhaps unaware of this strength, continues to explore all genres. Still, if he concentrated more directly on fiction and its criticism, I believe he could become one of our most important literary critics.

He has also contributed to the history of Pashto drama and is

currently working on an important research book tracing the history of Pashto radio plays in Peshawar, Quetta, and Kabul. I have no doubt that once published, this book will be a major contribution to the field.

As a person, Zubair is a true friend—generous, sincere, and warm-hearted. In Peshawar, I count few close literary companions, but two names shine brightest: Zubair Hasrat and Hanif Khalil. Whenever I visit Peshawar, Zubair is constantly by my side, making sure I feel welcome. And when I'm in Islamabad, Hanif does the same. They both go out of their way to ensure I am comfortable, cared for, and never left alone.

Zubair lives in Mardan. Once, Hanif and I visited him there, and later went to his village, where his friends welcomed us with warmth. Zubair also visits Quetta often and has built a strong literary circle there as well. Just like Hanif, Zubair is, in my view, a rare gift to Pashto literature.

I often remember those literary nights in Peshawar, especially when the Literary Circle would

invite me. After the program, late at night, I would turn to Zubair and say, "Let's walk these mysterious streets." He would smile and say, "Let's go." A few others would join us, and together we would wander through the sleeping city—nameless to the world, but carrying within us some of Pashto's finest literary voices. No one knew who we were. But we knew. And we had the night.

Zubair Hasrat is that kind of friend, that kind of writer. No matter how much we praise him, it will never be enough. Because literature survives through such people—those who write with heart, who work with sincerity, and who give more than they take.

When we look at Zubair's body of work—his stories, his criticism, his poetry, and his research—we see a writer of great depth and range. He has earned his PhD, retired as a professor, and still continues to work with full energy and passion. May he live long. May he continue to write. May he keep giving Pashto literature more gems, more pearls, more beauty.



UK-France migrant returns deal takes effect

PARIS (AFP): A "one-in, one-out" deal in which Britain can return some migrants who cross the Channel in small boats back to France came into force on Tuesday, the UK government announced.

The interior ministry said that British authorities were "operationally ready" and that migrant detentions were expected to begin "within days" following ratification of the agreement. "Today we send a clear message -- if you come here illegally on a small boat you will face being sent back to France," Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in a statement after striking the deal with French President Emmanuel Macron last month.

The agreement seeks to curb record levels of irregular Channel crossings that are causing discontent in Britain and helping fuel the rise of the hard-right Reform UK party. Under the arrangement -- for now a pilot scheme set to run until June 2026 -- irregular migrants arriving on UK shores could be detained and returned to France if they are deemed ineligible for asylum.

In exchange, the UK will accept an equal number of migrants from France who can apply for asylum via an online platform, giving priority to nationalities most vulnerable to smugglers and to people with ties in Britain. The two govern-

ments signed the final text last week, with the EU Commission giving its "green light on this innovative approach", Britain's Home Office said in a statement.

"The unscrupulous business model of smugglers must be broken," the European Union's migration commissioner Magnus Brunner wrote on X Tuesday. But refugee charities have criticised the deal, urging the British government to provide more safe and legal routes for asylum seekers instead.

The number of migrants making the dangerous journey in flimsy dinghies this year crossed 25,000 at the end of July, the highest tally ever at this point in the year. The rise, which the government has partly attributed to extended periods of good weather, means Labour leader Starmer is struggling to fulfil one of his main pledges before winning last year's general election. In recent weeks, anti-immigration protesters and counter-protesters have clashed outside hotels housing asylum seekers in Britain, with some demonstrations turning violent.

Starmer has tried to portray the deal as a diplomatic victory after years of faltering cooperation between France and the UK on the politically sensitive issue. "This is the product of months of grown-up diplomacy delivering real results

for British people as we broker deals no government has been able to achieve," he said. While the agreement has also met with criticism in northern France, where some officials say the scheme is too favourable to the UK, Nigel Farage's anti-immigrant Reform UK party says it does not go far enough to secure Britain's borders.

Interior minister Yvette Cooper said Tuesday that she would not put a number on how many migrants would be deported under the deal. "Of course, it will start with lower numbers and then build, but we want to be able to expand it," she told BBC radio. The Home Office this week pledged £100 million (\$132 million) for law enforcement, including additional staff and technology, to "tackle" gangs who organise the crossings.

Starmer's government also said it would make it an offence to promote on social media dangerous immigration routes into the UK, including via the Channel. Under the new provision, which will be part of a border security bill making its way through parliament, those found advertising such crossings could be fined and face up to five years in prison. According to a Home Office analysis, 80 percent of migrants arriving via small boats told officials they used social media during the process.

Flash flood washes out Himalayan town, killing 4

DHARALI (AFP): Rescue teams deployed Tuesday to India's Himalayan region after flash floods tore down a mountain valley, appearing to wipe away much of a town, where at least four people were killed. Videos broadcast on Indian media showed a surge of muddy water sweeping away multi-storey apartment blocks in the tourist region of Dharali in Uttarakhand state.

Uttarakhand State Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said rescue teams had been deployed "on a war footing". Senior local official Prashant Arya said four people had been killed, with other officials warning that the number could rise. "Luckily, most of the people were at a fair in a safe location," said a disaster official who asked not to be named since he was not authorised to speak to the media.

India's army said its teams had reached the town. "A massive mudslide struck Dharali... triggering a sudden flow of debris and water through the settlement," it said. Images released by the army, taken from the site after the main torrent of water had gone, showed a river of slow-moving mud. A wide swathe of the town was swamped by deep debris.

In places, the mud lapped at the rooftops of houses. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences to those "affected by this tragedy". "No stone is being left unturned in providing assistance to the people," he said in a statement posted on social media. Chief Minister Dhami said the flood was caused by a sudden and intense downpour.

"News of heavy damage caused by a cloudburst... is extremely sad and distressing," he said. "I am in constant contact with senior officials, and the situation is being closely monitored," Dhami added in a statement. "I pray to God for everyone's safety."

The India Meteorological Department issued a red alert warning for the area, and recorded "extremely heavy" rainfall of around 21 centimetres (eight inches) in isolated parts of Uttarakhand. Deadly floods and landslides are common during the monsoon season from June to September, but experts say climate change, coupled with urbanisation, is increasing their frequency and severity. The UN's World Meteorological Organization said last year that increasingly intense floods and droughts are a "distress signal" of what is to come as climate change makes the planet's water cycle ever more unpredictable.

Trial opens in Bali for US in Indonesia

DENPASAR, Indonesia (AP): A man charged with importing drugs to Indonesia faces up to 15 years in prison under the country's tough drug laws in a trial that began Tuesday on the tourist island of Bali.

William Wallace Molyneux V, a US citizen, was arrested May 23 after he allegedly collected a package containing illegal drugs at a post office near Kuta beach, a popular tourist spot. Prosecutor I Made Dipa Umbara said the arrest followed a tip that Molyneux received a suspicious package by mail from London. Bali's Narcotic Agency seized the package and investigators reported they found 99 Adderall pills in seven silver medicine boxes containing 1.86 grams of amphetamine.

The 27-year-old resident of Brooksville, Florida, told authorities that he was addicted to amphetamines because he has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD. Molyneux told authorities he bought Adderall online from the dark web and paid the equivalent of \$250 in Monero, a cryptocurrency, while on vacation in Bali. Umbara said. "ADHD medications, such as Adderall, consist of amphetamines and are therefore illegal in Indonesia, no exceptions," Umbara told the Denpasar District Court. Molyneux faces multiple charges including importing drugs, which carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a fine up to 10 billion rupiah (\$609,980).



DHARALI: Rescue teams deployed to India's Uttarakhand state where flash flooding washed out a town in the tourist region.

Far-right German MP's ex-aide on trial for spying for China

BERLIN (AFP): Two suspected spies for China, including a former assistant to far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) lawmaker Maximilian Krah, went on trial in the eastern city of Dresden on Tuesday.

The German national Jian Guo allegedly worked for Chinese intelligence from 2002, including while working in the office of then-MEP Krah between 2019 and 2024. He is accused of using that position to pass on more than 500 documents, some deemed highly sensitive, to Beijing as well as information about decisions and debates at the European Parliament.

Guo is also accused of being the handler for a second alleged operative, a Chinese national partially named as Yaqi X., who is accused of spying on German arms manufacturers. Prosecutor Stephan Morweiser told reporters that the case was "without precedent" in terms of Chinese spying activity in Germany. He said it was "particularly serious" as it shed light on "the extensive espionage interests that China has in relation to political, military and economic matters in Germany and the EU".

Guo is also suspected of gathering intelligence on leading AfD politicians and spying on Chinese dissidents in Germany. This included posing as an opponent of the Chinese

government on social media in order to gain contacts in the opposition scene. Guo's lawyer denied the charges on his behalf as the trial opened.

The second defendant, Yaqi X., worked at a company which provided Leipzig airport with logistics services and is accused of helping Guo access information on flights and passengers. The information she passed on focused on flights transporting defence equipment and "people with links to a German arms company". According to German media reports, she particularly targeted arms giant Rheinmetall, which is involved in making Leopard tanks and which uses Leipzig airport for cargo flights.

Morweiser, the prosecutor, said that, if found guilty, Guo faces a jail term of up to 10 years while Yaqi X. could be imprisoned for up to five years. In recent months, several cases of alleged espionage for Moscow and Beijing have been made public in Germany. The trial of three German-Russians suspected of passing information to Russia and planning acts of sabotage targeting aid to Kyiv is also underway in Munich.

Both defendants in the Dresden trial have been in detention since they were arrested last year. The trial could be particularly embarrassing for the AfD if it leads to the informa-

tion Guo collected on the anti-immigration party becoming public. According to news weekly Der Spiegel, investigators have seized records that Guo kept of conversations with Krah and other AfD politicians in which they discussed the private life of party co-leader Alice Weidel and alleged power struggles with her colleague Tino Chrupalla.

Krah denied to the magazine ever having discussed such matters with Guo. Krah was the AfD's top candidate in last year's European elections, but was excluded from its delegation after comments in which he minimised the crimes of the Nazis' notorious SS. However, he was welcomed back into the AfD fold for this year's German general election and now sits as one of the party's MPs in the Bundestag.

The trial is expected to last until the end of September and Krah himself has been called to appear as a witness. Krah is also being investigated by prosecutors in Dresden on suspicion of money laundering and corruption during his time as a member of the European Parliament. According to Der Spiegel, between 2019 and 2023 he received more than 50,000 euros (\$57,900) in payments from firms linked to Guo. Krah denies all wrongdoing and says the accusations against him are "politically motivated".

Hong Kong hit by flooding after flurry of rainstorm warnings

HONG KONG (AFP): Parts of Hong Kong were brought to a standstill by flooding caused by heavy rains on Tuesday, after the highest-tier rainstorm warning was issued for the fourth time in eight days.

The city logged its highest daily rainfall in August since records began in 1884, at just over 355 millimetres recorded at the Hong Kong weather observatory's headquarters at 2:00 pm (0600 GMT). The financial hub has suspended school classes and opened temporary shelters, and some hospital services such as outpatient clinics have also been affected.

The observatory said the "black" rainstorm warning - meaning downpours

exceeding 70 millimetres in an hour -- would remain in force at least until 5:00 pm. It was hoisted and again in the pre-dawn hours. More than 9,600 cloud-to-ground lightning strikes were recorded between 5:00 am and noon, according to the observatory.

The weather service warned on Tuesday afternoon that "persistent rainstorm will cause serious road flooding and traffic congestion". An AFP reporter saw some small boats had capsized off the coast of the eastern Tseung Kwan O district. Cars were seen nearly submerged at an outdoor parking lot nearby.

The city's number two official Eric Chan urged the

public to stay alert and said employers should consider flexible working arrangements that prioritise safety. Emergency room service at the Queen Mary Hospital was affected for around two hours due to "severe flooding" on some roads, health authorities said. Public transport slowed to a crawl in some districts and a handful of subway station exits were closed.

Hong Kong's airport saw delays to around 100 flights as of Tuesday morning, with one departure and one arrival flight cancelled, according to the airport authority. The Drainage Services Department said it identified 25 cases of flooding as of Tuesday after-

noon.

Neighbouring Chinese tech hub Shenzhen issued a "red" rainstorm warning earlier in the day, the first time since 2018, according to media reports. Tuesday's "black" rainstorm warning in Hong Kong was the fourth in the span of just over a week, beating the previous record of three such warnings in a year. Scientists warn the intensity and frequency of global extreme weather events will increase as the planet continues to heat up because of fossil fuel emissions. China is the world's biggest emitter, though it is also a global renewable energy powerhouse aiming to become carbon-neutral by 2060.

Dutch are first to buy US arms for Ukraine under NATO scheme

BRUSSELS (AFP): The Netherlands will buy 500 million euros (\$577 million) of US weapons for Ukraine, becoming the first NATO member to fund a full package under a new scheme to speed deliveries from American stockpiles, the defence ministry said.

The purchase will be under the Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) mechanism launched by US President Donald Trump and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte last month. Under the scheme, countries pay Washington for defence systems and munitions in US warehouses that are

then shipped to Ukraine, which has been battling a Russian invasion since February 2022.

"The Netherlands is now taking the lead in supplying military equipment from American stockpiles," Dutch Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans said on X. "By supporting Ukraine with determination, we are increasing the pressure on Russia to negotiate." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky thanked Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof in a call.

"These weapons are badly needed," Schoof posted on X, highlighting the near-daily drone and missile

attacks by Russia. The Dutch package includes US Patriot missile parts and other systems tailored to Ukraine's front-line requirements, according to the defence ministry. Brekelmans called the Russian air strikes "pure terror" and warned that Moscow's advance into Ukrainian territory could pose a broader threat to Europe.

"The more Russia dominates Ukraine, the greater the danger to the Netherlands and our NATO allies," he said. Washington is releasing military support for Ukraine in \$500 million tranches under the PURL mechanism. While other

allies have pledged to join the initiative, the Netherlands is the first to transfer funds.

It has already pledged tanks, drones, ammunition and support for F-16 training and delivery to Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte welcomed the move, calling it a vital first step under the new framework. "Great to see the Netherlands taking the lead and funding the first package of US military equipment for Ukraine," he said on X. "I thank Allies for getting Ukraine the equipment it urgently needs to defend against Russian aggression."

