

Two police officers martyred
F.P. Report

KOHAT: Two policemen embraced martyrdom during a heavy exchange of firing with terrorists in Kohat early Friday. The gunbattle took place in Nadir Banda area of Kohat. One of the policemen was identified as Sub Inspector Tahir Nawaz, and another was a police constable. The intense shootout was still underway and a heavy contingent of police was called in after the incident.

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DG ISPR visits Murree School
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Military spokesperson Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), engaged with students at multiple educational centers in Murree on Friday, emphasizing national solidarity. Students from Army Public School, Convent of Jesus and Mary, and Presentation Convent participated in an open dialogue with the military official.

Egg thrown at Aleema Khan outside Adiala jail
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: An egg was hurled at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's sister Aleema Khanum on Friday during a press conference in Rawalpindi. A viral video shows her talking to media when an egg is thrown at her, leaving her shocked. Her sister Uzma Khan and lawyer were also present when the incident took place outside the Adiala jail.

Police have taken two women into custody and shifted them to Adiala police station. Police said the women got enraged and hurled the egg after Aleema did not respond to their questions. "We are not worried if someone attacks us — we knew this would happen," the PTI founder's sister said following the egg attack.

After making the statement, Aleema Khan avoided answering questions from reporters outside Adiala Jail and chose to sit in her vehicle instead. Earlier, a heated exchange occurred between PTI leaders, supporters, and journalists. The PTI workers became agitated when tough questions were posed to Aleema Khan.

Speaking outside Adiala Jail, Aleema Khan stated that people will see that injustice as their anger is evident from their eyes. She added that the PTI founder is the voice of the people, advocating for democracy and the rule of law. "They want to silence the voice of the PTI founder," she said.

Floods claim 884 lives: NA told
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tatar on Friday termed the ongoing floods a massive natural disaster affecting millions across the country, stressing that dealing with such calamities is often beyond human control, even in advanced nations.

Addressing the National Assembly, he briefed the House on the scale of devastation and the relief operations under way. He said so far, 884 people had lost their lives, with the toll expected to rise as operations continue, particularly in Punjab.

The minister said more than 7,138 houses had been destroyed, while updated figures suggested the number could reach 9,292. Over 6,180 livestock losses had also been reported, with around 2.1 million people directly affected, requiring extensive evacuation and relief support. He informed that the Prime Minister had announced a comprehensive relief package, under which the families of the deceased would receive Rs 2 million, those seriously injured Rs 500,000, and other affected persons Rs 200,000. So far, nearly Rs 690 million had already been disbursed to the affected families, while Rs 1.3 billion had been released to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for relief and recovery efforts.

The minister underlined the importance of coordinated work between the federal, provincial, and district administrations within the three-tier disaster management system. The NDMA, he said, was issuing timely alerts and coordinating resources, noting that 92 percent of flood predictions this season had been accurate.

Holiday Notice

ON the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi, the offices of The Frontier Post will remain closed on 06-09-2025 (Saturday). Therefore, there will be no issue of newspaper on 07-09-2025 (Sunday).



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Palestinian President on Religious Affairs and Chief Justice of Shariat Court of Palestine, Mahmoud Siddiqui Alhabash presenting a letter by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Bilawal urges PM to declare agri emergency
F.P. Report

KASUR: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited the flood-affected areas of Kasur on Friday. He was accompanied by the former Prime Minister and PPP Central Punjab President, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider, PPP Central Secretary Information Nadeem Afzal Chan, In-charge of the PPP Peoples Labour Bureau, Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed, and PPP Punjab Secretary General Hassan Murtaza.

Addressing the gathering, Chairman Bilawal said that the Punjab administration had given him a briefing on the floods. At present, Punjab is the most affected province and widespread destruction has taken place. He said that the Chief Minister of Punjab is doing good work. What is needed at this time is that the local government, the administration, the provincial government, and the federal government should all work together to deliver maximum relief to the flood victims.

He recalled that during the previous government, when Shehbaz Sharif was Prime Minister and he himself was a minister, floods had struck then as well, and the government had helped the flood victims through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). He said the rescue operation is ongoing, but unfortunately in Pakistan people often start criticism during natural disasters, something he himself has witnessed in the past. He added that he has instructed his party to fully assist the flood victims in every possible way. PPP will stand with the provincial government both during the relief and reconstruction phases, he emphasized, because no single government can cope with a calamity of this scale.

He announced that the PPP will request the Prime Minister once again, as in the past, deliver immediate assistance to affected families through BISP. Punjab's farmers have suffered the most losses, he noted, stressing that agriculture is the backbone of the national economy. He urged that an agricultural emergency be declared in Punjab, and that the Prime Minister provide farmers with support in the supply of seeds and fertilizers. He also called for relief in electricity bills and loan installments for flood victims.

Bilawal said the rebuilding of homes would come in the third phase, and that assessments of the damage to houses, businesses, and infrastructure would be carried out. He appealed to the federal government to initiate reconstruction in Punjab just as 2 million homes are being built in Sindh, and

noted that in Sindh too, the federal government is assisting in rebuilding houses and infrastructure.

He further said that floods have also caused destruction in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and there too, the provincial governments will need federal support. "We must support the people. All of us must unite to assist the governments of Gilgit-Baltistan, KP, and Punjab. We will not abandon them," he vowed.

Bilawal reminded the audience that these floods came from rivers flowing out of India. He accused India of violating international law by refusing to honor the Indus Waters Treaty. "This time we witnessed that India forgot humanity and failed to provide timely flood data. We condemn this attitude of India. We are raising this issue at the international level and will compel India either to honor the Indus Waters Treaty or return our rivers to us. Under international law, India is obligated to respect the treaty. India is committing water terrorism, which we will never tolerate," he declared.

Concluding his speech, Bilawal assured the people that their demands will be conveyed to both the provincial and federal governments, and that he himself will personally raise the matter with the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended heartfelt felicitations to the entire nation on the joyous occasion of 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal.

According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP said in his message that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is a mercy for all mankind and a source of guidance for humanity until the end of time. Every aspect of his blessed life is a shining example of service and compassion.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) always taught lessons of helping others, selflessness, and brotherhood. His saying that "the best of people are those who are most beneficial to others" remains a timeless message for building a just and caring society. He added that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) established a society based on justice and equality, which continues to serve as a model for humanity. Today, it is our duty to spread his message of love, compassion, and humanity to strengthen unity and harmony in our society. Concluding his message, the PPP Chairman prayed that Almighty Allah grants us the ability to truly follow the teachings of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

PM directs climate resilience action plan
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination to begin immediate preparations for the 2026 monsoon season and present a comprehensive climate resilience action plan, within two weeks, that must address Pakistan's growing vulnerability to climate change, including increasingly intense rainfall and flooding.

The prime minister chaired a high-level review meeting here to assess the damage caused by recent heavy rains and flooding, as well as the ongoing rescue, relief, and rehabilitation efforts underway across the country, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. PM Shehbaz declared the rehabilitation of flood-affected citizens a top national priority. He directed authorities to ensure full preparedness in river-adjacent areas of southern Pakistan, which remain vulnerable to flooding.

He emphasized that the federal government stands fully prepared to support provincial governments in all aspects of relief and rehabilitation. The Prime Minister stressed the need for real-time monitoring of evacuation and relief operations to ensure that timely assistance reaches those in need. He instructed the establishment of a special com-

Advisor to President of Palestine calls on Premier
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday met Advisor to the President of Palestine on Religious Affairs and Chief Justice of the Shariat Court, Mahmoud Siddiqui Alhabash who is leading the Palestinian delegation to attend the Seerat Conference here flanked by Imam of Al Aqsa Mosque and the Palestinian Ambassador. During the meeting, the Prime Minister conveyed his warm regards to Dr. Mahmoud Abbass, President of Palestine. He reaffirmed the unwavering support of the people of Pakistan to the Palestinian cause and assured the Palestinian side that Pakistan would continue to lend its full support for the brotherly people of Palestine, who have rendered enormous sacrifices and bravely faced Israeli brutal aggression, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

mittee to facilitate financial assistance for flood victims who are not currently registered with NADRA.

In addition, he urged the Ministry of Climate Change to begin immediate preparations for the 2026 monsoon season and directed it to present a comprehensive climate resilience action plan within two weeks. The plan, he said, must address Pakistan's growing vulnerability to climate change, including increasingly intense rainfall and flooding.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister praised the efforts of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster

Management Authorities (PDMAs), the Pakistan Army, and federal and provincial rescue and relief agencies for their coordinated operations in affected areas. Officials briefed the Prime Minister on the extent of the damage and the current status of operations. According to the latest updates, floodwaters from the Ravi, Sutlej, and Chenab rivers have reached parts of central and southern Punjab and are expected to pass through Panjnad. Authorities have made preparations to handle a potential water flow of 1 to 1.2 million cusecs; however, the actual flow is expected to be around 600,000 cusecs, significantly lower than initially projected.

Pak reaffirms commitment to regional peace: FO
Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan on Friday said Pakistan remains firmly committed to advancing regional peace, economic connectivity, and multilateral cooperation under framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

In his weekly press briefing, he provided an extensive briefing on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China to attend the SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS) and SCO CHS Plus meetings held in Tianjin from August 31 to September 1. The Prime Minister's visit, undertaken at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, saw high-level engagements with SCO member states and key regional leaders.