Thailand will compensate border conflict casualties

BANGKOK (Reuters): Thailand will spend 18.5 billion baht (\$572 million) on stimulus measures to support the economy as it braces for the impact of US tariffs, and will compensate families of those who died in last month's border conflict, officials said on Tuesday. The stimulus measures approved by cabinet are aimed at enhancing economic competitiveness and supporting student loans, Deputy Finance

Minister Julapun Amornvivat told reporters. The government still has about 25 billion baht of funds to use to mitigate the impact of US tariffs and for broader relief efforts, Julapun said.

The US last week set a 19% tariff on imported goods from Thailand, lower than the 36% rate announced earlier this year and more aligned with other countries in the region. Julapun said cabinet gave the government

approval to prepare a joint statement on tariffs and trade with the United States, but said discussions were ongoing and there was no set signing date. On Tuesday, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce said it expected the economy to grow 1.7% this year. That is below both the finance ministry's revised forecast of 2.2% growth in 2025 and last year's actual growth of 2.5%. The cabinet also approved

a 10 million baht (\$310,000) payment to the families of government officials who died in the July conflict with Cambodia, while those injured will receive up to 1 million baht, government spokesperson Jirayu Huangsat told a briefing. Families of Thai civilians who died during the conflict will each receive a payment of 8 million baht, he said, while the injured would receive up to 800,000 baht.

China to offer free pre-school education from autumn

BEIJING (AFP): China said on Tuesday it would introduce free pre-school education from the autumn, as the world's second most populous nation seeks to boost childbirth in the face of a looming demographic crisis.

China's population has declined for three consecutive years, with United Nations demography models predicting it could fall from around 1.4 billion today to 800 million by 2100. There were just 9.54 million births in China last year, half the number in 2016, when Beijing ended its one-child policy after more than three decades.

The population declined by 1.39 million last year, and China lost its crown as the world's most populous country to India in 2023. Marriage rates are also at record low levels, with many young couples put off having babies by high child-rearing costs and career concerns.

On Tuesday China's cabinet, the State Council, announced that: "starting in the fall semester of 2025, childcare and education fees will be waived for children attending public kindergartens in the year before school". The policy aims to "effectively reduce the cost of education, improve the level of public education services, and provide education that satisfies the people", the State Council said. Beijing described it as an "important measure that concerns thousands upon thousands of households and relates to long-term development".

Funding for the new measure would be shared between central and local authorities, while children attending approved private kindergartens would also be eligible for fee reductions. The announcement comes a week after the country said it would offer parents the equivalent of \$500 per year for each

child under the age of three. At a news conference in Beijing last week, National Health Commission (NHC) official Wang Haidong acknowledged that the country had "gradually shifted from a phase of population growth to a phase of population decline".

"The childcare subsidy system can directly increase people's cash income," Guo Yanhong, vice minister of the NHC, said. Chinese leaders have in recent years struggled to breathe life into the economy, beset by a years-long property crisis that has spooked would-be homebuyers and dissuaded many people from having children. China's shrinking population is also ageing fast, sparking worries about the future of the country's pension system. There were nearly 310 million people aged 60 and over in 2024.

Japan sets record temperature of 41.8C

TOKYO (AFP): Japan logged a new heat record on Tuesday, with the mercury hitting 41.8C, the weather office said, warning temperatures may rise further still. Temperatures the world over have soared in recent years as climate change creates ever more erratic weather patterns, and Japan is no exception. The scorching temperature in the city of Isesaki on Tuesday surpassed the previous record in the Hyogo region of 41.2C, which was set only last week. Tokyo has also been struggling with extreme heat.

"I'm really concerned about global warming, but when it comes to my daily life, I can't live without turning on the air conditioner," office worker Mayomi Saito told AFP. "I don't really know what I should be doing. I'm just desperately getting through each day."

Last month, 38,608 people were treated in hospital for heatstroke, data showed Tuesday, down from 43,195 in July 2024. Last week there were 18 deaths. In tourist hotspot Kyoto last week the mercury hit 40C, the first time any of its observation points -- the oldest opened in 1880, the newest in 2002 -- had seen such a high, authorities said. Experts warn Japan's beloved cherry trees are blooming earlier due to the warmer climate -- or some-

times not fully blossoming -- because autumns and winters are not cold enough to trigger flowering.

The famous snowcap of Mount Fuji was absent for the longest recorded period last year, not appearing until early November, compared with the average of early October. July was also the hottest since records began in 1898, the weather agency said Friday, with the average monthly temperature 2.89C above the 1991-2020 average. Japan's summer last year was the joint hottest on record, equalling 2023, and was followed by the warmest autumn since records began 126 years ago.

Blistering heatwaves have also hit other parts of Asia this summer, from South Korea to Vietnam, as well as Europe. South Korea saw its second-hottest July, with an average temperature of 27.1C, according to the meteorological office, which has been collecting such data since 1973. The hottest July on record in South Korea was in 1994, when the average temperature reached 27.7 degrees Celsius.

In northern Vietnam, 17 places across seven provinces reported record highs for the month of August, with electricity demand spiking as people try to stay cool, authorities said Tuesday. The capital

Hanoi experienced its first-ever August day above 40C.

In Japan, some dams and paddies nationwide are experiencing a water shortage, with farmers complaining that the sizzling heat combined with a lack of rain is slowing rice cultivation. Precipitation in July was low over wide areas of Japan, with northern regions facing the Sea of Japan experiencing record low rainfall, it added.

The rainy season ended about three weeks earlier than usual in western regions of Japan, another record. Every summer, Japanese officials urge the public to seek shelter in air-conditioned rooms to avoid heatstroke. The elderly in Japan -- which has the world's second-oldest population after Monaco -- are particularly at risk.

This year, western Europe saw its hottest June on record, as extreme temperatures blasted the region in punishing back-to-back heatwaves, according to the EU climate monitor Copernicus. Dangerous weather stretched into the next month, with separate research estimating that climate change made the temperature up to 4C hotter, pushing the thermometer into deadly territory for thousands of vulnerable people and greatly worsening the projected death toll.

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War-themed movies teach important lessons

As part of the events commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War, many war-themed movies have or are going to hit cinema screens both at home and overseas.

Dead to Rights is one of them. Centered on the Nanjing Massacre, in just eight days since its July 25 release, the movie has become the top-grossing film of the country's summer box office, with revenues surpassing 1 billion yuan (\$140 million).

Based on true events, the film follows a group of civilians in a Japanese-controlled photo studio in Nanjing, where, as they are forced to develop images for the occupiers, they secretly document the atrocities being carried out by the Japanese troops, risking their lives to preserve the evidence of Japanese war crimes.

Many moviegoers have attributed the film's success to its powerful storytelling and compelling performances, describing it as a vivid "history lesson" for the younger generation.

Another film, 731, which revisits the horrific World War II-era human experiments conducted by Japan's notorious biological and chemical warfare unit, the eponymous 731, is set to premiere on Sept 18, to coincide with the 94th anniversary of the Sept 18 Incident in 1931, which marked the start of Japan's invasion of China.

During the 14-year-long war, China suffered more than 35 million casualties, both military and civilian, and Japanese troops committed countless heinous crimes that deserved universal condemnation.

Yet due to various reasons, many people in the West are still not fully aware of the horrific acts committed by Japanese invaders in China eight decades ago. While the Holocaust is taught in all history textbooks in the West, the Nanjing Massacre remains not fully understood despite its scale and significance. In 2022, when Evan Kail, a US pawnshop owner, decided to donate a photo album documenting Japanese wartime atrocities in China to the Chinese consulate in Chicago, he even faced death threats. "I want more people to know the truth," he explained about his courageous act.

Now after watching Dead to Rights, Kail has urged all people, especially those in the West, to see the film, so that "the story of what was in (that) photo album could continue to be shared".

Indeed, the war-related films are not intended to foster animosity but to help shape our collective memory so that these war crimes will never be forgotten. This is the right way to honor those who gave their lives to uphold freedom, justice and peace, and mourn the loss of innocent lives brutally taken during the war. Only by remembering the horrors of the past can people today truly cherish peace.

It is outrageous that Japanese rightists still try to deny Japan's wartime atrocities and successive postwar Japanese governments still try to whitewash the country's past crimes. This makes people in countries victimized by Japanese aggressors doubt whether the country has really severed itself from its militaristic past. They rightly question whether Japan is ready to join hands with its Asian neighbors to build a peaceful and prosperous future.

That some politicians in Japan are still regularly paying homage to the Yasukuni Shrine, where convicted war criminals who committed atrocities against humanity are enshrined, makes the sporadic apologies and remorse Japan has previously expressed for that war of aggression sound hollow and perfunctory.

But it should be noted that Japanese people were also the victims of Japan's wartime militarism. It is wrong to foster hatred against a people just because a small minority of Japanese militarists set off the war of aggression.

Rather, the people of China and Japan should pass on friendship from generation to generation through improved communication, bearing in mind that forgetting history is tantamount to the betrayal of truth.

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Saudi Arabia leads the way in push for two-state solution

Hassan Al-Mustafa

ANYONE following developments in the Middle East will have noticed a clear surge in Saudi Arabia's engagement with the Palestinian cause since Oct. 7, 2023. This momentum goes beyond a political or humanitarian position; it reflects a strategic vision. The Kingdom has reinforced this commitment by sponsoring international conferences, building broad alliances with partner nations, and providing critical funding for food and medical supplies to Palestinians in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Saudi efforts have evolved steadily from vocal advocacy to leading a political process aimed at establishing an independent Palestinian state, strengthened by a strong partnership with European nations.

The international conference on the two-state solution, held in July at the UN headquarters in New York, and co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, brought together representatives from more than 125 countries. The summit aimed to initiate a clear political process to end the war in Gaza and advocate for the recognition of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with UN resolutions.

The conference adopted a declaration presenting a comprehensive framework with clear, time-bound measures. These included an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the transfer of administrative control to the Palestinian Authority, and the deployment of a temporary international mission under UN supervision to help stabilize the situation.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan highlighted that "these outcomes offer a comprehensive set of proposals encompassing political, humanitarian, security, economic, legal, and strategic dimensions," forming "a practical and actionable

framework for implementing the two-state solution and securing lasting peace and security for all." He called on "all UN member states to endorse the final declaration before the conclusion of the upcoming General Assembly session in September."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot urged all nations to view the conference as a critical turning point in advancing the two-state solution and ending the war in Gaza. He emphasized the urgent need to cease attacks on civilians and to pursue a path toward lasting and sustainable peace.

Saudi Arabia's active diplomacy has firmly underscored that normalization with Tel Aviv will not take place unless Israel ends its occupation of Palestinian territories and commits to a serious, credible peace process. This unequivocal position was clearly stated by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman before the Saudi Shoura Council in September 2024, when he declared: "The Kingdom will not waver in its tireless efforts to establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and we affirm that the Kingdom will not enter into diplomatic relations with Israel without that."

The international conference achieved several key strategic objectives, most notably reviving global momentum for the two-state solution following years of diminished focus and the war in Gaza since October 2023; reaffirming the legitimacy and authority of the Palestinian Authority; and establishing a clear link between normalization and a concrete political framework. In essence, peace and normalization are now firmly tied to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, laying the foundation for lasting peace in the Middle East.

Another major political

achievement — long a source of concern for Israel and a point of unease for the US administration — has been the momentum gained in pushing key European countries toward recognizing the state of Palestine. France is set to lead this initiative in September, along with other nations, such as Ireland, Portugal, and the UK.

The conference also firmly linked the peace process to halting settlement expansion, rejecting the illegal annexation of Palestinian land, and ending violence against Palestinian civilians. This stance was underscored by the explicit use of the term "terrorism" to describe the violent attacks carried out by extremist settlers against unarmed Palestinians and their property.

This summit was not a reiteration of past initiatives, but rather a unified political declaration to redefine the negotiating framework and establish a new political and legal balance of power. It stood in direct opposition to Israel's policies, which have dismantled previous regional dynamics through the use of force, starvation, and forced displacement.

For the first time in decades, the two-state solution has been advanced outside the framework of traditional American dominance, under the joint sponsorship of Saudi Arabia and France. This shift highlights the growing diplomatic influence of the Middle East, which has succeeded in rallying influential European nations and establishing lasting strategic partnerships.

The underlying message is unmistakable: Israel can no longer rely exclusively on US protection to sideline Palestinian demands. Negotiations have shifted. They are no longer defined by a stark imbalance between a militarily domi-

nant power and a counterpart relying solely on the strength of international law and moral legitimacy.

France's decision to recognize a Palestinian state in September is not a mere symbolic gesture, but a significant shift with serious implications, which explains Israel's concern.

Paris is breaking away from the traditionally passive or hesitant European stance, most notably that of Germany, and is instead embracing a more assertive and proactive diplomatic approach.

France is working to solidify its role as a key interlocutor, an alternative actor, and a "parallel mediator" to the US. While an imbalance of power and influence remains — and Washington continues to play a central role in Middle Eastern affairs — this shift in French diplomacy reinforces the emergence of a multipolar approach to conflict resolution. It also places growing pressure on Israel to acknowledge that its occupation is no longer seen as legitimate or acceptable in the eyes of the Western world, especially as its image among broad segments of the European public is now deeply tarnished by associations with violence and bloodshed.

What lies ahead? Politically, pressure on Israel is set to intensify, especially if France proceeds with its recognition of the state of Palestine and is followed by other countries, notably the UK. Diplomatically, we can expect active Saudi engagement in international forums to support new resolutions on Palestine, along with renewed efforts in Washington to convince President Donald Trump's administration that a credible peace process serves the interests of the US, the Middle East, and even Israel.

Without such engagement, the region risks descending further into chaos and hostility, fostering generations without hope. The truth is, this is not a sign of a failed nation. It is evidence of the occupation's success in dragging it to the brink. It is not the people who have lost control. Control has been forcibly stripped from them — through starvation, the systematic destruction of healthcare and sanitary infrastructure, the dismantling of state institutions and the empowerment of criminals. Yet Gaza will not break. People may grow angry and desperate, cry out and protest, but they still retain a moral compass. This collective outcry is not infighting. It is a clear warning that society will no longer tolerate betrayal. Those who raise prices mercilessly in times of siege are traitors, and they will be held accountable before institutions of justice when Gaza rebuilds. The occupation may be revelling now in the unfolding collapse, but it would be wrong to think it has defeated the Palestinians. Every crisis breeds new awareness. Every betrayal gives birth to new resistance. The vast majority of Palestinians refuse to become tools in the hands of their torturers. They refuse subjugation and erasure. They refuse to exploit and harm their fellow citizens. Palestinian national solidarity is still alive.

Why the delay in judging Israeli war crimes?

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

THE Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem released a comprehensive report on July 27 describing the Israeli war on Gaza as genocide. However, the delay in publishing such an indictment is troubling and adds to an existing problem of politically motivated decision-making processes that have, in their own right, prolonged Israeli war crimes.

The report accused Israel of committing genocide, a conclusion reached after a detailed analysis of the military campaign's intent, the systematic destruction of civilian life, and the government-engineered famine. This finding is significant because it adds to the massive body of legal and testimonial evidence affirming the Palestinian position that Israel's actions in Gaza constitute a genocide. Moreover, the fact that B'Tselem is an Israeli organization is doubly important. It represents an insider's indictment of the horrific massacres and the government-engineered famine in Gaza, directly challenging the baseless argument that accusing Israel of genocide is an act of anti-semitism.

Western media were particularly interested in this finding, even though numerous firsthand Palestinian reports and investigations are often ignored or downplayed. This double standard continues to feed into a chronic media problem in its perception of Palestine and Israel.

Claims by Palestinians of Israeli war crimes have historically been ignored by mainstream media or academia. Whether the Zionist militia's massacre of Tantura in 1948, the actual number of Palestinians and Lebanese killed in the massacres of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon in 1982, or the events resulting in the Jenin massacre in the West Bank in 2002, the media has frequently ignored the Palestinian

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For example, despite the International Court of Justice's historic ruling on Jan. 26, 2024, that determined there are plausible grounds for South Africa's accusation of Israel of committing genocide, the court is still unable, or unwilling, to produce a conclusive ruling. A definitive ruling would have put significant pressure on Israel to end its mass killing in

Gaza. Instead, for now, the ICJ expects Israel to investigate itself — a highly unrealistic expectation at a time when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promises his extremist ministers that Israel will encourage the ethnic cleansing of Gaza.

The same indictment of intentional and politicized delays can be attributed to the International Criminal Court. While it issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Nov. 21, 2024, no concrete action has been taken. Instead, it is Karim Khan, the ICC's chief prosecutor, who finds himself attacked by the US government and media for having the courage to follow through on the investigation.

Individuals, too, especially those who have been associated with "revolutionary" politics — the likes of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Bernie Sanders, among others — have been reluctant to act. On March 22, 2024, Ocasio-Cortez refused to use the term genocide in Gaza, going as far as claiming that while she saw an "unfolding genocide," she was not yet ready to use the term herself.

Sanders, on the other hand, who has spoken out repeatedly and strongly against Netanyahu, describing him in an interview with CNN on July 31 as a "disgusting liar," has had repeated moral lapses since the start of the war. When the term genocide was used by many far less "radical" politicians, Sanders doubled down during a lecture at a university in Ireland. He said that the word genocide "makes him queasy," and he urged people to be "careful about it."

These are not simply lost opportunities or instances of moral equivocation; they have had a profound and direct impact on Israel's behavior. The timely interven-

tion of governments, international institutions, high courts, media, and human rights groups would have fundamentally changed the dynamics of the war. Such collective pressure could have forced Israel and its allies to end the war, potentially saving thousands of lives. Delays born of political calculation and fear of retribution have given Israel the critical space it needed to carry out its genocide. Israel is actively exploiting this lack of legal and moral clarity to persist in its mass slaughter of Palestinians. This must change. The Palestinian perspective, their suffering, and their truths must be respected and honored without needing validation from Israeli or other sources. The Palestinian voice and their rights must be truly centered, not as an academic cliché or political jargon, but as an undeniable, everyday reality.

As for those who have delayed their verdict regarding the Israeli genocide, no rationale can possibly absolve them. They will be judged by history, and by the desperate pleas of Gaza's mothers and fathers, who tried and failed to save their children from the Israeli killing machine and the world's collective silence or inaction.

Why Trump’s Texas battle over the House could end up affecting every American

DEMOCRATS might finally have learned something about Donald Trump — if they hope to beat him, they must get down in the gutter alongside him.

Party leaders in power-house blue states on Monday vowed to emulate the president’s methods to create new Democratic-friendly seats in the House of Representatives in response to his bid to carve out five new GOP districts in Texas.

Their promises came as they celebrated Democratic Texas state lawmakers who suddenly became the fresh faces of the anti-Trump resistance after facing arrest warrants for fleeing the state in an exodus that ground a special legislative session called by the president’s allies to a halt.

This all might look like yet another twist in a generationslong struggle by both parties to gerrymander districts to get a leg up in elections. And some voters’ eyes might glaze over at what seems like an internal Texas tussle.

But the fight has profound national implications.

In the short term, the House of Representatives — which Democrats hope to win back in midterm elections next year to rein in Trump’s presidency — could be at stake. Democrats currently need a net gain of three seats to take the majority. If the Texas plan passes without a response by another state, they will need eight. That could dash their goal of imposing a clamp on Trump’s runaway presidency.

In the medium term, the Texas redistricting fight must be seen against the backdrop of a fraught political age. There are growing signs American democracy is fraying. Republicans will argue, correctly, that Democrats have mounted their own egregious redistricting schemes in states such as Illinois and Maryland. But the instigator of the effort to make the Texas congressional delegation even redder was a president who already has a dark record of trying to subvert the verdict of voters.

There are growing signs American democracy is fraying. Republicans will argue, correctly, that Democrats have mounted their own egregious redistricting schemes in states such as Illinois and Maryland. But the instigator of the effort to make the Texas congressional delegation even redder was a president who already has a dark record of trying to subvert the verdict of voters.

Longer term, the national political fight that has erupted over Texas looks almost certain to further erode the checks and balances of democracy, however it ends. If both parties now simply go all-out in a national gerrymandering frenzy, they will produce a House of Representatives where it will be even more difficult for incumbents to lose their seats and that will make meaningful political change

even harder.

The Texas fight shows how much Democrats lost by ceding national power

If nothing else, the furor demonstrates the imperative of winning power and forging transformational change before the opportunity is lost.

Republicans over the last decade have built an unsailable conservative Supreme Court majority that enabled GOP redistricting efforts based on race, including in Texas. And they’ve elected and supported a president with an expansive and constitutionally questionable thirst for imposing his own personal power that has shattered most political norms. Most

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presidents would not be as blatant in Trump in trying to change the electoral battlefield. Over the same period, Democrats failed to bolster ranks of liberals on the Supreme Court — for instance, by not persuading late Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg to retire when a liberal replacement could be confirmed while the party controlled the presidency and the Senate. In 2024, Democrats initially backed an aging and unpopular President Joe Biden, despite warnings that his candidacy could open the door again to Trump and his anti-democratic project.

This loss of power has been disastrous to progressive aspirations and to protecting the liberal victories of the last 50 years, including the nationwide constitutional right to abortion.

Some top Democrats see the Texas redistricting showdown as a moment for their party to show more ruthlessness.

“We are at war,” New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said Monday, alongside several exiled Texas lawmakers, warning that Democrats should forget independent redistricting panels intended to draw fairer maps that represent a complex electorate.

Stephen Collinson

“The playing field has changed dramatically, and shame on us if we ignore that fact and cling tight to the vestiges of the past,” Hochul said. “That era is over. Donald Trump eliminated that forever,” she said.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled a plan for a mid-decade redistricting in his state to match the one underway in deep-red Texas. His proposal would come before voters in November — the latest skirmish in a long-running ideological feud between the two states. But it will only be triggered if Texas moves ahead with its own plan. Newsom said he still

examples of Trump’s widening authoritarianism, following his cowing of Congress, crushing of constraints within the federal government, and co-option of the Justice Department and some intelligence services into instruments of his whims. On that score, a source told CNN on Monday that Attorney General Pam Bondi has ordered prosecutors to launch a grand jury investigation into Obama administration officials over the Russia investigation.

Given all this, if the Democrats don’t fight back now, when will they ever fight?

The Texas Democrats have an uphill task

This seems a long shot, however, not least because there are considerable impediments in New York to a swift redrawing of maps. Hochul admitted that that even if everything goes smoothly, redistricting that would bypass New York’s current nonpartisan commission could only be in place for the 2028 election — a lifetime away in Trump-era politics. And attempts by Democratic states to rebalance electoral maps might convince more GOP bastions to do the same.

So, if an outside Texas strategy is unlikely to force the Texas Republicans to back down, why are Democrats pursuing it?

This may be one of those times in politics when a party can win something by losing.

Democrats might not only engage their demoralized partisans by taking the fight to Trump on Texas; they can use the battle to organize and focus their message as they grapple for traction after a grim political year.

Defending democracy might be a desirable project in the abstract. But in the past, especially when Biden was warning that Trump imperiled America’s “soul,” the idea felt distant from voters infuriated by high grocery prices and the cost of housing. And impassioned warnings from Democratic leadership about how Trump would threaten democracy didn’t stop his reelection.

Hochul and other Democrats seemed on Monday to be reaching for a way to connect the democracy question to more immediate voter concerns through the prism of the Texas power grab. She argued that stopping such schemes was critical to charting a path back to power so Democrats could reverse Trump’s policies on tariffs and deportations.

That will require a toughening of the Democratic approach, one that underscores the distance traveled since former first lady Michelle Obama warned that when Republicans like Trump go low, “we go high.”

“With all respect to the good governance groups, politics is a political process,” Hochul said, dismissing “purity tests” that would make electoral maps fair to everyone involved through nonpartisan commissions.

“If Republicans win the legislature, they can have at it. But until then, we are in charge, and we are sick and tired of being pushed around.”

I lost my brother in the Beirut port explosion. Where is the justice?

Cecile Roukoz

THE people of Lebanon are marking five years since the Beirut port explosion of August 4, 2020 – a blast that has been described as one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history. The detonation pulverised the port, ruined vast sections of the city and was felt as far away as Cyprus. It also claimed the lives of more than 220 people, injured more than 7,000 more and left more than 300,000 homeless.

The horror of that day is beyond words – the force of the explosion, the shattered city and the wounded and the dead scattered across and beyond the port. But even that devastation pales in comparison to the nightmare of searching through hospitals the evening of the blast for my brother, who worked at a private company operating inside the port.

We searched all night, hospital after hospital, and returned home around 5am, devastated and empty-handed. None of us could sleep. At dawn, we resumed the search, until we eventually found him in the morgue at Rafik Hariri University Hospital. We were forced to bury him without even a final goodbye. Not seeing his face one last time is a pain that words cannot describe.

The explosion resulted from the detonation of 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, with a nitrogen grade of 33.5 per cent. This had been stocked illegally under the supervision of high-level security officials, and with the full knowledge of five different security agencies, despite the danger it posed and in violation of Lebanese law. This clearly suggests a deep level of corruption.

It is difficult to assign liability with certainty at this stage. But, in breaking the relevant laws and regulations, a crime was certainly committed. Therefore, legal responsibility must be established for all those implicated in the events that led to the explosion.

Although the investigation into this crime has faced many challenges and obstructions, Judge Tarek Bitar, who took over in early 2021 after his predecessor Fadi Sawan was dismissed, is perseverant.

Since his appointment, he has been the target of several baseless complaints demanding his recusal from the investigation. Judges examining the recusal lawsuits have, in turn, been confronted by recusal lawsuits themselves. This is in addition to claims against the state of purported gross misconduct by investigating

judges. The number of such complaints, intended to derail the investigation, has potentially reached more than 40 so far.

Several politicians and their allies have used all sort of tactics to hinder the investigation. These have included running campaigns to undermine the probe and daily attempts to discredit judges and generally escape accountability. All these actions and obstructions reflect a pattern in Lebanon, in which political officials and influential figures have grown accustomed to impunity and the absence of legal scrutiny.

The political war over Judge Bitar’s probe has also produced threats against him personally and violence on the streets. Hezbollah, the Iran-backed party and militant group, together with Amal – a political ally led by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri – has allegedly been trying to push the judge out since his appointment.

However, the investigator’s determination to move the case forward led to the issuance of a legal analysis on January 25, 2023. This, Judge Bitar stated, gave him the authority to resume his work on the Beirut port explosion case. He had been suspended from the investigation since December 23, 2021, amid legal disputes and intense political pressure. Upon resuming his duties, Judge Bitar brought charges against several senior officials, including Lebanon’s top public prosecutor, Ghassan Oweidat.

In response, Mr Oweidat reversed his prior recusal – a move widely regarded by experts as lacking legal basis or unlawful – and charged Judge Bitar with “usurping power”, summoning him for questioning. He also imposed a travel ban on Judge Bitar and ordered the release of all 17 detainees connected to the blast, leaving one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history without a single suspect in custody.

Under Lebanese law, the authority to decide on the release or continued detention of individuals lies with the investigating judge, not the public prosecutor. In this case, it appears that the Prosecutor General, whose role is to represent the public interest, may have acted beyond his legal powers, potentially committing serious procedural and legal violations, in addition to the charges he already faces in connection with the explosion.

Mr Oweidat did not stop at these violations. He went further by issuing an

order to the judicial police and the Public Prosecution Office instructing them not to co-operate with Judge Bitar – a move many legal experts have described as lacking legal basis and potentially obstructing justice.

However, despite all this, Judge Bitar resumed interrogations on February 10 this year, questioning the remaining defendants, including former prime minister Hassan Diab, politicians, judges and senior security officials. He completed all interrogations and chose to withhold decisions on individuals until a full indictment was issued.

The newly appointed public prosecutor, Judge Jamal Hajjar, also reversed the directive previously issued by the defendant, Mr Oweidat, restoring co-operation between the investigative judge and the Public Prosecution Office.

As of July 21, Judge Bitar has completed all his questioning and is now awaiting responses to several judicial requests that were sent abroad.

The port explosion was a turning point in the lives of the Lebanese people, with many families emigrating after that date, especially after witnessing how the country’s political class handled the investigation with disregard for justice and open threats to the judiciary. Many also lost hope of uncovering the truth, as the Lebanese grew accustomed to a prevailing culture of impunity.

However, the situation is different for the victims’ families. They do not cling to the word “hope” because the justice they are demanding is a victim’s right, not an aspiration.