During the summit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighted Pakistan's

perspectives on pressing regional and global issues and called for a comprehensive and structured dialogue to resolve longstanding disputes in South Asia. He strongly condemned terrorism in all forms, including state-sponsored terrorism, and cited irrefutable evidence of foreign involvement in recent terrorist incidents such as the Jaffar Express hostage crisis and attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

FO Spokesperson said the prime minister also voiced firm condemnation of Israel's military offensive in Gaza, describing it as "inhuman" and calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. He also denounced the recent attack on Iran, a fellow SCO member state. He stated that the PM stressed the importance of meaningful engagement with Afghanistan, noting that instability in Afghanistan undermines development across the

entire SCO region. The PM also highlighted the significance of regional connectivity and economic integration, pointing to Pakistan's strategic geographical location as a potential trade and transit hub for the SCO.

He underscored the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a cornerstone for regional integration under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Shafqat Ali Khan said on the sidelines of the summit, the prime minister held a series of bilateral meetings with the Presidents of China, Russia, Türkiye, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan. These discussions focused on enhancing political, economic, trade, energy, and defense cooperation. Notably, the PM congratulated Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the signing of the historic peace agreement with Armenia, marking a significant step toward peace in the South Caucasus.



LAHORE: A view of fireworks during Jashan-e-Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) rally in connection with 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal.

India issues Sutlej flood warning amid Punjab's swelling rivers
F.P. Report

LAHORE: Dangerous flooding in the Ravi, Sutlej, and Chenab rivers, combined with torrential rains, has caused massive destruction across many cities of Punjab. Hundreds more villages have been submerged, millions of acres of crops destroyed, and in Gujrat, urban flooding caused by heavy downpours has paralyzed life.

As a result of flooding in the Ravi, Chenab, and Sutlej rivers, nearly 4,000 villages and more than 3.5 million people have been affected in Punjab, while millions of acres of crops have been wiped out.

The Indian High Commission has sent another letter to the Indus Water Commission, stating that the Sutlej River is facing high flood levels at Harike and Ferozepur, which will send additional water surges into Pakistan.

According to the Punjab

Flood Forecasting Division, flood conditions persist across rivers in Punjab. Extremely high floods have been recorded at Head Sidhnai and Ganda Singh Wala. The Chenab River is also facing extremely high floods at Head Khanki, Head Qadirabad, and Chiniot Bridge. High flood levels have been reported at Head Marala, Ravi Siphon, Shahdara, Balloki, and Head Sulemanki, while Trimmu, Jassar, Islam, and Mailsi Siphon are experiencing medium floods. Guddu, Sukkur, Kotri, and Panjnad are witnessing low floods. In tributaries of the Chenab, Nullah Aik is experiencing very high floods and Nullah Palku high floods, while water levels in Nullah Basantar and Nullah Bein, linked to the Ravi, have decreased.

The confluence of the Ravi and Chenab near Khanewal has created a double threat for Multan and Muzaffargarh districts. Despite controlled breach-

es last week, the risk remains. At Head Muhammad Wala and Sher Shah, the water level was recorded at 412 feet, only five feet below the danger mark. Authorities have termed the next 12 hours extremely critical as pressure is increasing at erosion points near the confluence of the two rivers.

At Head Ganda Singh Wala in Kasur, a dangerous flow of 319,000 cusecs in the Sutlej River has engulfed more than 100 villages, including Noori Wala, Bhedian, and Usman Wala. Around 132 villages and 18,000 acres of land have been submerged, causing crop losses worth millions of rupees. In the surrounding areas of Luddan, high floods in the Sutlej caused breaches in protective bunds, submerging many settlements. A government elementary school collapsed, and its building and furniture were swept away.

In Kabirwala, floodwaters from the Ravi entered villages

including Kund Sargana, Qatalpur, and Barbegi. The makeshift embankments built by locals broke at multiple points, allowing water to rapidly enter homes and fields.

In Gujrat, 506 millimeters of rainfall within 24 hours triggered severe urban flooding. Four feet of water accumulated at Kutchery Chowk, Gondal Chowk, Zahoore Elahi Stadium, Jail Chowk, and other key points. Overflowing of Nullah Bhandar and Nullah Bhimber swept away a house. The session court, government offices, and shops in Gujrat went underwater, causing panic among residents as mosque loudspeakers made continuous announcements.

In Multan, floodwaters from the Ravi reached the railway bridge. In Shujabad tehsil, the flood destroyed many villages, forcing people to migrate on their own. In Lodhran, protective bunds in five villages broke, flooding crops and cutting off

road links. In Khanewal, 136 villages have been affected, while 75 villages have been impacted in Toba Tek Singh. In Kot Momin's Ram Deyana area, a government elementary school and several buildings were submerged. At Shorkot on the Chenab, high floods inundated nearby areas along Jhang-Multan Road, where army and rescue teams carried out relief operations.

In Multan, riverbank erosion caused by flood surges washed away land. In Pindi Bhattian, Chenab floodwaters entered several areas, submerging the Government Technical College and a police patrolling post. In Jhoke Venus, Chenab floodwaters devastated multiple villages, while in Chishtian, an entire settlement was submerged, forcing residents to climb rooftops for safety. At Head Islam, water levels rose again, submerging more villages. In Vehari, more than 15 government schools have been destroyed by floodwaters.

DG Punjab Disaster Management Authority Irfan Ali Kathia confirmed that the death toll from floods in Punjab has reached 46, and more than 3.5 million people have been affected. Nearly 4,000 villages have been submerged, about 1.5 million people rescued, and more than 1 million livestock relocated to safer places. He added that floodwaters from the Chenab at Qadirabad will again hit affected areas, and once the river reaches Jhang, the situation will worsen further. He warned that a massive surge of 900,000 cusecs will enter Sindh on the night between September 6 and 7.

Floods have destroyed over 1,326 million acres of crops in Punjab. Faisalabad Division was the worst hit, with 323,215 acres damaged. In Gujranwala Division, 262,000 acres were destroyed, and in Gujrat Division, 238,000 acres. Bahawalpur Division lost 145,000 acres of crops, Sahiwal Division 137,000 acres, and Lahore Division 99,421 acres.



Sharjeel and a new chapter in Sindh's transport

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Millions of people travel on Karachi's roads every day. A shortage of buses, unregulated terminals, the pressure of heavy vehicles, and a growing population have long made transport one of the city's biggest problems.

In this situation, Sindh's Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information and Transport, Sharjeel Inam Memon, took charge and announced a vision that promises relief for ordinary citizens.

Sharjeel Inam Memon's most significant step is his effort to promote environment-friendly transport. For the first time in Sindh, e-taxi and electric bus projects have been initiated. These buses will not only minimize pollution but also offer the people cheap and modern means of travel. The Pink Bus Service, launched for women, has already set an exemplary status of safe and comfortable travel.

Double-decker buses will soon run on Karachi's busiest artery,

Shahrah-e-Faisal. The sight may remind one of London or Dubai, but this facility is now being provided in Karachi itself. Similarly, the Yellow Line BRT project is being expedited to provide hundreds of thousands of passengers with regular and organized transport each day.

In the past, the city suffered greatly from illegal bus terminals and the traffic chaos they created. The new terminal at Sohrah Goth is a step towards resolving this issue. Now, large buses arriving from the interior of Sindh pick up and drop passengers at one designated place, easing congestion in other parts of the city. At the same time, plans are underway to connect the SITE Industrial Area to major transport projects, providing convenience for both workers and industrialists.

These reforms are not limited to road infrastructure alone. The minister has announced plans to digitize the entire transport system. Permits to be on the routes, fitness checks on the vehicles, and commercial transport monitoring will henceforth be

handled by centralized software. It is likely to check corruption and enhance transparency.

As Information Minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon has also launched an innovative program to re-launch the local movie industry, offer avenues for young filmmakers, and spread messages of national harmony. He believes that media and culture can instill confidence and hope among the people.

Citizens are already welcoming these initiatives. Nida Fatima, a resident of Gulshan-e-Iqbal who uses the Pink Bus daily, said: "Earlier, I felt unsafe while traveling to the office. Now, because of the Pink Bus, I commute with peace of mind and confidence." Muhammad Saleem, a laborer from Liaquatabad, added, "With the new terminal at Sohrah Goth, our buses arrive on time. The roads are no longer as congested as before." Student Zainul Abidin remarked: "If double-decker buses and the BRT are introduced on schedule, it will be a huge relief for Karachi's youth."

Sindh, PR agree on joint steps for KCR revival

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, in a high-level meeting, agreed to strengthen collaboration between the provincial government and Pakistan Railways on multiple fronts, including the revival of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), outsourcing of key services, removal of encroachments, and the introduction of upgraded Karachi-Rohri passenger trains.

The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by senior Sindh cabinet members, including Senior Minister for Transport Sharjeel Inam Memon, Minister for Planning, Development & Energy Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Principal Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin. The federal delegation included Secretary Railways Mazhar Ali Shah, Senior GM Railways Amir Ali Baloch, AGM Infrastructure Hammad Hassan, DS Karachi Mahmood Rehman Lakho, and Director to Minister Ashfaq Ahmed.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah praised Hanif Abbasi's proactive role, saying, "After a long time, we are finally seeing ownership from Pakistan Railways." He regretted that while railways are profit-making globally, Pakistan Railways continues to suffer losses and called for reforms to improve efficiency and service delivery.

Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) revival: The meeting also discussed at length the revival



of the Karachi Circular Railway. CM Murad Shah stressed that KCR was an urgent necessity for Karachi, lamenting the years of delay in its implementation. He suggested that the Sindh government and Pakistan Railways should jointly develop the project, while also engaging donor agencies and the private sector.

Originally studied by JICA from 2008 to 2013, KCR was included in CPEC in 2016. A revised feasibility study, prepared by Sindh government with China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC), estimates the cost at USD 2,002 billion. The 43-kilometre circular route will include 24 stations, serve an estimated 650,000 passengers daily, and provide critical east-west and north-south connectivity across Karachi. However, the updated feasibility still awaits approval from Chinese authorities.

Anti-encroachment drives have already cleared over 11 acres of railway land along Drigh Road, Karachi University, Urdu College, and Gillani stations, but problematic encroachments remain near Liaquatabad and Urdu College. The chief minister

assured that the Sindh government will continue supporting Pakistan Railways in anti-encroachment operations and urban rehabilitation measures linked with the KCR route.

The meeting concluded with a consensus that experts from the Sindh government and Pakistan Railways will jointly work out the final modalities of the KCR project, station outsourcing, and new train services. Minister Hanif Abbasi endorsed the CM's proposals and gave assurances of full federal support.

"Railways are the backbone of any national economy," CM Murad Shah remarked, adding that KCR and intercity train upgrades would transform Karachi's mobility, create new opportunities, and help Pakistan Railways move towards financial sustainability.

Outsourcing of cleaning and station management:

The meeting decided that the cleaning and waste management of Karachi Cantt and City Stations would be handed over to the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board, for which a formal agreement has been signed. The Cantt Station washing lines are

also likely to be outsourced to SSWMB, while the Sindh government will extend support in the beautification and upgradation of major railway stations. The CM recalled that the provincial government had already rebuilt the Cantt Station approach road in 2018.

Karachi-Rohri upgraded train service:

Federal Minister Hanif Abbasi announced that all railway lines from Karachi to Sukkur (a distance of 480 km) would be upgraded, with Rs 6 billion earmarked for introducing an air-conditioned Karachi-Rohri passenger service. Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah also pledged to co-invest in the project. "Running an upgraded up-and-down service between Karachi and Rohri will bring immense relief to commuters," said the Chief Minister, adding that outsourcing certain operations would ensure better quality and transparency.

Hanif Abbasi assured that Pakistan Railways is moving towards outsourcing most of its services to improve efficiency, with the support of provincial governments.

Over 60,000 cops deployed for Eid Milad security

LAHORE (APP): As many as 60,000 police personnel have been deployed across Punjab to ensure the security of 2,498 processions and 1,398 gatherings being held in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi.

According to the Punjab Police spokesperson, Lahore will host 216 processions and 112 gatherings, with over 8,000 officers, personnel, and volunteers deployed for their security.

The spokesperson added that all conventional and modern policing tools will be utilised, with support from the Traffic Police, Elite Force, Special Branch, and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD). Sensitive areas will be monitored using Safe City cameras, he said.

Inspector General of Police Punjab directed that strict SOP-based security measures be enforced for all Category A, B, and C events. He also stressed the importance of coordinating with peace committees, religious scholars, and community leaders to ensure harmony.

All regional police officer, city police officers and district police officers have been instructed to personally supervise the security arrangements, while dedicated control rooms will remain operational 24/7 for real-time monitoring, said the IG.

Modern technology key to nation's progress: Rai Ejaz



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Deputy Inspector General of Police Information Technology, Rai Ejaz Ahmad, said that modern information technology has revolutionized every sphere of life. He urged the personnel of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Media Cell to adopt a constructive and positive approach and play their vital role in the country's progress and prosperity.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony at the Central Police Office Peshawar, where commendation certificates were distributed among the staff of the police print, social, and electronic media cells for their outstanding performance.

Rai Ejaz Ahmad noted

that in the present era, no field is more important than IT, and the nation's future is directly linked to it. He described media staff as unsung heroes contributing to the department's reputation and stressed that IT personnel must utilize modern technology to expand outreach and project a more positive image of the police among the public.

He said that positive and constructive thinking not only paves the way for progress and prosperity but can also transform the entire world. With clear intentions and strong resolve, he added, achieving set targets becomes inevitable. Positive thinking, he maintained, nurtures patience and realism, while freeing oneself from negativity helps in

moving toward solutions more easily.

The DIG further emphasized that to bring improvement in society, individuals must first focus on self-improvement. He urged young officials to continually strive for personal growth and carry forward their careers and lives with a positive outlook.

Commending the efforts of the media cell staff in promoting the police's image, DIG IT expressed hope that they would continue to enhance the department's reputation in line with modern-day requirements. On this occasion, he awarded commendation certificates to officials from the print, electronic, social media, and IT wings for their exemplary performance.

Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) seminar held at UoP



Sajjad Muhammad Khan

PESHAWAR: The Department of Seerat Studies, University of Peshawar, in collaboration with the Directorate of Students Societies and the Directorate of Youth Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, organized an impressive Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) Seminar on Thursday, aimed at guiding the youth through the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Senator Pir Dr. Noor-ul-Haq Qadri was the chief guest, while prominent speakers included Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar Prof. Dr. Muhammad Johar Ali, Chairman Department of Seerat Studies Dr. Mufti Muhammad Iltimas, Prof. Dr. Hafiz Abdul Ghafoor, Prof. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, and Prof. Dr. Khan Bahadur Marwat.

The seminar began with the recitation of the Holy Quran and the national anthem. Students from various universities presented naats in melodious voices, entralling the audience. Dr. Saifullah Al-Azhari hosted the event with his unique, spiritual and captivating style of presentation.

Director Youth Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Nauman Mujahid, in his address, stressed that it is essential for the young generation to mold their lives in accordance with the Prophet's (PBUH) exemplary conduct. He said Tawheed (oneness of Allah), justice, brotherhood, love, and patience are fundamental values, and if youth adopt these guiding prin-

Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) as a compulsory subject: Faculty, students express gratitude

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Addressing the seminar, Chairman Department of Seerat Studies, Dr. Mufti Muhammad Iltimas, said: "All faculty members and students are deeply grateful to the provincial assembly, especially MPA Muhammad Abdus Salam and all assembly members, who unanimously passed the resolution to make Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) a compulsory subject."

He added that this historic decision will serve as a milestone in shaping students' character and guiding their practical lives in the light of Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH).

Dr. Iltimas further informed that in line with the resolution, the Department of Seerat Studies has introduced several courses, which have been approved by the relevant bodies:

1. Compulsory Seerat Studies Course (3 Credit Hours): Already implemented for all BS students across every department of the University of Peshawar.
2. BS Specialization in Seerat Studies (Two-Year Program, Four Semesters): Approved at the departmental level and awaiting Academic Council's approval.
3. Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Certificate Course (One-Year Program): Approved and to be launched soon.
4. Hajj & Umrah Training and Basic Arabic Speaking Course (Two-Month Program): Also approved and will be implemented in the near future.

He stressed that these initiatives will help equip the younger generation with moral, intellectual, and practical guidance from the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), thereby contributing to the development of a peaceful and prosperous society.

ciples, both individuals and society will progress, and the nation will emerge as a strong and prosperous state.

Speakers emphasized that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is Rahmat-ul-lil-Alameen (a mercy for all the worlds), and it is a matter of honor for Muslims to belong to

his Ummah. They underlined that "it is our responsibility not only to speak about the Prophet's teachings but to practically implement them in every sphere of our lives." The seminar concluded with the distribution of shields among distinguished scholars and officials by the chief guest.

Govt to modernize Railway waiting areas

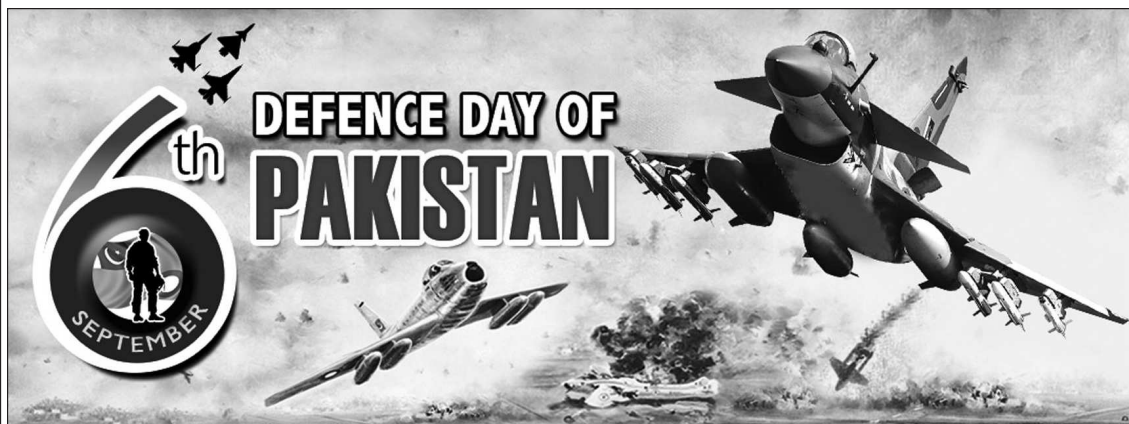
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi and Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani have announced that extensive

measures are being taken to ensure better travel facilities across the country and to upgrade waiting areas at all railway stations along modern lines.