Lebanon’s new government and new president have pledged, within the powers granted to them by the constitution, to do everything necessary to ensure justice is done in the port case. However, the people are waiting for truth and accountability. Victims’ families and their supporters are also ready to resume protests if the investigation is not completed and an indictment is not issued.

The investigation into the Beirut port explosion, despite major delays caused by political obstruction, Hezbollah and the defendants will, I am sure, lead to the truth. Every official or civilian who was required to preserve the security of the citizens and did not do so, will be held accountable. If these people had done their duty, the storm resulting from the nitrate explosion would not have swept through the city, destroyed homes and roads, and killed people in this catastrophic way.

September could be a decisive moment for Palestine

NEXT month could be a major turning point for Palestine as France, Britain, Canada and six other countries are set to extend recognition of a virtual Palestinian state. While enjoying three of the four attributes that define statehood — a permanent population, a government and relations with other states — Palestine does not exercise control over sovereign territory. Recognition is to take place at the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly which opens on September 9th with addresses from world leaders.

The Trump administration has criticised these countries and tried to punish the Palestinians by imposing sanctions on so far unnamed Palestinian Authority and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials who could be denied visas to attend the General Assembly. Washington has justified its stand by claiming “the two Palestinian organisations have ‘taken actions to internationalise’ their conflict ‘with Israel, including through the International Criminal Court, and said both had continued ‘to support terrorism.’” On the latter charge, neither the Authority nor the PLO supported Hamas’ October 7th, 2023, raid into southern Israel during which 1,139 Israelis

and visitors were killed and 250 abducted.

The US previously excluded Palestinian leaders from the opening of the annual Assembly session. Although he had addressed the General Assembly in 1974, the US refused PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat a visa for the 1988 opening. A special session was held in Geneva in mid-December to enable Arafat to speak.

After this debacle, his successor, Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas, had addressed the opening session of the Assembly for nearly two decades.

Palestine has been recognised by 147 of the UN’s 193 members, 75 per cent, but the US has vetoed its full membership. Consequently, Palestine has observer status which permits it to attend and participate in General Assembly and Security Council sessions but not to vote. Palestine also has gained membership in UN-related institutions despite US objections.

Palestine has sought recognition as a state since November 15th, 1988, when the Palestine National Council, the parliament-in-exile, issued the declaration of independence in Algiers. Written by Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish, the declaration called for a mini state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza occupied

by Israelis in 1967 instead of the whole of Palestine.

This amounted to a strategic shift in policy by the PLO which had demanded a Palestinian state in the whole of Palestine. The shift was in line with UN Security Council resolution 242 of November 1967 which

Malaysia, Morocco, Turkey, Yemen, and Somalia. On December 15th, 1988, the General Assembly acknowledged the declaration of independence and recognised Palestine rather than the PLO as representing Palestinians within the

Michael Jansen

had recognised Palestine.

EU members Ireland and Spain and Norway recognised Palestine last year. In addition to France, Britain, and Canada, Andorra, Finland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Portugal, San Marino, and Malta are set to recognise Palestine this year. Australia has refused to fix a time while Germany and Italy do not intend to offer recognition. The addition of France

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threatened to impose high tariffs on Canada for taking this action. Donald Trump has fully backed Israel in its war on Gaza and blockade of the strip which has starved 2.3 million Gazans and has been branded genocide by prominent Israeli human rights groups B’Tselem and Israeli Doctors for Human Rights as well as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Israeli experts on genocide.

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and Britain will mean that four of the five permanent UN Security Council members (including Russia and China) will have recognised Palestine. The US is the sole hold-out.

The Trump administration has criticised the process of recognition and has threatened to

Gazans and has been branded genocide by prominent Israeli human rights groups B’Tselem and Israeli Doctors for Human Rights as well as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Israeli experts on genocide.

B’Tselem dubbed the terrible and tragic situation in Gaza “Our Genocide” and stated: “For nearly two years, Israel has been committing genocide in Gaza, acting in a systematic, deliberate way to destroy Palestinian society there through mass killing, causing serious bodily and mental harm and creating catastrophic conditions that prevent its continued existence in Gaza. Israel is openly promoting ethnic cleansing and the destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure for individuals and the group, with 2 million people starved, displaced, bombed, and left by the world to die. The genocide must be stopped.”

Israeli Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) presented a position paper entitled “Destruction of Conditions Of Life: A Health Analysis of the Gaza Genocide.”

PHR stated, “Over the past 22 months, Israel has systematically targeted medical infrastructure across the Gaza Strip, attacking 33 of 36 of Gaza’s hospitals and clinics depriving them of fuel and water. More than 1800 of Gaza’s medical

staff have been killed or detained.” PHR argued that this assault is “a deliberate, cumulative dismantling of Gaza’s health system, and with it, its people’s ability to survive. This amounts to genocide.” Haaretz reported in a podcast that the “mass starvation and death in Gaza seems to have finally cut through the layers of denial and media self-censorship in Israel – and in both Arab and mixed cities – demonstrations against the horrifying humanitarian situation are drawing thousands of protesters.” Haaretz said three out of four Israelis want to end the war which Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu prosecutes to maintain his fragile coalition.

It is now a minority government since two ultra-Orthodox religious parties have exited because he did not pass a law granting military exemption to their youths.

Israel’s war on Gaza propelled France and Saudi Arabia to hold a conference in New York last week to urge countries round the world to recognise the Palestinian state and press for the two-state solution. The conference, attended by 125 countries, issued a call for a ceasefire in Gaza, Hamas’ handover to a new administration, and a roadmap for the step-by-step establishment of a Palestinian state.

[illegible]



In brief

David fined for breaching ICC code of conduct

ISLAMABAD (APP): Australia player Tim David has been fined 10 per cent of his match fee for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the fifth T20I against the West Indies in St. Kitts on July 28. David was found to have breached Article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player

Support Personnel, which relates to "showing dissent at an Umpire's decision during an International Match." In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to David's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period, said a press release. The incident occurred in the fifth over of Australia's innings, when Alzarri Joseph bowled a delivery to David down the leg side which was not called a wide. David showed dissent by stretching his arms out and signaling for it to be called a wide and then walked towards the umpire with his arms still stretched out. David admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Reon King of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Zahid Bassarath and Leslie Reifer, third umpire Deighton Buttler and fourth umpire Gregory Brathwaite levelled the charge. Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

Afghanistan announce squad

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan Cricket Board unveiled preliminary squad for their upcoming T20I assignments, the tri-nation series against Pakistan and hosts UAE and ACC Men's Asia Cup 2025. As per the ACB's official statement, the Rashid Khan-led squad will undergo a two-week training and preparation camp, after which the final 15-member squad for both events will be finalized. Afghanistan's T20I tri-series campaign will kick off on August 29 in Sharjah with a curtain-raiser against Pakistan. It is worth mentioning here that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed the schedule for the national side's T20I tri-series with Afghanistan and the UAE on Friday. Set to begin on August 29 at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium, the upcoming T20I series is aimed at allowing the teams to prepare for the Asia Cup 2025. "The T20I tournament will serve as a launching pad for the teams to prepare for and acclimatise to the conditions ahead of the eight-team ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup, scheduled to take place in the UAE from 9 to 28 September," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement. The opening game between Pakistan and Afghanistan will be played on Friday, August 29. "Each team will play the others twice, giving all sides at least four matches before the top two teams qualify for the final, scheduled on 7 September," as per the PCB. Tournament schedule (all matches at Sharjah Cricket Stadium): August 29 - Afghanistan v Pakistan - 7pm local time August 30 - UAE v Pakistan - 7pm local time September 1 - UAE v Afghanistan - 7pm local time September 2 - Pakistan v Afghanistan - 7pm local time September 4 - Pakistan v UAE - 7pm local time September 5 - Afghanistan v UAE - 7pm local time September 7 - Final - 7pm local time.

Arshad Nadeem ruled out of Diamond League due to fitness issues

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan's star athlete Arshad Nadeem has been ruled out of the upcoming Diamond League due to fitness concerns. His doctor has advised him not to participate in the event.

Arshad is currently undergoing a rehabilitation program in England, where

he has begun putting weight on his injured leg.

The surgery was performed by Dr Ali Sher Bajwa in Cambridge, UK, and his recovery is being monitored there.

According to doctors, Arshad's latest injury is new and of a serious nature. His participation

in the World Athletics Championship will also depend on the completion of his rehabilitation process.

The final decision will be made once his recovery is complete. Despite the setback, the gold medalist remains hopeful for a swift and full recovery.

PMYP-Qalandars cricket talent hunt trails on Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The next phase of the nationwide Cricket Talent Hunt Trials under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) is set to begin on Wednesday in Lahore.

The initiative is being jointly organized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Lahore Qalandars, said a press release.

According to Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana, the overwhelming participation from young cricketers across Pakistan reflects the nation's enduring passion for the sport. He added that the enthusiasm isn't limited to just the players—parents, cricket clubs, and local associations are also actively encouraging

participation and nominating talented athletes.

"So far, more than 122,000 young players have registered and taken part in the trials held across various regions of the country," he said. In Sindh alone, over 48,000 players turned up at trial venues in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, and Shaheed Benazirabad.

In Balochistan, 14,000 participants from five designated regions gathered at the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS) in Quetta. In Southern Punjab, trials in Bahawalpur and Multan collectively drew over 26,000 players. Faisalabad

recorded around 20,000 participants, while more than 12,000 young cricketers joined the trials in Sargodha.

HEC Director Sports Javed Memon said that such large-scale participation is evidence that the initiative is effectively engaging youth in positive, healthy, and competitive activities. Teams from HEC, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, and Lahore Qalandars are actively present at the venues to ensure a transparent selection process and to give young players full opportunities to showcase their talent. Following the two-day Lahore trials, the next phases will be held in Sialkot and Rawalpindi.

Thomas Partey in court on rape charges

LONDON (Agencies): The former Arsenal footballer Thomas Partey has appeared in court charged with six sexual offences.

The 32-year-old was bailed to appear at the Old Bailey for trial later this year over allegations of rape and sexual assault. During Tuesday's brief hearing at Westminster magistrates court, he stood in the dock dressed all in black with his arms behind his back.

Partey has been charged with five counts of rape against two women and a charge of sexual assault against a third woman. The alleged offences are said to have taken place in 2021 and 2022 when he was an Arsenal player.

The chief magistrate Paul Goldspring granted conditional bail, telling



Partey he must not contact any of the three women. Partey was also told he must notify police of any permanent change of address and if he is to stay somewhere other than his home for 14 consecutive days. He was also told to notify police of any international travel ahead of time.

Partey joined Arsenal from Atlético Madrid in 2020 in a transfer worth about £45m. The defensive midfielder had signed

for the Spanish club in 2012 and made 188 appearances, as well as going out on loan to Mallorca and Leganés.

He played 35 games for Arsenal in the Premier League last season, scoring four goals. Partey left the north London club at the end of his contract this summer. As bail conditions were discussed in court, Goldspring said: "I understood he's no longer employed in this country and playing in Spain now."

The Metropolitan police said they first received allegations against him of rape in February 2022.

Partey's lawyer, Jenny Wiltshire, has previously said he "denies all the charges against him" and that he welcomed "the opportunity to finally clear his name".

US restricts sports visas for transgender women

NEW YORK (Agencies): The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced on Monday it has updated its immigration policy to restrict visa eligibility for transgender women seeking to compete in women's sports.

Under the policy update, USCIS will consider "the fact that a male athlete has been competing against women" as a negative factor when evaluating visa petitions in categories such as O-1A for extraordinary ability, EB-1 and EB-2 green cards for highly skilled workers, and national interest waivers.

"USCIS is closing the loophole for foreign male athletes whose only chance at winning elite sports is to change their gender identity and leverage their biological advantages against women," said USCIS spokesperson Matthew Tragesser. "It's a matter of safety, fairness, respect, and truth that only female athletes receive a visa to come to the U.S. to participate in women's sports."

The move aligns with broader efforts by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to regulate transgender partic-

ipation in athletics and follows similar policies enacted at the state level across the country.

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee last month updated its policy to align with an executive order signed earlier this year by Trump barring transgender women from competing in women's sports.

Trump signed the "Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports" order in February, a directive that supporters said will restore fairness but critics argue infringes on the rights of a tiny minority of athletes.

Bangladesh unveil squad for Asia Cup 2025

DHAKA (Agencies): The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) unveiled its preliminary squad for the upcoming Asia Cup 2025 on Tuesday.

The BCB also announced the 25-member squad for the upcoming three-match T20I series against the Netherlands, alongside confirming their participation in the continental tournament. Wicketkeeping batter Nurul Hasan is a notable inclusion in the Bangladesh squad.

"The available players will report for a fitness camp at SBNCs, Mirpur on 6 August. The skill practice will begin at the SBNCs from 15 August before the camp moves to Sylhet on 20 August," BCB said in a statement.

Bangladesh will host the Netherlands from August 26 to September 3 for a T20I series.

According to reports, the tourists will land in Bangladesh on August 26 and will play the first game against the hosts in Sylhet on August 30.

The two teams will then face off in the second game on September 1, while the third and final T20I is scheduled for September 3.

The Asia Cup 2025 is scheduled to take place in Dubai and Abu Dhabi from September 9 to 28.

Group A includes Pakistan, India, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, while Group B comprises Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and

Hong Kong.

Bangladesh preliminary squad for the Asia Cup 2025 and the Netherlands series:

Litton Das (c), Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Mohammad Naim Sheikh, Soumya Sarkar, Parvez Hossain Emon, Tanvir Hridoy, Jaker Ali Anik, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Shamim Hossain, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Rishad Hossain, Mahedi Hasan, Tanvir Islam, Nasum Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Mohammad Saifuddin, Nahid Rana, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Syed Khaled Ahmed, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Mahidul Islam Ankon, and Saif Hassan.



LONDON: Justin Langer, Head Coach of London Spirit, looks on with David Warner and Kane Williamson of London Spirit prior to the The Hundred match between London Spirit Men and Oval Invincibles Men.

Pakistan women seek series sweep against Ireland in Dublin

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan and Ireland's women cricket teams are set to clash in a three-match Twenty20 International (T20I) series starting Wednesday, August 6th, at the Clontarf Cricket Club in Dublin. This series marks the beginning of a demanding year for the Pakistan women's side, which includes two white-ball World Cups.

This will be the fifth T20I series between the two countries. The second and third matches are scheduled for August 8th and 10th, respectively, with all games commencing at 4 pm local time. Both squads have previously secured two bilateral T20I series victories each, with Pakistan holding an overall advantage, having triumphed in 15 out of 19 T20I encounters.

Their most recent clash saw Muneeba Ali etch her name in history by becoming the first Pakistani woman to score a T20I century during the ICC T20 World Cup 2023 in Cape Town, leading Pakistan to a resounding 70-run victory.

The Pakistan team arrived in Dublin on August 3rd, fresh from a rigorous 17-day skills camp and a five-day pre-tour camp at the Hanif Muhammad High Performance Centre in Karachi. Twenty-year-old Eyman Fatima is the sole uncapped player in the touring party. Shawaal Zulfiqar has replaced the injured Sadaf Shammas. World number one T20I bowler, Sadia Iqbal, will be aiming to solidify her ranking with commanding displays. Ireland enters the series following comprehensive victories over Zimbabwe women in both T20I and One-Day International series in July.

Mansehra wins U-16 3x3 Basketball c'ship in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Mansehra claimed the title in the Under-16 3x3 Basketball Championship for Hazara Region after defeating Abbottabad in a thrilling final match held in Abbottabad.

The regional championship featured competitive teams from Mansehra, Abbottabad, and Haripur. In the semi-final stage, Mansehra overpowered Haripur, while Abbottabad Green defeated Abbottabad Red to book a

spot in the final.

The final witnessed a nail-biting contest between Mansehra and Abbottabad, with Mansehra emerging victorious after a tough battle on the court.

Chief Guest Masoor Khan distributed trophies and prizes among the winning and runner-up teams during the closing ceremony. The event was also attended by Director Sports Shakeel Ahmad, Ihsan Lala, Waqas Wiki, Shamsul Haq, and a large

number of basketball enthusiasts.

Addressing the ceremony, President of Hazara Region Basketball Association, Rafiq Khan, announced that top players from both the champion and runner-up teams will be shortlisted and sent to Peshawar for final trials for the Islamabad Youth Games. The trials will determine the final selection for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial basketball team.

Djokovic pulls out of Cincinnati Open

CINCINNATI (Agencies): Novak Djokovic is set to enter the US Open without playing in any warm-up tournaments after he pulled out of the Cincinnati Open.

Djokovic has not played since a comprehensive straight-sets loss to Jannik Sinner in the Wimbledon semi-finals on 11 July.

The 24-time grand slam champion struggled with a left thigh injury during his one-sided defeat at the All England Club and after he missed the Toronto Masters, the Serbian will now sit out another ATP 1000 event in the shape of the Cincinnati Open.

After being included on the original acceptance list, an updated version on Monday showed Djokovic as a withdrawal. The next time Djokovic is expected to return to action will be in the US Open mixed doubles after he partnered with Olga Danilov.

Emma Raducanu adds Rafael Nadal's former coach Francisco Roig to her team: Emma Raducanu has added Rafael Nadal's former coach Francisco Roig to her team on a full-time basis before this month's US Open, it is understood.

The 2021 winner at Flushing Meadows has worked with British coach Mark Petchey on an informal basis since March and enjoyed a positive run of results. However, Petchey's TV commitments meant he was always unable to become

Raducanu's full-time coach and after a trial with Roig following Wimbledon, the 22-year-old will begin work with him in Cincinnati this week. He has agreed a contract until the end of 2025.

Raducanu has struggled to settle with a coach in recent years until her part-time work with Petchey started to pay dividends earlier this season. A WTA 1000 quarter-final showing at the Miami Open in March was followed by a last-16 run at the Italian Open before she made the last eight in the first women's tournament at Queen's Club.

Aryna Sabalenka proved too strong for Raducanu in round three at Wimbledon, but this was backed up by a semi-final at the Citi Open as the British No 1 targets being seeded at the US Open later this month. Petchey, who worked with Andy Murray at the start of his career, revealed in July that Raducanu would need to find a full-time coach soon and she has found that in Roig.

The Spanish coach worked with Nadal alongside Nadal's uncle Toni for most of the 22-time grand slam champion's career and more recently was part of Matteo Berrettini's backroom staff. Raducanu will stay close to Petchey but turns her focus back to rising up the WTA rankings with a strong display at the Cincinnati Open over the next fortnight.

Man Utd, Newcastle make bids for Sesko

LONDON (Agencies): Manchester United are battling with Newcastle to sign the RB Leipzig striker Benjamin Sesko.

Newcastle had appeared to be within touching distance of a deal for the 22-year-old but Manchester United made a rival bid on Tuesday and believe the player would prefer a move to Old Trafford.

Newcastle submitted a second offer for Sesko of £69.7m, which with add-ons could rise to almost £75m, after receiving encouragement that he was potentially open to a transfer to Tyneside. But cautious optimism at St James' Park regarding an agreement was caveated by Manchester United's interest.

Manchester United's bid is of a guaranteed £65.2m, rising to a possible £73.8m. They have been pursuing a striker all summer and missed out on targets including Viktor Gyökeres, Hugo Ekitike and Liam Delap.

Manchester United have spent more than £130m on Bryan Mbeumo and Matheus Cunha this summer and previous indications have been that they would need to sell at least one of Jadon Sancho, Alejandro Garnacho and Tyrell Malacia if they were to spend big again.

Newcastle were also keen on Ekitike and Delap,



and it would be another significant transfer blow for them if Sesko were to end up at Old Trafford.

With Eddie Howe's first-choice centre-forward Alexander Isak having made plain his desire to leave, ideally for Liverpool, Newcastle are in the market for two forwards. Negotiations with Brentford are ongoing regarding Yoane Wissa, and Howe is also a longstanding admirer of Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins.

Newcastle's negotiations with Leipzig have been led by the director and minority owner Jamie Reuben, who has stepped in to assist Howe's nephew Andy Howe with recruitment in the absence of a sporting director.

Isak is scheduled for talks with Howe this week but chances of a real rapprochement look slender. After the Swede missed

Newcastle's tour of Singapore and South Korea citing a minor thigh problem apparently undetectable on scans, and took the unilateral decision to train alone at his former club Real Sociedad, it is hard to envisage Isak playing for the club again. Liverpool's £110m bid for the club again.

Howe said before leaving Seoul that he had known nothing of Isak's trip to Spain and warned that players exhibiting "poor behaviour" would not be permitted to train with his first team. The Newcastle manager described the situation as "far from ideal".

A series of potential signings, also including João Pedro and James Trafford, have turned down Newcastle but Howe, who is preparing for a Champions League campaign, has signed the

Sweden winger Anthony Elanga from Nottingham Forest for £55m and the goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale on loan from Southampton.

Ramsdale's arrival appears to have opened the door for Martin Dubravka to depart, with the Slovakia goalkeeper in advanced talks over a move to Burnley.

Howe is also in the market for a right-sided centre-half and, should funds be released by Isak departing, Newcastle could revive a longstanding interest in Crystal Palace's Marc Guéhi.

With Newcastle not thought to be Guéhi's first-choice destination a deal could be difficult and Marseille's Argentinian centre-half Leonardo Balerdi remains high on Howe's shortlist. Newcastle have made repeated attempts to recruit the defender Giorgio Scalvini from Atalanta but have been persistently rebuffed.

Guéhi is understood to be willing to stay at Selhurst Park and see out his contract, which expires next summer. Liverpool are believed to be his preferred option, although they are reluctant to pay Palace's £40m valuation. Palace rejected an offer worth up to £70m from Tottenham in January and are facing the possibility of the England international leaving on a free transfer.



In brief

Rescue observe Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir Day in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): Like the other parts of the country, Rescue 1122 Rawalpindi on Tuesday observed Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir Day on August 5 to express solidarity with the people of Indian-occupied Kashmir. Officials and staff of the Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) Rawalpindi participated in rallies organized in cooperation with the district administration. Members of civil society and various government departments also took part in the event. Participants held banners with pro-Kashmir slogans, sending a clear message to the world that the people of Pakistan firmly stand with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters. Speakers at the event strongly condemned the ongoing human rights violations in occupied Kashmir and urged the international community to take effective steps to resolve the long-standing Kashmir dispute.

27 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police teams from Shams Colony, Women and Sihala police stations arrested seven accused involved in various criminal activities on Tuesday. A public relations officer told APP that police recovered 665 grams of Ice, 115 grams of heroin, and three pistols with ammunition from their possession. Cases have been registered against the accused, and further investigations are underway. During a special campaign to apprehend proclaimed offenders and absconders, police teams also arrested 20 other criminals. Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the ICT Police is continuing its effective crackdown against crime and criminal elements to maintain peace and security in the federal capital. The ICT Police remains committed to safeguarding the lives and property of citizens and will not allow any elements to disturb public order. Ensuring peace and protecting residents is the top priority of the Islamabad Police.

Five members of gang arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Tuesday arrested five members of a criminal gang, including a woman, during an operation in Bani Gala and recovered stolen valuables from their possession. A police spokesperson told APP that the operation was carried out as part of an indiscriminate crackdown against criminal elements involved in theft and other unlawful activities in the federal capital. The Bani Gala police team, using technical and human intelligence, apprehended the accused identified as Muhammad Zarrar, Tariq Masih, Safer Ahmed, Ali Raza, and Saddam Hussain. The spokesperson said the police also recovered a stolen mobile phone and a snatched motorcycle from the accused. Legal proceedings have been initiated, and further investigation is underway to trace their criminal network. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq said the ICT Police was taking all necessary measures to protect the lives and property of citizens. "No criminal will be allowed to disturb public peace," he added.

August 5, darkest day in Kashmir history, says Danyal Ch

RAWALPINDI (APP): Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry termed August 5 as the darkest day in Kashmir history. He condemned India's 2019 revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status saying it is an act that stripped Kashmiris of their rights and ignited a new wave of oppression.

Speaking at a ceremony regarding Youm e Istehsal at Viqar-un-Nisa College on Tuesday, Barrister Danyal reiterated Pakistan's uninterrupted political, diplomatic and moral support for the Kashmiri people. He highlighted that Indian forces are engaged in changing demography of the Kashmir which is never acceptable. He said that the sacrifices, courage and determination by the people of Kashmir would finally bring the independence of Kashmir.

The parliamentarian further reiterated that every Pakistani citizen stands

with Kashmiris, emphasizing that their right to self-determination, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions, must be upheld. "India can never suppress the Kashmiri spirit of freedom," he asserted. He condemned India's closure of educational institutions for Kashmiri girls as a "cruel and inhumane" tactic. He stressed that Pakistan will continue to raise the Kashmir issue on every international platform, ensuring the world hears the Kashmiri people's plight. Danyal recalled the decisive victory of Pakistan Armed Forces against India's May aggression.

"The whole nation was united as a wall of steel during the operation of Bunyanum Marsoos to debunk the enemy's claims of regional superiority," he said.

Addressing Pakistan's domestic challenges, Chaudhry rejected claims of economic default, highlighting that within one-and-a-half to two years, the country has stabilized. He credited his party's

focus on unity, progress, and stability, praising the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces and the resilience of the youth.

Encouraging students to write research papers on Kashmir and raise global awareness through social media, Barrister Danyal called on the younger generation to amplify Kashmiri voices and expose Indian atrocities. He warned that a specific group was conspiring to undermine the state, accusing them of working on an anti-state agenda to weaken state institutions and misleading the youth. He urged the nation to stand united against such divisive elements.

The event was attended by National Assembly member Tahira Aurangzeb, Commissioner, Engineer Aamir Khattak, Hurriyat leader Tufail Altaf, Director Colleges Amjad Khattak, CEO Education Tariq Mahmood, the college principal, faculty, students, civil society members, and representatives from various walks of life.

Human Rights Council observes Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Human Rights Council of Pakistan Tuesday organized a purposeful and impactful conference at the National Library of Pakistan to mark Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir (Kashmir Exploitation Day), shedding light on the constitutional assault, human rights violations, and global silence over the plight of the Kashmiri people.

Themed "Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir – Constitutional Attack, Human Rights Violations, and Global Conscience in Silence," the conference aimed to highlight the grave political and humanitarian crisis in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A by the Indian government on August 5, 2019, which stripped the region of its special constitutional status.

Prominent Hurriyat leader Sheikh Abdul Mateen was among the keynote speakers, paying tribute to

the sacrifices, resilience, and unwavering struggle of the Kashmiri people. Muhammad Tauqeer Khan, journalist and former president of Khoi Ratta Press Club as well as Central Secretary General of AJK Electronic Media, addressed the gathering on the media's role in amplifying the voices of oppressed Kashmiris, stressing the need for objective and persistent coverage.

Renowned poet Kashif Kamal moved the audience with a heart-touching poem dedicated to Kashmir, evoking deep emotions. Executive Member of the Human Rights Council, Advocate Hammad Abbasi of the Supreme Court, gave a detailed presentation on the constitutional and international dimensions of the Kashmir dispute, calling for urgent intervention.

The event was ably moderated by Nisar Ahmed, who ensured the smooth flow of proceedings. Speakers emphasized that Youm-e-Istehsal is not merely a symbolic day, but

part of a sustained effort to amplify the voices of Kashmiris worldwide. They expressed grave concern over the United Nations and international community's silence and demanded the immediate granting of the right to self-determination to the Kashmiri people.

"Youm-e-Istehsal is not a symbolic day; it is a continuous call for global protest," a resolution at the conference declared. "Kashmir will become Pakistan — but with justice, democracy, and human values!"

IRSA releases 282,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 282,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 342,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1544.00 feet which was 142.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 212,800 cusecs and 168,900 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1203.25 feet, which was 153.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people from different walks of life participating in Kashmir Youm-e-Istehsal (Kashmir Exploitation Day) rally at Constitution Avenue to condemn India's illegal actions of August 5, 2019, in IIOJK.

Photo exhibition, protest rally organized in solidarity with Kashmir

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the occasion of Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir, a photo exhibition, documentary screening, and rally were held at the Punjab Arts Council to highlight Indian brutality, oppression, and atrocities, including: rape and genocide. The event saw strong participation from political and social figures, as well as students.