Special attention is being given to

Karachi Cantt and City stations, where cleanliness arrangements will now be managed under a formal agreement between Pakistan Railways and the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB).



Defence Day of Pakistan symbolises the exemplary courage, sacrifice and unity of the Armed Forces and the people of Pakistan. The day holds a special significance in our history, as it revives the memory of our nation's resolve in the face of aggression, thus showing the world that Pakistan knows how to safeguard its territorial integrity. In a similar vein, the aggressor yet again challenged the very existence of a peaceful country in May 2025, but was routed with the same ancestral spirit, which is our hallmark. Alhamdulillah, this resounding success was the outcome of remarkable synergy displayed by our Armed Forces, coupled with people's full support and Allah's special blessings. While commemorating this momentous day, we remember the extraordinary achievements of our heroes and pay them glowing tributes for their ultimate sacrifices.

My Dear Countrymen! Pakistan is a peace-loving nation and believes in maintaining peaceful and cordial relations with its neighbours as well as the international community at large. Despite our strong desire for peaceful co-existence, we cannot remain oblivious to the sacred obligation of Pakistan's defence. We have been challenged many a time through aggression from across the border but overpowered the threats to our very survival on the strength of national cohesion.

Today, I once again assure the entire nation that, as always, by grace of Allah Almighty the aerial defence of Pakistan is invincible. Well-cognizant of the fast-changing security dynamics, Pakistan Air Force stands committed to its mission with singularity of purpose. The latest link in chain of victories secured by PAF in Marka-e-Haq Bunyan-um-Marsoos has once more proved our will and capability to guard the aerial frontiers of our motherland.

On this historic occasion of our national pride and unity, I take this opportunity to share in the grief of those affected by devastating floods and stand in solidarity with them. Let me assure that Pakistan Air Force, in coordination with Sister Services, is ever ready to employ all available resources to extend full support in their hour of need.

On this special day, we also acknowledge the sacrifices of our Kashmiri brethren and pay homage to Kashmiri Shuhada who laid down lives in their just struggle for self-determination.

May Allah Almighty give us strength and guide our efforts to defend the country in keeping with aspirations of the people of Pakistan! (Aameen).

**Pakistan Air Force Zindabad!
Pakistan Paindabad!**



**Air Chief Marshal
Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI(M), HJ
Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force**



**PAKISTAN AIR FORCE
A SYMBOL OF PRIDE FOR THE NATION**

Anti-Drug Campaign fails in Peshawar, as addicts overrun City roads



Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: The much-trumpeted campaign against drug addicts in Peshawar has collapsed, leaving the provincial capital overrun by groups of addicts occupying main

roads, plazas, and market streets. University Road, GT Road, Ring Road, and Karkhano Market once considered the city's commercial lifelines are now plagued by clusters of drug users, creating fear and frustration among citi-

zens. Despite the Chief Minister's initiative and millions of rupees spent on rehabilitation drives, the effort has failed to produce lasting results. Authorities managed to clear the streets temporarily, but without sustainable employment and reintegration measures, most addicts have relapsed. Commissioner Peshawar's steps, though widely praised on social media, have proven largely cosmetic on the ground. Residents complain that addicts continue to swarm public spaces, often engaging in petty crimes and disturbing the city's

social fabric. Civic groups and observers insist that the crisis cannot be solved by half-hearted provincial campaigns alone. They stress that if the federal government collaborates with the provincial administration to launch practical and long-term measures - particularly job opportunities and proper rehabilitation centers - only then can this menace be effectively eradicated. For now, Peshawar's streets remain gripped by the growing presence of drug addicts, and frustrated citizens demand urgent, concrete action beyond mere announcements.

Ministeries, positions are temporary: Shafqat F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Science and Information Technology, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, has said that ministeries, positions, and chairs are temporary, while the true essence lies in public service. He stated that the success of a politician or public representative is not measured by the office he holds, but by the steps he takes to serve the people and the extent to which he addresses their problems.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz said that the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and in line with the vision of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's founder Imran Khan, has dedicated all its energies to public service, empowering the youth, and the overall development of the province. He emphasized that this government does not exist merely for power, but is driven by a spirit of service, and every decision is made keeping in view a brighter future for the people.

He said that ministries and offices come and go, but leaving behind a legacy of service in the hearts of the people is the real success.

"These chairs are not permanent. They are simply temporary responsibilities. True success is when people pray for you, trust you, and look to you as a solution to their problems."

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz placed special emphasis on the youth, declaring them the true asset of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that the Digital Skills Program, initiatives in science and technology, and modern educational reforms are part of this vision so that the province's youth can demonstrate their potential not only locally but also on a global level.

He added that by investing in digital education and modern technology, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sent a strong message that the future of the province lies in the hands of its young generation.

Seerat of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a complete code of life: Fakhar F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jehan, has said that the Seerat (life and character) of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is the best and most comprehensive system of life for humanity.

He stated that true justice, love and peace in society can only be achieved by following the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

He expressed these views while addressing a spiritually enriching ceremony held in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) celebrations, organized by the Directorate General of Sports, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where he participated as the chief guest.

The event was also attended by Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs, Saadat Hassan, Director General Sports Tashfeen Haider and a large number of officers and staff from the department.

Speaking on the occasion, the provincial minister said that the birth of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), the final Messenger and mercy for all mankind, is the greatest blessing for humanity and a source of eternal guidance.

He added that the noble character of the Prophet (PBUH) is a practical embodiment of high morals, tolerance, justice, equality, brotherhood and compassion, which guarantees success in both this world and the Hereafter.

From Operation Gibraltar to Bunyan Ul Marsoos

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

FROM the first dawn of Pakistan's independence, this nation has stood as a sentinel of resilience, tested time and again by trials greater than its size, its resources, or its age, yet each has risen with the same defiance, proving that Pakistan is more than a country-it is an idea, a covenant with Almighty Allah, and a flame of faith that no storm can extinguish. From the fields of Kashmir in 1965 to the recent trials of May 2025, our history tells the same story: whenever India sought to subdue us with its aggression, Pakistan answered with courage, unity, and sacrifice.

The saga begins in 1965, when the oppressed cries of Kashmir echoed across the Himalayas. Operation Gibraltar was planned with the dream of igniting hope in the valley. But what followed was India's blatant aggression across Pakistan's international borders on the night of 6 September. The nation still remembers the voice of Field Marshal General Muhammad Ayub Khan in his historic address: "India has committed aggression against Pakistan. It is a declaration of war. Seventy million Pakistanis are now at war with India." These words struck like thunder in every heart, transforming an entire nation into a living army. Housewives prepared for shortages with pride, students rushed to donate blood, poets sharpened their pens as weapons of morale, and every soldier on the frontline felt the breath of the nation at his back.

In that September of fire, Pakistan's defenders wrote stories that can never fade. Major Raja Aziz Bhatti held his ground until his last breath, defending Lahore's frontiers like a wall of steel. Squadron Leader M.M. Alam rose in the skies like an eagle of Iqbal's dream, striking down five Indian aircraft within a single minute, etching his name forever in the annals of aerial warfare. Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Ahmed Rafiqui, Flight Lieutenant Imtiaz Ahmad Bhatti, Captain Nazir Ahmed, Major Muhammad Fazil, Lieutenant Muhammad Naeem Akhtar, Major Anwar-ul-Haq and countless others became legends not merely of war but of faith. The 1965 war did not redraw maps, but it redrew destinies. It showed the world that Pakistan's strength lay not in numbers or weapons but in the unity of its people and the conviction of its faith.

Sixty years later, in May 2025, history once again summoned Pakistan to its hour of trial. This time, India sought to impose its will through a sudden and ruthless assault, hoping to cow Pakistan into submission. But just as in 1965, the answer was swift, unflinching, and resolute. Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos was launched as Pakistan's response-a shield and a sword in the face of naked aggression. Under the leadership of Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, the armed forces of Pakistan stood firm, proving once again that this nation may be challenged but never subdued. The skies thundered with the roar of our jets, the deserts shook with the steel of our tanks, and the rivers whispered prayers for the sons of the soil marching to the front.

This was not merely a military engagement but a reaffirmation of Pakistan's destiny. In the face of the world's conspiracies and India's arrogance, Pakistan stood tall, making it clear that aggression would never go unanswered. The martyrs of Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos joined the eternal ranks of their forefathers of 1965-jawans who fell in the fields of Punjab, officers who led charges with the Quran in their hands, and Ghazis who returned with the wounds of honor. Their sacrifice was a bridge across time, connecting the Lahore of 1965 with the May of 2025, binding two generations in the same chain of faith, sacrifice, and defiance.

The comparative lessons of both operations shine with clarity. In 1965, the challenge came from India's tanks rolling across our borders; in 2025, it came in the form of a modern, well-orchestrated assault, aided and abetted by external powers. Yet in both, Pakistan's response was the same: fearless, united, and uncompromising. In both, India's aggression failed, and Pakistan's resolve prevailed. These operations were not only battles of weapons but of wills-and in both, Pakistan's will proved stronger.