The chief guest, Syed Shahid Iftikhar Bukhari, Director of Agriculture, Rawalpindi Division, while speaking to the media reps said that the RSS agenda has completely failed. "Modi government has normalized the detention and bloodshed of Kashmiris. The past six years have witnessed the highest number of human rights violations in Kashmir," he said.

He further emphasized that global powers must raise their voices against this exploitation in order to curb this state-sponsored terrorism, and that Kashmiris should be granted the full right to self-determination in accordance with UN resolutions so that the saga of oppression can come to an end.

At the end of the event, louder slogans were chanted against India's undemocratic behavior and oppression, like "We will achieve freedom," "Freedom is our right," and "Free Kashmir from Indian occupation." Director of the Arts Council, Muhammad Shakoor, paid tribute to the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, who have given millions of lives for the sake of freedom. "Children have been martyred, loved ones have been subjected to brutalities before the eyes of their families, yet their struggle for independence continues," he said.

CDA increases employees' Hajj quota to 76

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) has increased the number of staff members selected for Hajj this year from 66 to 76.

The announcement came during a balloting ceremony held here on Tuesday, presided over by Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The balloting process involved 9,352 non-gazetted CDA employees (Grades 1 to 17), including 9,123 men and 229 women. As a result of the draw, 77 employees were selected to perform Hajj this year.

"This institution runs on the strength of its employees and the prayers of their mothers," said Chairman Randhawa while addressing the gathering. "We are

committed to doing all we can for their well-being. Those going on Hajj are Allah's honored guests. They should pray for our martyrs, for Pakistan, and the success of our nation."

The decision to increase the quota was made in response to a request from the General Secretary of the CDA Workers Union, Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin. "This compassionate step by the Chairman will be remembered forever," said Yasin. "We thank the administration for standing with employees, and the Workers Union will continue to support the CDA leadership in all efforts for staff welfare."

Chairman Randhawa emphasized the importance of intention and accountability, encouraging employees to remain dedicated and to pray

for the country during their pilgrimage. "With sincerity and hard work, no one can undermine our institution, our city, or our country," he said.

The event concluded with prayers and congratulations to all successful candidates. The draw was conducted openly, with CDA officials underscoring the administration's commitment to fairness and transparency in employee-related initiatives.

The ceremony was attended by senior CDA board members, including Member Admin and Estate Talat Mahmood, Member Finance Tahir Naem, Member Planning Dr. Muhammad Khalid Hafiz, Member Environment Esfandiyar Baloch, and Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza.

529 FIRs registered against traffic violators

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi, under the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's "Safe Punjab" initiative, has intensified efforts to enhance road safety across the city.

According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Beenish Fatima, a total of 95,358 challan tickets were issued last month for various traffic violations while 529 FIRs registered against major offenders. Strict actions were taken against several violations, including 11,680 challan tickets were issued to motorcycle riders without helmets.

Similarly, City Traffic Police (CTP) also issued

2524 challan tickets to underage drivers, and 10,229 challan tickets were issued for careless driving.

CTP also issued 3,871 challan tickets issued to tinted glasses vehicles. For disrupting traffic flow some 5,571 challan tickets were issued to drivers. 2,088 public service vehicles (PSVs) operating without route permits were issued challan tickets.

Additionally, 1,476 PSVs were challaned for lacking valid fitness certificates, and 20,373 challans were issued for lane and line violations. 13,300 challan tickets were issued to drivers without licenses, 7,609 for using fancy number plates, 2,919 for unreg-

istered vehicles, 4,141 for one-way violations, and 7,444 challan tickets were issued for signal violation.

Further action included 857 vehicles booked for wrong parking and 155 vehicles issued challan for emitting smoke. The Education Wing of the traffic police conducted awareness sessions for over 5,800 individuals in schools, colleges, universities, bus stands, and public areas to promote understanding of traffic rules and road safety. CTO Beenish Fatima also highlighted that 21,433 citizens received new driving licenses last month, with 98,694 benefiting from licensing-related services.

ISSI seminar marks sic year of Indian aggressions in IIOJK

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The India Study Centre (ISC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a seminar, titled "August 5, 2019: Another Turning Point in the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute."

The event was organized to commemorate the struggle, resolve, and sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, and observe Youm-e-Istehsal to condemn India's unilateral and illegal actions of August 5, 2019, with regard to the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Ambassador Masood Khan, Former President of the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, as the Guest of Honour. Speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; Dr. Sheikh Waleed Rasool, Assistant Professor, Riphah International University; Dr. Raja Qaiser Ahmed, Assistant Professor, SPIR, Quaid-e-Azam University; Mr. Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR); Ms. Naila Altaf Kayani, Human Rights Activist; Mr. Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, Former Convener of APHC AJK; and Barrister Nida Salam, Lawyer, Islamabad High Court.

In his remarks on the occasion, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood said that for the last six years, the IIOJK had remained the 'most militarized zone' in the world; the suppression of Kashmiris by Indian security forces reached unseen scale; and the human rights violations escalated to the level of 'crimes against humanity' with 'collective punishment' of entire communities. However, despite all its wanton repression, India has neither been able to dampen the spirit of the Kashmiris nor break their will to fight for their inalienable right to self-determination. New Delhi is now making an unacceptable assault on the Kashmiris' rights, land, and distinct cultural identity and working to turn the Kashmiri Muslim majority into a minority on their own soil. These sinister designs indicate repli-



cation of the Israeli model to implement a 'settler-colonial project.'

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood noted that, unable to control the resistance movement by force, India has reverted to its familiar ploy of branding the indigenous Kashmiri struggle as "terrorism" and accusing Pakistan of complicity in the so-called "cross-border terrorism." Failing to use the Pahalgaon attack of 22 April 2025 to deter Pakistan militarily and diplomatically, New Delhi has now weaponized water. Its willful smear campaign against Kashmiris and Pakistan and reckless military adventurism show that the Hindutva-driven BJP government has no interest in stability and peaceful co-existence.

While reflecting on Pakistan's steadfast support for the just cause of the Kashmiri people, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized that India and the international community must recognize that Kashmir is a dangerous flashpoint and that durable peace and stability in South Asia remains contingent upon a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UNSC resolutions. This, he stressed, can only be ensured through

the collective endeavours of Kashmiris, Pakistan, and the world community.

In his remarks, Chief Guest Ambassador Masood Khan warned that the unresolved Kashmir dispute will intensify the smog of war in South Asia, making it catastrophic for the region and the world. He noted that the Indo-Pak conflict of May 2025 challenged the narrative of India's regional military dominance and brought renewed focus on Kashmir as central to South Asia's long-term peace and stability. Discussing Pakistan's position on Kashmir, Ambassador Khan highlighted the potential of the Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora to reach global conscience regarding the plight of the Kashmiri people. He emphasized the need for sustained understanding of India's socio-political landscape and its strategic culture through dedicated research initiatives.

While lauding Pakistan's efforts to raise the Kashmir Issue at global forums including the UN Security Council, General Assembly, and Human Rights Council, Ambassador Masood Khan called for stronger communication with global institutions and decision-making bodies. Further, he advised Pakistan to

remain vigilant of any new development with regard to the political status of IIOJK and strategically respond to it.

Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui noted that India's demographic and electoral engineering in IIOJK following 5 August 2019 was in clear violation of the International Law, International Humanitarian Law, Article 1 of the UN Charter, and the 4th Geneva Convention. The incarceration of Kashmiri political leadership and a cap on political activity in the occupied territory reflect the broader design of eliminating truly representative political class.

While reemphasizing Pakistan's resolve to firmly stand with the Kashmiris' right to self-determination, Ambassador Imran Siddiqui stressed that 'Youm-e-Istehsal' was a renewed call for international community to address the miseries taking place under the Indian occupation and resolve the dispute according to the will of the Kashmiri people. He reiterated Pakistan's full support for the Kashmiris until the realization of their right to self-determination.

Earlier, Dr. Khuram Abbas in his introductory remarks noted that, following its actions of 5 August 2019, India

was determined to erase the Kashmiri identity through a myriad of structural and cultural changes. Lacking any legal, political, and moral basis, unilateral actions of India related to Indus Waters Treaty or Jammu and Kashmir are fueling chaos and uncertainty, and squeezing the space for meaningful engagement.

Dr. Sheikh Waleed Rasool, while presenting a historical overview of the Kashmiri struggle, shed light on administrative measures being taken by India to disenfranchise and dispossess Kashmiri Muslims in the aftermath of 5 August 2019. Moreover, drawing from an academic background, Dr. Raja Qaiser Ahmed presented an overview of India's shifting constitutional narratives on IIOJK and how they contributed to New Delhi's fiercer occupation of the territory. He called upon the youth to engage in deep research and produce quality academic work to contribute to global awareness about the Kashmir issue.

Mr. Altaf Hussain Wani explained how Kashmiri people were broken due to broken promises and the world silence on their miseries. He also highlighted how the UN human rights machinery and international human rights organizations had helped advance the cause and stressed that more engagement on these platforms would facilitate efforts for breaking the 'silence.' Similarly, Ms. Naila Altaf Kayani explained the civilizational, cultural, and linguistic suppression of the Kashmiri people at the hands of Indian occupying forces. She underscored that the Indian state was not just erasing the political identity but the cultural soul and very existence of Kashmiris. She stressed that it was crucial to continue to raise awareness and resist this systematic erasure.

Mr. Muhammad Farooq Rehmani reinforced the need to build on the current global environment favouring Pakistan and the Kashmir cause. Barrister Nida Salam highlighted that no international legal framework permitted India to declare Kashmir its internal matter and that its status cannot be altered without a UN-supervised plebiscite.

The seminar was concluded with remarks by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI.

Weapons depot seized

CHARIKAR (Pajhwok): About 15 different types of weapons and a quantity of ammunition have been seized in central Parwan province of Afghanistan and one individual arrested in connection with this case, police said on Tuesday. In a statement, the police headquarters said these weapons included a PIKA, a DShK, a Crankov, four Kalashnikovs, a Kolehkov, an M4, M40, an M49, three weapons, and a grenade launcher.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Safar 11, 1447 — Wednesday, August 06, 2025

Bodies of Afghan couple found

KABUL (Amu TV): The bodies of a young Afghan couple were discovered late Sunday night in the basement of a shop in Tehran's Qiamdasht district. The discovery followed a call to the emergency police hotline, whereupon a forensic team was dispatched to the scene, local reports said. Preliminary police findings suggested the two had gone into the basement for reasons not yet clear. When their bodies were found, a power generator was running nearby.

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

‘Over 400 uplift projects launched’

KABUL (TOLNews): Plans have been drafted this year for the implementation of 410 development and infrastructure projects.

According to the Ministry of Economy, hundreds of infrastructure projects have been launched using domestic resources to reduce unemployment.

Abdul Rahman Habib, spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy, stated: “As part of this year’s agenda, 410 major and fundamental development projects are being funded by domestic revenue sources. The majority are focused on development and infrastructure. Once implemented, these projects will create job opportunities for hundreds of people.”

Unemployment and poverty remain major economic challenges in Afghanistan, repeatedly drawing concern from international

organizations, including the United Nations.

Several Kabul residents say the lack of employment opportunities has caused them severe financial difficulties and they call on the Islamic Emirate to take practical steps.

Ali, a Kabul resident, said: “There are thousands of people like me who are unemployed. People are suffering from this situation. Some are even forced to turn to alternative work due to lack of jobs. With the arrival of the Islamic Emirate, security has improved, but there’s still no business or employment.”

Another Kabul resident, Rohit, also said: “It’s better to create job opportunities here. A young man should be able to work in his own country rather than having to migrate to Iran. The road is full of dangers. It’s better for a young man to find

work and bring food home to his family.”

However, economic experts emphasize that short-term projects alone are not enough to sustainably reduce unemployment. Broader investment in domestic resources is necessary.

Economist Mohammad Asif Stanekzai added: “To eradicate poverty, comprehensive economic strategies — whether based on natural resources or other sectors — must be implemented. Humanitarian aid alone can never eliminate poverty.”

Meanwhile, in its latest session, the United Nations Security Council labeled poverty, unemployment, and migration as Afghanistan’s most pressing challenges, calling for continued humanitarian assistance and the release of the country’s frozen assets.

Kyrgyzstan seeks enhanced transport ties

KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation and Kyrgyzstan Ambassador have discussed strengthening of bilateral transport and transit ties, as well as enhancing trade between Kabul and Bishkek.

Mullah Hamidullah Akhundzada met with Kyrgyzstan Ambassador Turdakun Sydykov today (Tuesday), the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MoTCA) said.

A statement from the ministry said the two sides discussed enhancing bilateral transport and transit cooperation, increasing the exchange of commercial goods between the two countries and several other related topics.

The Transport Minister said the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) was fully prepared and committed to expanding transport and transit ties with Kyrgyzstan by utilising all available land and air infrastructure.

For his part, the Kyrgyz envoy also emphasised the importance of transport links between Kabul and Bishkek and reiterated his country’s commitment to expanding these ties.

Commercial township to be built

KABUL (Pajhwok): Around 600 Afghan businessmen are collaborating to construct a commercial township in District 22 of Kabul city, with a total investment of 800 million afghanis.

Abdul Basir Mashal, an official from the “Afghan Commercial Township” project, announced at an event in Kabul today that the development will span 200 acres of land owned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock.

He said that the project included construction of approximately 1,500 small and large warehouses designated for commercial goods. These facilities will be used to store, process, and eventually export products to various international markets.

Mashal noted that many of the 600 investors were returnees from abroad, particularly from neighboring countries. These businessmen are primarily involved in importing goods from Europe, storing them in Kabul, and then re-exporting them to other Asian nations.

One of the investors, Haji Jalaluddin Qasemi, said the businessmen are building warehouses for their own use, aiming to streamline their logistics and expand their commercial activities.

Sheikh Noorul Haq Anwar, Director General of the Administrative Office of the President, highlighted that in the past, many Afghan investors were compelled to leave the country due to insecurity and other challenges.

He said, with the establishment of a stable Islamic government, more investors are returning and are now keen to reinvest in Afghanistan.

Tatarstan ready to invest in Kabul water transfer project

KABUL (Pajhwok): Tatars-tan is ready to invest in an ambitious project to transfer water from central Panjshir River to the capital Kabul as well as in other sectors.

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar met with his Tatarstani counterpart and Minister of Industry and Trade Oleg Vladimirovich Korobchenko at the Presidential Palace on Tuesday, his office said in a statement.

During the meeting, both sides discussed enhancing economic cooperation and increasing joint trade.

Mullah Baradar said the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) seeks to expand economic and trade relations with all republics of the Russian Federation and had fruitful discussions in this regard at the 16th Kazan International Economic Forum.

He added that the IEA has provided opportunities for domestic and foreign investors to invest in various sectors in Afghanistan and assured full support and cooperation on their part.



According to him, the Republic of Tatarstan can take advantage of this opportunity and invest in Afghanistan in areas such as roads, tunnels, water supply networks, dams and housing construction, the chemical industry, as well as in the water transfer project from the Panjshir River to Kabul city.

Mullah Baradar emphasized increasing Afghan exports to Tatarstan to boost joint trade between

Kabul and Kazan, as well as importing high-quality food products, medicines, and technical equipment from that country, and stressed the importance of joint efforts by the relevant ministries and agencies of both sides.

Korobchenko said that with the recognition of the IEA by the Russian Federation, many facilities have been created for interaction between Tatarstan and Afghanistan in various

fields.

He added that they are ready to invest in the project to transfer water from the Panjshir River to Kabul city, as well as in other sectors.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Tatarstan also said that several industrial companies’ representatives accompanied him on this trip and are interested in initiating cooperation with Afghanistan in various fields.

Nangarhar Orchard expects 20t of dates as local production increased

N A N G A R H A R (TOLNews): The Hada Date Palm Orchard, run by the Wadey Emirati Agricultural Company in Nangarhar, has seen an increase in yield compared to last year, with an estimated production of over 20 tons.

Abdul Qayum Atrafi, who has been managing the orchard for the past seven years, stated that the orchard was established in 2010 with date palm saplings imported from United Arab Emirates, and currently produces six different varieties of dates for the market.

Abdul Qayum Atrafi, manager of the Hada Farm Date Orchard, said: “There are around 2,700 date palm

trees in this orchard. Whenever there’s a disease outbreak, we have a plant protection team that we inform immediately. We have six varieties of dates here, and we expect this year’s yield to surpass last year’s. We’ve also established another 25-jerib orchard in addition to this one.”

Officials from Nangarhar’s Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Chambers of Agricultural Production, along with orchard workers, noted that thousands of tons of dates are imported into Afghanistan annually.

They urge the caretaker government and private sector to invest in domestic date orchards to reduce

reliance on imports.

Ajmal Rahmani, head of Nangarhar’s Agriculture, Livestock, and Production Chamber, said: “To prevent the import of thousands of dates from countries like Iran, the UAE, and others, we must establish our own orchards. We need to produce locally and meet our own market demands.”

Another worker, Abdul Mubeen, added: “If more orchards like this one are built, more job opportunities will be created for the people.”

Officials from the Wadey Emirati Agricultural Company in Nangarhar said they expect more than 20 tons of dates to be har-

vested this year and that they are intensifying efforts to promote date cultivation in the province.

Company spokesperson Sayed Homayoun Gharibmal stated: “This company has established date orchards on 65 jeribs of land. From 40 jeribs of that, we harvest dates on a large scale every year. Last year, we had a good yield, but it was severely affected by rain, hail, and wind.”

There is a growing belief that if the government and private sector focus more on establishing local date orchards, domestic production could eventually replace imports and meet market demand.

Process to refund excess fees to pilgrims started



KABUL (Pajhwok): The process of refunding excess fees to pilgrims who performed this year’s hajj pilgrimage will begin today (Wednesday), an official said on Tuesday.

Acting Minister for Hajj and Islamic Affairs Shaikh Noor Mohammad Saqib told a news conference at the Government Information and Media center on Tuesday that 30,000 Afghans had gone to Saudi Arabia this year to perform the Hajj.

He said after a detailed calculation by the Ministry, each pilgrim would be paid

3,936 afghanis, and the distribution process will begin tomorrow (Wednesday) and there is no end date.

Pilgrims from the center could go to the ministry with their original ID card and passport, and pilgrims from the provinces can go to the ministry’s directorates to receive their money.

About 282,090 afghanis were collected from each pilgrim, totaling 8 billion 278 million, 772 thousand and 320 afghanis from all pilgrims in Afghanistan, the acting minister added.

Totally, eight billion, 163 million 312 thousand

and 537.59 afghanis were spent on this year’s Hajj, and the amount of money spent by a pilgrim is 278,154.19 afghanis.

According to Saqib, a total of 115 million, 464 thousand, 782.41 afghanis remain unspent from the money collected from pilgrims. Head of Pilgrimage and Umrah, Maulvi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi explained 18 Afghan pilgrims died during this year’s Hajj.

He added this year, the number of Afghan pilgrims died was less than in previous years.

Uplift project to launch at Torghundi port soon

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Turkmenistan’s railway delegation chief has announced that work on a development project at Torghundi port would begin in near future.

A delegation from Turkmenistan, led by Qurbanov Sardar, CEO of the country’s Railway joint stock company, met with governor of western Herat province Maulvi Noor Mohammad Islamjar, his spokesman Mufti Mohammad Yousaf said.

During the meeting, the

two sides discussed development of Torghundi port and construction of a warehouse at the site for loading and unloading.

The Turkmen team announced work on the project would commence soon and all workers would be recruited from among Afghan nationals.

They also urged cooperation of the Herat local administration in implementation of this project.

Saeedi reiterated work on the project was due to kick off soon and Afghan

citizens would be employed during the construction phase.

Meanwhile, the Governor Maulvi Noor Mohammad Islamjar assured full cooperation of his administration in executing the project.

The Governor Maulvi Noor Mohammad Islamjar described the employment of Afghan workers as positive step and pledged necessary facilities would be provided to Turkmen workers in issuance of visas.

Harmful colors found in celebration cakes: Health Ministry

KABUL (Pajhwok): Findings of Food and Drug Authority (FDA) indicate that many celebration cakes in the country are decorated with metallic paints and their excessive consumption can lead to allergies, chronic diseases and even cancer.

Various types of cakes and cookies are produced and sold in Kabul, among which eye-catching celebration cakes with vibrant designs and colors are very popular. Families often serve these cakes at events like weddings, birthdays, and other celebratory gatherings.

However, the Ministry of Public Health warns that the unauthorized use of metallic colors in cakes can cause chronic illnesses, allergies, and even cancer.

Why MoPH issued this warning?

Last year, FDA of the MoPH inspected a large number of cake and cookie factories in Kabul. They

discovered that metallic colors were being used to decorate celebration cakes.

Eng. Shafiqullah Shafaq, Head of Food Surveillance Analysis at the FDA, told Pajhwok Afghan News: “Last year, we visited many cookie factories unannounced. During in-person inspections, we noticed they were using metallic colors to decorate celebration cakes. We collected samples and brought them here for further investigation.”

He added that the main reason given by bakers for using these artificial colors was a lack of awareness about their harmful effects. He also noted that such materials were used in almost all bakeries across Kabul.

Shafaq shared a copy of their investigation findings with Pajhwok.

In the report titled “Risk Analysis (22): Use of Metallic Colors in the Food Industry”, it states:

“In recent years, the use of metallic colors in food products has become a concerning public health issue. These colors are often used to make foods more visually appealing but frequently lack official health approval and can have harmful effects on human health.”

The report adds that these colors often contain heavy metals such as cadmium, chromium, zinc, and nickel.

Health consequences of these colors

Shafaq said: “Metallic colors mean that they contain heavy metals — chromium, lead. If heavy metals enter the digestive system, they can cause chronic and dangerous diseases. Even if it’s just for decoration, these should not be consumed.”

The report by the Food and Drug Authority (FDA) explains that one of the major concerns regarding

these colors is their potential to cause allergies and damage to the digestive, respiratory, nervous, and immune systems. Various studies have also shown a possible link between long-term consumption of these colors and increased risk of cancer.

This highlights the urgent need for public awareness and avoidance of such harmful additives.

According to the report, these colors can trigger skin allergic reactions such as itching, redness, and swelling, as well as respiratory issues like shortness of breath and coughing.

In terms of the digestive system, they can irritate the intestinal lining and cause nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, constipation, heartburn, and possibly gastric ulcers.

The report also notes: “Metallic colors in some food products may contain heavy metals such as zinc,

chromium, nickel, and cadmium, which play a significant role in the development of cancer. While findings are sometimes contradictory, some studies have shown that these metals can increase the risk of cancers such as colon, stomach, and kidney cancer.”

The ministry’s response, actions

The report states that, first and foremost, consumers need to be informed about the risks of unauthorized color use so they can avoid buying and consuming such products.

It further emphasizes the need to strengthen health and legal monitoring to prevent the use of harmful colors in the food industry. Additionally, more research is required to assess the long-term effects of these additives and to implement effective public health strategies.

Given the rising use of metallic colors in food

products, the need for consumer education and stricter monitoring is felt more strongly than ever. Although these colors may enhance the visual appeal of food, they pose serious health risks.

Shafaq explained the ministry’s measures: “First, we issue recommendations. Then our public awareness teams visit the factories and explain the issue. After that, we conduct follow-up inspections. If the problem persists and they do not comply, legal action will be taken.”

He added: “We shared the issue with higher authorities, and their directive was that we can repeatedly conduct thorough inspections. If violations continue and they remain non-compliant, legal measures must follow.”

Public awareness needed Shafaq added that in terms of imports, alternative materials can be used

instead of these harmful colors. These metallic decorative colors are industrial and are typically used in painting buildings or furniture.

He suggested that instead, food-grade colors should be used—those that are safe for consumption and do not cause digestive or health issues.

Factory Workers: We use these colors based on customer demand

Shafiqullah, a senior baker at a cake and cookie factory in Kabul, told Pajhwok that he uses metallic colors in cakes due to customer orders.

He said: “I use cake ingredients and cream, and these colors are only for decoration. Most designs come from the internet. Some customers even say: ‘Color it—we won’t eat it—but the design must be there.’”

According to him, they also consume these cakes

themselves and give them to their families.

He added: “Since the Ministry of Health announced that these colors are harmful, we’ve reduced our usage. Now, we only use them for specific orders when customers insist.”

Similarly, Mohsen, another baker at a cake and cookie factory in Kabul, said that various ingredients are used in cake production, but metallic colors are used upon customer request.

He said: “Before using these colors based on a customer’s order, we inform them about the nature of the color and ask whether to use it or not. These metallic colors are only mixed with 70% medical alcohol. We know it’s harmful, so we use them only for customer’s orders.”

He added that they have decided to stop using these colors in baking going forward.

Bilawal flays Indian atrocities in IOJ&K

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the Indian government's illegal and unilateral actions in Illegally Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, reiterating Pakistan's unwavering political, moral, and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people on the solemn occasion of Youm-e-Istehsal being observed across the country on August 5.

According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP said in his message that August 5 marks a dark chapter in South Asia's history when, in 2019, India revoked the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir in blatant violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. "Over the last six years, the BJP-led Indian regime has accelerated its colonial project in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by introducing policies aimed at altering the region's demographic character, disempowering its indigenous population, and erasing its distinct political and cultural identity," he said.

Bilawal condemned India's arbitrary delimitation of constituencies, the mass inclusion of non-Kashmiris in electoral rolls, and the issuance of domicile certificates to outsiders as part of a broader strategy to turn Kashmiris into a political minority in their own homeland. "This demographic engineering is not just illegal—it is an act of aggression against an entire people," he pointed out.

Chairman PPP emphasized that Youm-e-Istehsal is not only a day of condemnation, but also a moment to reaffirm the commitment of the Pakistani nation to the Kashmiri cause. He further said that the people of Pakistan, and the Pakistan Peoples Party in particular, will always stand shoulder to shoulder with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters until their right to self-determination is realized as per the United Nations Security Council resolutions. He recalled the life-long commitment of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to the cause of Kashmir. "We carry forward their legacy, and we will never abandon the people of Kashmir in their darkest hour," he vowed.

NDMA warns of flood risk

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) of NDMA has issued a fresh flood alert in view of an intensifying monsoon system affecting upper and central regions of Pakistan from August 5 to 8, 2025.

The alert follows the combined influence of penetrating monsoon currents and a westerly trough over northern Pakistan, which is expected to result in scattered heavy rainfall during this period.

Increased inflows are anticipated in all major rivers, especially Indus, Chenab, and Ravi, with nullahs of Ravi and Chenab likely to reach up to medium flood levels. Tarbela, Guddu, and Sukkur Barrages are presently at low flood stage, but continued rain may push Chashma and Taunsa towards low flood levels as well.

River Chenab at Marala is expected to reach low flood, while River Jhelum upstream of Mangla Dam, along with its tributaries, may attain medium flows. River Kabul at Nowshera, and River Swat and Panjkora with their associated streams and nullahs are also likely to swell owing to persistent rainfall in their catchment areas.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, stream networks in districts Hunza, Shigar, and Ghanche may see significant rise in water levels with potential for localized flash floods in tributaries. Current storage levels at major reservoirs show Tarbela at 94% and Mangla at 61%, with further inflow expected.

Bangladesh to hold elections in February 2026

DHAKA (AFP) Bangladesh will hold elections in February 2026, interim leader Muhammad Yunus said Tuesday, the first polls since a mass uprising overthrew the government last year.

"On behalf of the interim government, I will write a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner requesting that the election be arranged before Ramadan in February 2026," Yunus said in a broadcast on the one-year anniversary of the ousting of prime minister Sheikh Hasina. Nobel Peace Prize winner Yunus, 85, is leading the caretaker government as its chief adviser until elections, and has said he will step down after the vote.

"We will step into the final and most important phase after delivering this speech to you, and that is the transfer of power to an elected government", he said. Yunus had earlier said elections would be held in April, but key political parties have been demanding he hold them earlier, and before the Islamic holy

month of Ramadan in the Muslim-majority nation of 170 million people.

"I urge you all to pray for us so that we can hold a fair and smooth election, enabling all citizens to move forward successfully in building a 'New Bangladesh', he added. "On behalf of the government, we will extend all necessary support to ensure that the election is free, peaceful and celebratory in spirit." Hasina's rule saw widespread human rights abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killing of her political opponents, and Yunus has pledged to overhaul democratic institutions.

"The sacrifice of thousands has gifted us this rare opportunity for national reform, and we must protect it at any cost," Yunus said in letter issued to mark the anniversary. "The fallen autocrats and their self-serving allies remain active, conspiring to derail our progress."