The heroes of Gibraltar and Bunyan-ul-Marsoos belong to the same immortal fraternity. The names of Aziz Bhatti, M.M. Alam, and others stand proudly beside those of the unnamed martyrs of May 2025 who wrote with their blood the latest chapter of our history. The spirit of Ayub Khan's stirring call to arms resonates with the steadfast leadership of Asim Munir, both voices carrying the same message: Pakistan is eternal because its faith is eternal.

Today, as we look back across six decades, from the guns of 1965 to the cannons of 2025, one truth stands beyond dispute. Pakistan has always been a nation that answers aggression with courage. Its defenders have always stood taller than their enemies, its people have always become an army when the homeland was threatened, and its soil has always borne witness to sacrifices that sanctify its anew.

To the martyrs of both eras, we offer not mere gratitude but a pledge-that their blood shall never be in vain. To the Ghazis, we offer honor that no time can dim. And to the generations to come, we offer the living testimony that Pakistan is not a country built on sand but on sacrifice, not a nation of fear but of faith. From Operation Gibraltar to Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, Pakistan's story is one: a story of defiance against tyranny, of unity against division, and of courage against all odds. And as long as this spirit endures, no enemy shall ever conquer this land of the pure.

The spirit of 1965 War resonates in Zarb-e-Karar

Dr Air Commodore (retd) Naveed Khaliq Ansaree

ON 7 September each year, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Day is observed not just to commemorate the splendid victory in the 1965 war over a three-times larger Indian Air Force (IAF) but to pay homage to the PAF warriors who flew those war-missions, made death-defying decisions under fire, and shaped the course of air warfare in South Asia. Amongst the heroic moments of the 1965 aerial war what remains most enduring is the human capital of the PAF; the exceptionally trained team of air warriors, inspired squadron culture, and mission-oriented leadership that enabled PAF to etch a local air superiority right at the onset of the aerial war. The famed downing of five Indian aircraft in less than a minute by Squadron Leader M.M. Alam was not only a feat of exceptional combat skill, but a reflection of a deeper PAF ecosystem; one that valued centralised command, decentralised execution, excellent realistic training, professional culture and exceptionally high morale amongst the air warriors.

At the heart of this ecosystem lay an elite professional regime rooted in three key principles. First, Leadership and Command: From Air Marshal Asghar Khan who laid the foundation of a premier PAF, and Air Marshal Nur Khan who commanded the PAF during war, down to flight commanders; they displayed a brand of wartime leadership that was agile, intuitive, and decisive. Nur Khan's strategic foresight, dynamic leadership, and sustenance of high-temp combat operations remain a text-book in the study of leadership in war. The leadership structure allowed junior officers to exercise discretion once in combat. Warriors like MM Alam, Sarfraz Rafiqui, Middlecoat, Cecil Choudary and many more demonstrated autonomy in combat execution. Second, Excellence in Training: Training in the 1960s emphasised real combat scenarios, high-tempo operations, simulation of enemy aerial tactics and speedy decision-making under pressure-a linchpin trait in air combat where an error by a second could make one perish or extend the lease of life for another day. Third, Morale and Squadron Culture: PAF's squadron milieu cultivated durable interpersonal bonds, solidarity, comradeship and ethos of excellence. Morale not simply sky-rocketed, it was weaponised; turning motivation into spirit de corps (camaraderie) and combat effectiveness. Faith amongst peers and leaders shaped an environment that cultivated risk-taking, innovation, and audacity in death-defying moments, plenty in a war. Leaders flew missions with their junior wingmen, equally sharing the risk and earning trust and credibility.

The "Spirit of 1965" did not end with war; it became a bedrock, a light-house and the driver of professional excellence as witnessed in the aerial encounters of 1971 and several other military stand-offs till today. The zenith of 1965-spirit and the hall-mark of professional excellence that PAF demonstrated in "Operation Zarb-e-Karar" in May 2025 had taken aback many in the comity of modern air forces. On the night of 7th May 2025, the PAF under the dynamic war-time leadership of the current Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber, Sidhu etched a new text-book of the "Decisive Electromagnetic and Air Dominance," and a notion of an invisible "Distributed Kill Chain" for the IAF; thus earning the PAF fame as an "Undisputed King of the Skies" and an "Air Force Second to None" as envisioned by the Quaid e-Azam in 1948.

Resonating the "Spirit of 1965," Zarb-e-Karar validated once again that the leadership is not hierarchical-authority, but a functional-trust under combat conditions. In a data-proven beyond visual range air combat, PAF downed three or four Rafales, one

Su-30, one Mirage-2000, one Mig-29 and a multimillion-dollar drone "Heron" within a span of an hour, all without losing any of its own. Such a splendid aerial victory is unrecorded in the annals of Defensive Counter Air Operations. The Rafale which Indian Prime Minister Modi had inducted as a technological overmatch and a game-changer in the arsenal of the IAF, instead added insult to IAF's injury.

Continuing with its proportionate punitive/ retaliatory strikes on 10 May, PAF destroyed with precision 34 high-value Indian military targets including a brigade headquarters, ammo depot for Brahmos and at least one world-renowned S-400 system thus shattering the aura of invincibility of Indian air defence system. The failed Indian military intimidation of Pakistan ended in a US-brokered uncomfortable ceasefire at India's request, undoing the new normal that IAF was desperately attempting to set.

The PAF's march towards 2025, especially during the last four years or so, stand testimony to the unprecedented rapid induction of lethal weapon systems, force-modernisation and the doctrinal shift towards Multi Domain Operations. With the superiority of air doctrine, quality of training, real-time sensor-shooter fusion and skilful integration of electronic and cyber warfare, PAF had buried the pride of the IAF beneath the weight of its tactical geometry of brilliant game-plans and full-spectrum fusion of technology, along with PAF's kinetic and non-kinetic applications into Multi Domain Operations as commanded by the current Chief of the Air Staff in real time from the war-room. The splendid PAF victory caused a monumental surge in the strategic capital of the Pakistan Air Force, restoring the conventional deterrence and inflicting a deadly blow to the notions of "Shinning-India, Net-Security-Provider and Counterweight to China" in the skies of South Asia. The "Spirit of 1965" had resonated in "Zarb-e-Karar" once again.

The write , is a Director at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore. He can be reached at info@casslhr.com

Speaker meets Afghan Consul general F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati, paid a special visit to the office of the Consul General of the Afghan Consulate Peshawar, Hafiz Mohibullah Shakir, to extend condolences on behalf of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

During the meeting, the Speaker expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the tragic loss of precious lives caused by recent earthquakes in Afghanistan.

The Speaker stated: "On behalf of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, I, Babar Saleem Swati, Speaker KP Assembly, extend my deepest condolences and sympathies to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the tragic loss of precious lives.

May Allah grant the departed souls a higher place in Jannat, and give strength and courage to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss."

He further emphasized that Pakistan and Afghanistan are not only neighbors but also bound together by ties of faith, culture, and brotherhood. He said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly stands shoulder to shoulder with the Afghan people in this hour of grief.

PHC holds full court meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Full Court Meeting of the Peshawar High Court held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble the Chief Justice Mr. Justice S.M. Attique Shah. A comprehensive agenda comprising of 20 items was deliberated upon in detail, on Friday.

The Chief Justice apprised the Judges of the initiatives undertaken to ensure expeditious and comprehensive dispensation of justice. He emphasized the vigorous application of ICT-based solu-

tions to address challenges relating to court and case management, enhance facilitation for litigants and the public, and safeguard fundamental rights.

The Judges reaffirmed their commitment to translating the Chief Justice's vision into reality within the shortest possible time.

The Chief Justice expressed satisfaction over the performance of the District Judiciary, acknowledging both the quality and quantity of their output as well as their sense of duty and

commitment. His Lordship also appreciated the constructive role of the Bar as an integral partner in the administration of justice.

Similarly, the contribution of the court staff was recognized, while caution was extended that individuals found indulging in malpractice would soon be dealt with firmly.

The meeting concluded with a unanimous resolution that the new judicial year will usher in greater achievements and continued success for the institution.

Three M. Phil scholars defend their theses

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Three M. Phil scholars, Muhammad Ishaq Khan, Ijaz Hussain, and Shehnaz Nafees, have successfully defended their theses in the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Peshawar.

The scholars completed their research under the supervision of Dr. Asad Khan, Chairman of the Department of Library and Information Science.

The scholars' research was supervised by Dr. Asad Khan, who provided guidance and support throughout the research process.

The external examiners for the theses defense were

Dr. Ghalib Khan and Dr. Rahim Jan from Khushal Khan Khatkhat University, Kark. The theses defense was attended by a large number of faculty members, students, and researchers, who congratulated the scholars on their

successful defense.

The scholars' achievement marks an important milestone in their academic journey, demonstrating their expertise and contributions to the field of library and information science.



Pink buses are a step not the finish line for women's safety

Sabina Adnan

WHEN I was a child in Lahore, a simple bus ride could feel like a small act of bravery. My mother would stand at a doorway and wait until she knew I had boarded safely; when I travelled alone for the first time as a teenager, the relief at returning home was as noticeable as the exhaustion from constant watchfulness. For millions of Pakistani women and girls, mobility is not only about distance or cost - it is about dignity, safety, and the daily calculation of risk.

This is why the arrival of women-only "pink buses" across cities such as Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi has felt like a visible, urgent answer to a real problem. Provincial and municipal authorities have rightly framed these services as a way to improve access to education and work for women and to offer an immediate, tangible sense of security for female commuters. In Punjab, the Pink Bus rollout in Lahore covered multiple routes intended to reach students and working women. Similar services have been announced or piloted in Islamabad and Karachi.

But if the pink bus is to become more than a photo op, we need an honest assessment: women-only buses help those who can already reach boarding points and who know the service exists. They do not, by themselves, dismantle the structural barriers that limit women's full participation in public life. Research and on-the-ground accounts show that fear of harassment-and actual harassment-remains a pervasive reason women change their travel plans, avoid jobs or forgo higher education. Systematic reviews and recent studies on women's safety in low- and middle-income public transport systems find troubling prevalence of harassment and a clear link between unsafe transport and reduced mobility for women.

A second, practical critique is distribution and scale. Existing women-only routes often cover only a handful of corridors and operate at limited hours - meaning they help a fraction of those who need a safe commute. Past evaluations in Lahore and elsewhere found that while women who used designated services appreciated them, limited availability and route coverage left most women reliant on irregular or unsafe alternatives.

So how should policymakers, civil society, and transport authorities respond? First, treat the pink bus not as a final answer but as part of a broader policy package. That package should include expanded, well-publicized routes and schedules so that services reach suburban and peri-urban areas where many working and studying women live. Expanding coverage requires both political will and budgetary planning - and evidence-based route selection grounded in where women actually travel, not simply where it is easiest to operate.

Second, we must make ALL public transport safer. Physical measures - better lighting at stops, CCTV, and clearly marked help points - help, but only if backed by enforcement and accountability. Drivers and conductors should receive mandatory gender-sensitivity training; harassment reporting mechanisms must be clear, fast, and followed by meaningful action. Municipalities should work with women's groups and student networks to co-design these systems; a top-down approach will never fully capture how women experience space.

Third, safety must be tied to economic opportunity. Studies show a direct relationship between women's mobility and their labour force participation: when transport is safe and affordable, women are more likely to seek work and to sustain it. Investing in safe, reliable transit is thus not only a rights issue - it is smart economic policy. Subsidised fares for low-income women, flexible timetables for shift workers, and targeted routes to employment clusters should be part of provincial transport planning.

Finally, the pink bus should be the beginning of a campaign to shift social attitudes. Public awareness campaigns that challenge victim-blaming, educate men and boys about consent and respect, and celebrate women's presence in public spaces are essential complements to any infrastructure investment. When communities see women travelling freely - to schools, hospitals and workplaces - the normalisation can reshape expectations and, slowly, behaviour.

The pink bus was a statement of intent: that women's safety matters and that public policy can, and must, respond. But statements only matter if followed by scale, systems and cultural change. We should celebrate the buses, learn from their limitations, and then move quickly on to the work that will actually make a Pakistan where a child's bus ride feels ordinary rather than brave.

If we do that - invest in routes, accountability, economics, and attitude - we can ensure our streets and buses become spaces of freedom rather than constraint. That future would be the truest measure of progress.



In brief

Anti-polio drive inspected F.P. Report

GHOTKI: Deputy Commissioner Ghotki suddenly reached Mirpur Mathelo to supervise the polio campaign, visited different areas and reviewed the process of vaccinating children. According to the details, Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Manzoor Ahmed Kanrani along with N-Stop Officer Dr. Zaheer Domki went to the huts of nomads in Mirpur Mathelo to supervise the polio campaign and inspected the process of vaccinating children. On this occasion, he instructed the teams that fingerprinting should be ensured after vaccinating every child, no negligence in this regard will be accepted because this is a question of the future of the coming generations, so all polio workers should perform their national duty with honesty and integrity. He said that making the campaign a success is the responsibility of every conscious individual. We all have to play our positive role in the fight against the polio virus so that the roots of this dangerous virus can be eradicated.

SEA holds sit-in F.P. Report

LARKANA: On the call of Sindh Employees Alliance (SEA), employees of various departments at the division level in Larkana reached Jinnah Bagh Chowk to protest and hold a sit-in for recognition of their demands including pension reform law, DRO allowance, group insurance, benevolent fund, etc. Traffic was suspended for a few hours due to the sit-in. On this occasion, employees of various government departments including GSTA, Works and Services, APCA and many others tied black bands on their arms and raised slogans against the government's anti-employee policies. Addressing the sit-in, GM Abro, Pearl Dayo, Muhammad Ramzan Mugheri and others said that the Sindh government has been committing irregularities with government employees for many years and has been violating the rights of employees. Recently, the government has brought a black law under the guise of pension reform, which will end the misery of retiring employees. They demanded that the black law of pension reform be implemented. The law should be repealed and the monthly pensions received by employees should be restored, otherwise the scope of the protest will be expanded. Meanwhile, police arrested a 9-member gang involved in street crime and robbery while conducting operations in different areas. According to the details, a 9-member gang involved in street crimes and thefts in the streets and neighborhoods of Larkana police was arrested. Master key, lock and door breaker were also recovered from the accused who were arrested from Chot Bazar area of Civil Lines police station.

Traders seek fresh polls F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Traders in Timergara have criticized the local traders' body for failing to hold bazaar elections for the past 17 years and announced an interim committee to push for fresh polls. Speaking at a meeting in Timergara Rest House here the other day, former trader leaders including Ihsanullah, Parvez Adil, Amanullah, Prof. Ihsanullah, Haji Gul Mir Khan, Shafullah, Malik Ziaul Haq and others said the current body was unconstitutional as elections were required every three years.



MULTAN: Students presenting patriotic tableaux and pay rich tributes to the martyrs during celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Defence Day 2025 at Jinnah Hall, organized by Women University.

Eid-e-Milad and our society

Irshad Afridi

THE month of Rabi' al-Awwal brings a special spiritual joy to the hearts of believers. This is the month in which Allah Almighty bestowed His greatest blessing on mankind in the form of the blessed birth of the Lord of the Universe, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (Peace Ne Upon Him).

The Holy Quran states: "Indeed, Allah has bestowed His greatest favor upon the Muslims that He has sent among them a Messenger from among themselves" (Aal-e-Imran: 164). This verse tells us that the arrival of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the greatest blessing for the Muslim Ummah. On the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH), mosques are decorated, processions are taken out, and Naatiya gatherings are held, but the real purpose is to align our lives with the good example and teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: "I have only been sent to perfect morality" (Musnad Ahmad). If every individual in society improves his morality, problems such as bribery, injustice, prejudice, and

corruption will automatically end. Eid Milad-un-Nabi (peace be upon him) teaches us a lesson in mutual love, tolerance, and brotherhood.

The Holy Quran commands, "And hold fast to the rope of Allah all together and do not be divided." (Aal-e-Imran: 103) By adopting this teaching, we can create a peaceful and prosperous society. The brightest aspect of the life of the Master of the Two Worlds, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH), is justice and fairness. He (PBUH) said, "The most beloved servant to Allah is the one who is most beneficial to people." (Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat). That is, society can be prosperous and strong only on the basis of service to humanity and justice.

The main message of Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) is that we should make the good example of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) an integral part of our practical lives. The Holy Quran says, "Indeed, you have in the Messenger of Allah the best model to follow." (Al-Ahzab: 21).

This is the principle that guides us in every field of action. Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) is not just a day of joy and illumination, but it

is also a day of renewing our commitment to model our character and actions according to the good example of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). When we make truth, trust, justice, love and brotherhood a part of our lives, our society will truly become an Islamic society. This is the true message that Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) gives us. Our prayer is that O Allah! Grant us the ability to follow the good example of Your beloved Prophet, Sayyiduna Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH). O Allah! Purify our society from hatred, prejudice, injustice and oppression and bless us with the wealth of love, unity and brotherhood. O Lord of the Worlds! Enlighten our hearts with the light of faith, fill our homes with peace and blessings, and make our homeland a cradle of peace and security. O Allah! Grant us the true joy of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH), which can only be found in following the footsteps of Your beloved and famous master (peace be upon him). Amen, O Lord of the Worlds.

The writer is Regional Information Officer Kohat, Pakhtunkhwa.

Land grabbers to be treated with iron hands: DPO

F.P. Report

MARDAN: District Police Officer (DPO) Mardan, has said that there is absolutely no place for land grabbers and gangsters in the district. "If the police cannot rein in such elements, then there is no need for police or police stations at all," he remarked. He added that with the increase in population, the responsibilities and capacity of the police must also increase, and that he is fully aware of the problems faced by the public regarding law and order and police services. He was addressing a grand reception organized by the Central Traders Organization Takhtbhai, on Friday.

The event was also addressed by Markaz Tanzeem Tajran Provincial General Secretary Zahir Shah Assistant Commissioner Takht Bhai Adnan Mumtaz Khattak, President Central Traders Organization Takht Bhai Haji Tariq, General Secretary Wahab Yousafi, and former Tehsil Nazim Haji Guldad Khan. DSP Takht Bhai Abid Khan Afridi, TMO Rahman Sher, President of Petroleum Association Irfan Mohmand, and other trader leaders were also present on the occasion. DPO said that without the cooperation of the people, the police can neither establish peace in the area nor eliminate crime and social evils.