But he said that while the interim government had made "extensive reform

efforts", a deal on measures to prevent a return to authoritarian rule remained elusive. Political parties are jostling for power ahead of elections. "Dialogue continues with political parties and stakeholders on necessary reforms, including the political and electoral systems," he added.

He called for people to remember the sacrifices made last year and to work together. "Let us stand united beyond all divisions to confront and defeat these threats," he added. "Together, we will build a Bangladesh where tyranny will never rise again." Protests began on July 1, 2024, with university students calling for reforms to a quota system for public sector jobs.

They culminated on August 5, 2024, when thousands stormed Hasina's palace as she escaped by helicopter. Hasina, 77, remains in India, where she has defied court orders to attend her ongoing trial on charges amounting to crimes against humanity.

Trump again threatens India with harsh tariffs

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President Donald Trump again threatened on Monday to raise tariffs on goods from India over its Russian oil purchases, while New Delhi called his attack "unjustified" and vowed to protect its economic interests, deepening the trade rift between the two countries.

In a social media post, Trump wrote, "India is not only buying massive amounts of Russian Oil, they are then, for much of the Oil purchased, selling it on the Open Market for big profits. They don't care how many people in Ukraine are being killed by the Russian War Machine." "Because of this, I will be substantially raising the Tariff paid by India to the USA," he added.

A spokesperson for India's foreign ministry

said in response that India will "take all necessary measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security." "The targeting of India is unjustified and unreasonable," the spokesperson added.

Trump has said that from Friday he will impose new sanctions on Russia as well as on countries that buy its energy exports, unless Moscow takes steps to end its 3-1/2 year war with Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin has shown no public sign of altering his stance despite the deadline. Over the weekend, two Indian government sources told Reuters that India will keep purchasing oil from Russia despite Trump's threats.

India has faced pressure from the West to distance itself from Moscow since Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022. New Delhi has

resisted, citing its long-standing ties with Russia and economic needs. Trump had already in July announced 25% tariffs on Indian imports, and US officials have cited a range of geopolitical issues standing in the way of a US-India trade accord.

Trump has also cast the wider BRICS group of developing nations as hostile to the United States. Those nations have dismissed his accusation, saying the group promotes the interests of its members and of developing countries at large.

India is the biggest buyer of seaborne crude from Russia, importing about 1.75 million barrels per day of Russian oil from January to June this year, up 1% from a year ago, according to data provided to Reuters by trade sources.

Gaza civil defense says Israeli attacks kill 26

GAZA CITY (AFP): Gaza's civil defense agency said 26 people were killed by Israeli gunfire and air strikes on Tuesday, including 14 who were waiting near an aid distribution site inside the Palestinian territory. Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that eight people were killed by Israeli gunfire while waiting for aid near the south Gaza city of Khan Yunis.

Six more people were killed and 21 injured by Israeli fire in central Gaza while waiting for food near a distribution center, according to Bassal. The Israeli army told AFP it was looking into the incidents.

Media restrictions in Gaza and difficulties in accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify the tolls and details provided by the civil defense agency and other parties. Thousands of

Gazans gather daily near food distribution points across Gaza, including four belonging to the US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

Its operations have been marred by chaotic scenes and near-daily reports of Israeli forces firing on those waiting to collect rations. Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods and aid into Gaza since the start of the war nearly 22 months ago have led to shortages of food and essential goods, including medicine, medical supplies and fuel, which hospitals rely on to power their generators.

Bassal said that five people were killed by a nightly air strike on a tent in Al-Mawasi in south Gaza, an area Israeli authorities designated as a safe zone early on in the war. "It's said to be a green zone and it's safe, but it's not. They also say that the aid (distribution) is safe, but people die

while obtaining aid," said Adham Younes, who lost a relative in the strike.

"There's no safety within the Gaza Strip, everyone is exposed to death, everyone is subject to injury," the 30-year-old told AFP. Mahmud Younes, another Gazan who said he witnessed the strike, said: "'We found women screaming — they were covered in blood. The entire family has been injured.'" Bassal of the civil defense agency said that six more people were killed in a strike near Gaza City, and one in a strike near the southern city of Khan Yunis.

The Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing and the largest armed force in Gaza, said in a statement Tuesday that they had bombarded an Israeli command-and-control center in south Gaza's Morag Axis, an Israeli-controlled corridor.

Moscow says not bound by missile treaty

MOSCOW: Russia is no longer bound by a moratorium on the deployment of short- and medium-range nuclear missiles, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said, with former President Dmitry Medvedev blaming NATO's "anti-Russian policy" and warning that Moscow will take "further steps" in response.

Medvedev, who has engaged in a war of words on social media with United States President Donald Trump, made his latest broadside after the Russian Ministry's statement on the withdrawal of the moratorium on the deployment of medium- and short-range missiles is the result of NATO countries' anti-Russian policy," Medvedev posted in English on the X social

media platform.

"This is a new reality all our opponents will have to reckon with. Expect further steps," he said. Medvedev, who serves as the deputy head of Russia's powerful Security Council and has made several hawkish comments on Russia's nuclear capabilities in recent years, did not elaborate on what "further steps" may entail.

Last week, Trump said that he had ordered two US nuclear submarines to be repositioned to "the appropriate regions" in response to Medvedev's remarks about the risk of war between Washington and Moscow. In its statement, Russia's Foreign Ministry said the developing situation in Europe and the Asia Pacific prompted its reassessment on the deployment of short- and medium-range missiles. "Since the situation is

developing towards the actual deployment of US-made land-based medium- and short-range missiles in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, the Russian Foreign Ministry notes that the conditions for maintaining a unilateral moratorium on the deployment of similar weapons have disappeared," the ministry said. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said last year that Moscow may have to respond to what they described as provocations by the US and NATO by lifting restrictions on a missile deployment.

Lavrov told Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti in December that Moscow's unilateral moratorium on the deployment of such missiles was "practically no longer viable and will have to be abandoned". — Aljazeera



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Head of European Union delegation to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Awian-e-Sadr.

Govt taking steps for law, order: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Adviser for Information Barrister Dr. Saif has emphasised that coordination with Afghanistan is essential to effectively curb terrorism in the region.

In a statement, Barrister Saif said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the provincial government is taking serious measures to maintain law and order. After holding tribal jirgas in Khyber and Orakzai, a Bajaur jirga at the Chief Minister's House, where tribal elders and key stakeholders are discussing security in the area.

He added that following the All Parties Conference (APC), a series of step-by-step jirgas are being organized, culminating in a Grand Jirga, which will finalize recommendations for sustainable peace to be presented to the relevant forums. The KP Information Adviser stressed that establishing peace is the provincial government's top priority, especially as the merged tribal districts are located along the Afghanistan border.

He further said that public trust and cooperation will remain central to all law-and-order initiatives and that cross-border coordination with Afghanistan is critical to counter terrorism effectively.

PHC seeks ECP reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PCH) has issued notices to Election Commission of Pakistan and other relevant authorities in a petition filed by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly challenging the order of the PHC's Chief Justice regarding the oath-taking ceremony for members elected to reserved seats at the Governor's House, on Tuesday.

PHC divisional bench comprising of Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Farah Jamshed has also directed the Election Commission to submit its response on the maintainability of the petitions.

The court has issued a notice to the Election Commission in a petition challenging the declaration of PTI members as independents. The petitions argued that the Chief Justice's order to administer the oath at the Governor's House was unconstitutional and that the oath should have been administered within the Assembly.

The petition stated that the Chief Justice's order was not in accordance with Article 255(2) of the Constitution, which outlines the procedure for administering the oath to members of the Assembly. The petition also argued that Article 65 of the Constitution requires the oath to be administered within the Assembly.

PHC has directed Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ask the Speaker to provide a schedule for administering the oath to the members. The court has fixed August 20 as the next hearing date for the petitions.

Meanwhile, the Peshawar High Court has restrained the NAB from arresting Syed Mehtab Shah, an accused in the Kohistan mega corruption scandal and ordered him to cooperate in the investigation, on Tuesday. The counsel Syed Qaiser Ali Shah advocate argued that the petitioner is willing to cooperate with NAB and that he had sold properties in question.

Chief of Naval staff visits Turkiye

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, undertook an official visit to Turkiye, during which he was conferred the prestigious Legion of Merit by the Turkish Armed Forces. The award was presented by Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces, Admiral Erumant Tatlioglu, in recognition of Admiral Naveed Ashraf's efforts to strengthen defence ties and maritime cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Upon his arrival at the Turkish Naval Forces Headquarters, Admiral Naveed Ashraf was presented a guard of honour and subsequently called on the Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces, Admiral Erumant Tatlioglu. During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed matters of professional interest, focusing on enhanced collaboration between the two navies.

During the visit, the Naval Chief also called on the Minister of National Defence, Yasar Guler;



Chief of the General Staff, General Metin Gurak; and Commander of the Turkish Navy Fleet, Admiral Kadir Yildiz. These high-level engagements included discussions on regional maritime security and bilateral defence cooperation.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf emphasized the need for increased interaction between the armed forces through joint exercises, mutual visits, and training and exchange programs.

Later, the Naval Chief visited Istanbul Naval Shipyard, where he called on the Commander of the Shipyard and received a detailed briefing on Pakistan Navy's MILGEM project - a flagship initiative in bilateral defence collaboration. He also visited

Golcuk Naval Base, where he observed cutting-edge submarine design and construction facilities.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf further visited the Turkish naval vessels TCG ORU-CREIS and S/M PIRIREIS, as well as the National Defence University (NDU) in Turkiye. He also called on the Commander of the North Sea Area and laid a wreath at the mausoleum of Turkiye's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as a mark of respect. The Naval Chief's visit is expected to play a pivotal role in further strengthening and expanding defence relations between Pakistan and Turkiye, two nations bound by deep-rooted historical, cultural, and strategic ties.

Jirga rejects any operation in Swat

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A grand Aman Jirga was convened at the Commissioner Office in Saidu Sharif, Swat, to address the law and order situation in the region.

The jirga, chaired by Provincial Minister for Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai, brought together prominent figures from various walks of life, including MNA Saleem ur Rahman, Deduck Chairman Akhtar Khan, MPA Hameed ur Rahman, MPA Ali Shah, MPA Sultan room, Commissioner Malakand Abid Wazir, DIG Sher Akbar, DC swat Saleem Jan, President Qumi Aman jirga Mukhtyar Yousafzai, Zahid Khan, Saleem Khan, Shaibuhadar Khan, lawmakers,

lawyers, journalists, and representatives of different organizations.

The participants unanimously rejected any possible operation in Swat, emphasizing the need for unity, solidarity, and responsibility in the current situation. Fazal Hakeem Khan stressed that there would be no compromise on the peace of Swat and that any decision related to law and order would require the trust of the people.

The minister assured that the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur, would consult with the people of Swat before making any decision. He emphasized that the people of Swat would not be subjected to any new test and that their unity and determination would foil any conspir-

acy against peace.

The jirga participants agreed to cooperate fully with the police, monitor suspicious activities, and establish an effective public communication system. Fazal Hakeem Khan also reminded the law enforcement officials, including the Commissioner, DIG, DPO, and DC Swat, that they were accountable to the people of Swat and that any decision related to law and order would require their trust.

DIG Malakand assured the jirga that 7,000 personnel were deployed in Swat to protect lives and property and would be ready to deal with any situation. The jirga concluded with a unanimous decision to reject any possible operation in Swat and to work towards maintaining peace and stability in the region.

CJP reiterates conformity between Bench and Bar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, accompanied by Mr. Justice Junaid Ghaffar, Chief Justice of the High Court of Sindh, met today with a delegation of the Sindh High Court Bar Association at the Supreme Court Branch Registry, Karachi.

The delegation was led by SHC Bar Association President, Barrister Muhammad Sarfraz Ali Metlo and comprising Mr. Muhammad Rahib Lakho, Vice President, Mirza Sarfraz Ahmed, Honorary Secretary, Mr. Athar Ali Memon, Honorary Treasurer, Mr. Waseem Saif Khoso, Honorary Joint Secretary, Ms. Safia Qadir, Mr. Aamer Latif, Ms. Zahida Kamal Alvi, Mr. Muhammad Aamir Khosa, Mr. Rizwan Ali Rajpar, Mr. Muhammad Faisal Khan, Ms. Urooj Akhlaq, Mr. Deewan Tara Chand and Mr. Ubedullah Abro, Members Managing Committee and Mr. Rehan Aziz Malik, Ex-President.

According to a press note released here Tuesday, the Chief Justice of Pakistan warmly welcomed the delegation and reaffirmed that the Bench and Bar are integral components of a justice system. He stressed that the

shared mission of delivering justice cannot be achieved without the close cooperation of the legal fraternity, assuring that he would not allow any factor to disrupt this vital meaningful partnership.

Briefing the delegation, the Chief Justice outlined the ongoing reform agenda being implemented through the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP). He apprised them of the measures taken for the welfare of the legal fraternity, including their inclusion in decision-making processes and policy development for the justice sector. Notable initiatives include the solarization of bar premises and the integration of IT solutions (e-libraries) to enhance bar's technical abilities in remote areas. It was reiterated that the decision was taken after a consultative process and collective input.

He further shared significant decisions taken at recent meetings of the LJCP and the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC), which he chaired. These decisions include acknowledging the issue of enforced disappearances and the creation of a dedicated committee to propose an institutional response; directives to High Courts to devise mechanisms to safeguard judges from

external influence; establishment of Commercial Litigation Corridors and Model Criminal Trial Courts for speedy adjudication; timelines for the disposal of 13 categories of cases; piloting a Double-Docket Court Regime; institutionalization of court-annexed mediation; and adoption of a Professional Excellence Index to elevate.

Additionally, the NJPMC formed a committee for standardization of recruitment, training, and service conditions for the district judiciary. In response, the President of the Sindh High Court Bar Association expressed gratitude to the Chief Justice for the initiatives undertaken for the legal community. He highlighted challenges faced by the fraternity and proposed the establishment of Model Civil Courts for the swift adjudication of the oldest civil cases. The Chief Justice welcomed these suggestions and assured that they would be placed before the relevant forums for due consideration. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmed commitment to strengthening judicial efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, underscoring the indispensable partnership between the Bench and Bar in ensuring the effective delivery of justice.