With the rise in population, crimes have also increased and challenges for the police have multiplied, but with public cooperation, the police are making every effort to control crime and lawlessness. He further said that in the present times, besides the gun and Kalashnikov culture, society is facing numerous other evils. Parents' control over their children has weakened, the younger generation has become obsessed with TikTok and social media, and the use of ice (methamphetamine) and other drugs is on the rise. Due to intolerance, disputes between brothers and between husbands and wives over trivial matters end up in police stations and courts, creating crowds similar to cattle markets. He urged the public that the doors of his office are always open for honest and oppressed citizens, and emphasized that people must play a strong supporting role with the police in establishing peace and eliminating crime and social evils.

approved: The Higher Education Department has approved the launch of three new Associate Degree (AD) programmes at Government Girls College Jandol, following efforts of the District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Chairman and MPA Ubaidur Rahman. Mr Rahman told reporters at Timergara on Friday that the college would soon start classes in AD English, AD Zoology, and AD Islamiat. He added that necessary arrangements had already been finalised to begin the programmes without delay.

According to the Additional Director of Higher Education, the BS Botany programme would also continue at the college, for which the immediate transfer of lecturers was being ensured. Rahman said promotion of education was his top priority. He noted that teachers were being recruited through ETEA on merit to overcome the shortage in schools and colleges, while practical measures were also under way to improve facilities in educational institutions across the district.

ADS program

Seminar on healthy future and breastfeeding held

F.P. Report

LARKANA: A one-day seminar on Healthy Future of Newborns and Breastfeeding for Generations was held at Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University Larkana, on Thursday.

The seminar was organized by SMBBMU Larkana in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and civil society organizations DDF, KDF and BSWA. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah was the special guest and keynote speaker of the seminar. In his speech, he highlighted the importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding.

He said that breast milk not only prevents malnutrition but also reduces the mortality rate of newborns and children, prevents stunting, and is beneficial for the mental, physical and emotional health of both the mother and the child. He added that breastfeeding also protects both mother

and child from type 2 diabetes in the long term and lays the foundation for a healthy generation. Dr. Nusrat Shah also emphasized the relevance of breastfeeding to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially discussing the topics of poverty, hunger, and good health.

In the ongoing seminar, Professor Saifullah Jamro shared his research paper titled: "Islamic Human Milk Bank: Is it Possible?" In his speech, he presented his research review on ethical, religious and medical implications. On this occasion, Mr. Shakeel Patras, Senior Manager for Health and Nutrition, International Rescue Committee (IRC), said: "Breastfeeding is the most important thing to protect a child from malnutrition and diseases, which strengthens the bond between mother and child and lays the foundation for a healthy community."

This was followed by a panel discussion in which eminent experts Professor Shahida Magsi, Professor Shantilal and Professor Shabnam Naz participated. In their views, the panelists presented their recommendations and strategies to increase breast milk at the societal and institutional levels. They said that there is no substitute for breast milk. Director ORIC Dr. Mir Hassan Khoso welcomed the guests and participants and said: "This seminar will be just one step towards a healthy society, because healthy mothers and healthy children are the guarantee of a healthy nation."

SPLA holds protest in favour of their demands: Sindh Professors and Lecturers Association (SPLA) District Larkana held protest demonstrations against the black law of pension reform in the Degree College, Girls Degree College, Commerce College, Boys and Girls Degree College Ratodero,

Haider Bakhsh Jatoti College Dokri, Boys and Girls Degree College Nodero and other educational institutions.

In protest, teachers and employees wore black bands on their arms and raised slogans against the cruel decision of the government, such as "Pension robbery is unacceptable", "Economic massacre of employees is unacceptable". On this occasion, SPLA Sukkur Region President Professor Malhar Sindh, SPLA Larkana President Professor Shuhabuddin Mangan, District General Secretary Dr. Azad Khatian and others protested and said that pension is a complete constitutional right, while economic massacre of employees in the name of pension reforms.

We reject the black law, they added that abolishing pension is tantamount to abolishing the existence of employees. Where is the justice in this that the pension of employees who have

served the institutions their entire lives is being abolished? This is a war of the rulers with the poor and oppressed. If there is an economic crisis in the country, how can the rulers increase their salaries? From this we believe that this decision is a big conspiracy against the employees.

Meanwhile, unknown gunmen in the area of Police Station Waleed, PCB Ground 2, Larkana, took Law Department student Faryad Ahmed Chandio hostage and robbed him of fifty thousand rupees in cash and an expensive mobile phone.

On this occasion, protesting before the media, the affected youth said that he was carrying the money received in trust when the incident occurred, while even though the police station is nearby, no police personnel are visible on the road. He demanded that DIG Larkana Nasir Aftab Pathan arrest the criminals and return the stolen

goods from him and take action against the staff of Waleed Police Station, otherwise I will approach the court for justice.

Medical camp held: A medical camp was organized for the people affected by the recent floods at 5 locations under the management of Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML) Toba District, at Mal Fatiana, Kalera Adda, Bhussi Adda, Kathia Mouza, and Dargahi.

The camp provided general check-up, provision of essential medicines, first aid and blood pressure and sugar checking facilities which benefited dozens of patients. More medical camps and relief activities will continue in other affected areas as well. Mian Sohail Ahmed. General Secretary MML District Toba, Abdul Majeed Salik - President Pakistan District Toba, President Milli Labour Federation Province Punjab - Imran Grewal were also present.

Malala's parent visits flood-hit Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of world-renowned Malala Yousafzai, and Malala's mother Torpekai Yousafzai, Malala Fund Director Madam Nishat Niaz, Media Coordinator Madam Jabeen, along with the team, offered Fateha for the eighty-seven martyrs of the same village in the flood tragedy hit village in Beshonai Pur Baba Buner on Thursday. They expressed their condolences to the bereaved families members.

Speaking on the occasion, Ziauddin Yousafzai said that Malala is very concerned about the flood victims of Buner, Swat, Shangla. He added she prays for the martyrs and injured and is very saddened by this tragedy. He shared they have come to Buner on her request. Malala's mother Torpekai Yousafzai said that Malala is very sad and shares the grief with the grieving families on her part. She added they have come to express her condolences to the grieving families on behalf of Malala.

Malala Fund Director Madam Nishat Niaz said that Malala has expressed concern about the education of the girls in the affected areas and has given instructions to work with charitable organizations through the mediation of the Government of Pakistan to rebuild educational institutions and continue their education and provide scholarships for these girls.

She has assured that the Malala Fund is with the victims in this hour of trouble and will provide full support in relief and rehabilitation work. Prior, they were met with DC Buner ADC Relief. The Malala Fund delegation has also visited the affected areas i.e. Qadar Nagar, Gokand and Chagharzi and has also visited THQ Hospital Pacha, camps of Al-Khidmat, Ansar-ul-Islam and Khudai Khidmatgar and other camps and has appreciated their efforts for the victims and praised the spirit of the general public in rescue, relief and rehabilitation.

Meanwhile, the most affected village in the recent floods, Bishonai, Sahibzada Ashfaq Ashiq Ali, Sahibzada Humayun Rashid, Rafiqullah Khan, members of the Victims Committee, revealed in a press conference that there are eighty-three mar-

tyrs, twenty orphans and four widows in this village, while seventy percent of the village has been destroyed and standing crops and lands have been washed away by the river, and the loss is estimated to be in the millions.

However, he is confident that the district administration, the provincial government, the central government, each minister, member, personalities, NGOs and people from every corner of Buner district have helped in digging graves and burying the dead, among whom the Salarzi people are most commendable. He further said that a lot of ration, goods, and cash were received, but the consolation that came from people from all over Pakistan is a lifetime asset and will be remembered in history. He appreciated the role of Buner's media for providing such immediate coverage that the whole of Pakistan and the world got the news and everyone moved in that direction, which made rescue and relief possible and a lot of work is also being done for rehabilitation.

He thanked those who expressed their desire to adopt orphaned children, but also expressed their determination not to separate their children from themselves and gave these people the opportunity to earn a share of the reward by bearing their living, education, training, treatment, home, and marriage expenses. He has appealed to the district administration, fundraising camps, and personalities to hand over the money collected in the name of the victims to the donation committee so that it can be collected in a joint account and used for the victims. He has demanded from the government to make the village safe, build houses, crops, and land, shop, garage, house, and car shed.

Give compensation and give special status to Bishonai and give quotas to children in education, health, employment, clean drinking water and to get rid of the fear of floods due to the daily thundering and raining clouds, heavy rain, cloudbursts due to being a disaster zone due to climatic changes. The world should take scientific inventions and protective measures so that fear is relieved every day and every evening and children, women and the elderly can sleep peacefully.

Advocate Asim's father flays police action

Anees Takar

CHARSADDA: The father of martyred Advocate Muhammad Asim Shah held a press conference at his residence in Charsadda, where leaders from various political parties, civil society members, and legal representatives were present to express solidarity with the bereaved family.

Speaking at the press conference, Advocate Mujeeb ur Rehman said that the martyrdom of Asim Shah and the subsequent arrest of his family members had generated sympathy and support from across the province. He alleged that despite the innocence of the deceased, the police registered a false First Information Report (FIR)

against his family members, further compounding their grief.

He noted that thanks to the efforts of the legal team, the terrorism-related sections were later removed from the FIR against Mian Mohsin Shah and others. The family also appreciated the intervention of the Deputy Commissioner, stating that it was only through his efforts that they were able to receive a copy of the FIR.

The father of the martyred lawyer added that following assurances given by the Regional Police Officer (RPO), the planned protest demonstration outside the RPO's office in Mardan was postponed. "We respect and acknowledge the sacrifices of the police for peace in the region," he

said, "but we cannot remain silent when innocent people are killed in alleged extrajudicial encounters."

He further accused the Charsadda police of appointing "low-ranking or incompetent officers as SHOs," which he claimed was contributing to deteriorating law and order. He alleged that some police officials were involved with ice (meth) mafias, and even charged that the post-mortem report of his son's killing had been tampered with to cover up the facts.

The bereaved family and political leaders demanded a transparent judicial inquiry into the case and warned that if justice was denied, they would be compelled to launch a province-wide protest movement.

Minister chairs meeting regarding wheat price

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: A high-level meeting was held at the Commissioner Office Mardan under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru to review the availability and pricing of wheat and flour in the wake of the recent ban on wheat and atta supply from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The meeting, attended by senior district and food department officials, was convened amid concerns over potential supply shortages and artificial price hikes due to inter-provincial

movement restrictions. Commissioner Mardan Nisar Ahmad briefed the minister that the current stock of wheat in the market and government godowns is satisfactory.

He further informed that deputy commissioners of both Mardan and Swabi districts have been directed to maintain strict vigilance over the situation and take legal action against hoarders and those causing artificial inflation of flour prices. Minister Zahir Shah Toru stressed that the provincial government is actively monitoring the situation and will not allow any attempt to

undermine the rights of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He noted that under Article 151 of the Constitution of Pakistan, the movement of food grains cannot be restricted between provinces. "The provincial government is fully committed to ensuring the uninterrupted supply of flour and wheat at controlled prices adding that Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Chief Secretary and the authorities of Food Department are in contact with the federal and Punjab authorities," the minister further informed.



DARFIR: People gathered as a Sudanese official announces the recovery of 300 bodies after a landslide destroyed Turasin village in Sudan.

Ukraine knocks out Russian refineries as Russia kills dozens

KYIV: Ukraine has pounded Russia's refineries with deep strikes in the past week, worsening its petrol shortages and causing Moscow to extend a ban on exports of petroleum products. Russia responded with a deadly attack on Kyiv and a barrage of statements portraying Moscow's "special military operation" as a success and Ukraine as teetering on the edge of surrender. Russian President Vladimir Putin used his appearance at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit to suggest Russian energy exports to China and India were booming, but reports suggested that Moscow is heavily discounting its crude to hold onto clients.

Ukraine's European and regional allies are meeting to try to finalise security guarantees in case a ceasefire should come about, while calling on US President Donald Trump to use sanctions to press Putin into direct negotiations with Kyiv. Russia redeployed marines and paratroopers – elite units – from Ukraine's northern Sumy region to the eastern region of Donetsk on September 1, suggesting it may be preparing a renewed push for the city of Pokrovsk, which Ukraine has identified as a Russian key tactical objective in the east since August 2024.

Russia last week gave up on an offensive for Dobropillia, a town whose capture would have enabled an encirclement of Pokrovsk from the north, after stiff Ukrainian resistance.

Ukrainian Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Oleksandr Syrskii confirmed that Dobropillia and Pokrovsk remained among the most intense battle zones along the front last week, along with Lyman, a city further north.

Between Lyman and Pokrovsk lies the so-called "fortress belt" of cities – Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Druhivka and Konstantynivka – considered one of Ukraine's most heavily fortified sections of the front, suggesting Russia may be intending its encirclement rather than head-on assault. Ahead of Putin's visit to Tianjin, China, on Sunday to attend the SCO summit, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov on Saturday said the Russian "unstoppable offensive" had seized more than 3,500 square kilometres (1,350 square miles) and 149 settlements since March.

"Gerasimov is inflating most of his claims," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, assessed, concluding that Russian gains stood at 2,346sq km and 130 settlements since March. The ISW also disagreed with Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov's claim on Friday that "at the beginning of the year, we were liberating 300-400 square kilometres monthly, and this figure has reached 600-700 square kilometres". The ISW said Russia had taken 445sq km in July and about 500sq km in August.

Ukraine's head of the Center for Countering Disinformation, Andriy Kovalenko, also disagreed with Gerasimov's claim to have captured half of the city of Kupiansk in the north. "All the fantasies of Russian war correspondents about control over half of the city of Kupiansk up to the centre do not correspond to reality," he wrote on the Telegram messaging service. "The traditional tactic is that runners with flags run around, they are filmed by a drone, and then propagandists do their job."

Russia did score operational success in the western Black Sea for the first time since 2022, when it had lost its flagship guided missile cruiser Moskva and control over Zmiinyi Island. On August 28, the Russian Ministry of Defence said it had sunk the Ukrainian reconnaissance ship Simferopol in a drone strike at the mouth of the Danube river. Surface kamikaze drone footage depicted an approach towards a ship matching the Simferopol, and separate footage recorded an explosion. Ukraine pioneered the use of naval drones to sink Russian ships in the western part of the Black Sea. This may be the first recorded instance of Russia successfully using the same tactics and doing so at the very edge of European Union territorial waters. On the same day, Russia conducted one of its largest aerial attacks on Kyiv, aiming much of its salvo of 598 drones and 31 missiles there. — Aljazeera

US peacekeeping cuts could limit UN ability to protect civilians, says UN

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): United Nations peacekeeping missions are under severe financial pressure and US cuts could limit their ability to protect civilians in places like South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, a UN peacekeeping spokesperson said.

US President Donald Trump last week unilaterally canceled \$4.9 billion in foreign aid authorized by Congress. This includes some \$800 million in peacekeeping funding appropriated for 2024 and 2025, according to a Trump administration message to Congress. The White House budget office has already proposed eliminating funding for UN peacekeeping missions in 2026, citing failures by operations in Mali, Lebanon and

Democratic Republic of Congo.

Washington is the largest contributor, accounting for 27% of the \$5.6-billion UN peacekeeping budget. These payments are mandatory. "Without sufficient resources, we will be doing less with less, with potentially serious implications for peace and security in contexts such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where financial constraints could significantly limit our ability to protect civilians," said a UN peacekeeping spokesperson in New York. "We urge all member states to pay their contributions to peacekeeping in full and on time to sustain the vital work and impact of peacekeeping," the spokesperson said.

There are currently 11

UN peacekeeping operations around the world. The UN peacekeeping spokesperson said those missions were already "under severe financial pressure due to a liquidity crisis." In the Trump administration's note to Congress, it said it was rescinding \$393 million of \$1.2 billion appropriated in fiscal year 2025 for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities account and more than \$400 million appropriated in fiscal years 2024 and 2025 for the Peacekeeping Operations account. The CIPA account provides funding for the mandatory UN peacekeeping payments. "UN peacekeeping has been fraught with waste and abuse, as evidenced by the ongoing sexual exploitation and

abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic," said the note to Congress, which also alleged that billions of dollars in peacekeeping contracts "were implicated in significant corruption schemes." It said the funding cuts "would be a first step to engaging in strong reforms across the UN"

It said the PKO account was intended to support peacekeeping and stabilization operations and to counter extremist threats, but "in practice, this account is a slush fund used to support projects well beyond a core security focus." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is seeking ways to improve efficiency and cut costs as the world body turns 80 this year amid a cash crisis.

Guatemalan document undercuts US claims on child deportations

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Many family members of unaccompanied Guatemalan migrant children who are part of a group the Trump administration attempted to deport over the weekend did not want their children returned to Guatemala, according to an internal Guatemalan government report that contradicts assertions made by US officials.

The report, produced by a Guatemalan attorney general's office and reviewed by Reuters, said Guatemalan authorities had contacted the families of 115 minors who had crossed the US-Mexico border without a parent or guardian. Of those, 59 families expressed anger about the possibility of their children being returned to Guatemala, with some even describing it as intimidation, the document said.

Contents of the report have not been previously reported and offer the most comprehensive insight so far into the resistance of

many family members to the children being deported. Some of those concerns were backed up by court filings published. President Donald Trump's effort to deport unaccompanied migrant children aged 10-17 over the weekend triggered an immediate legal challenge. In an emergency court hearing, a Justice Department attorney said the parents wanted their children to be deported, but a lawyer for the children rejected that assertion.

Guatemala initially agreed with US authorities that it would receive migrants nearing the age of 18 whose parents were generally not in the United States and who would be transferred to adult detention, according to the report. On July 11, the US provided Guatemala with a list of minors in Health and Human Services custody who were about to turn 18, in accordance with the original plan to facilitate their return to Guatemala before their birthdays. But some time after that, the

US sent Guatemala a much broader list of 609 children ages 14-17. One person with knowledge of Guatemalan authorities' thinking said the government was taken aback by how quickly the Trump administration had broadened the scope of the plan. The person said that it seemed to go overnight from returning 17-year-olds to deporting children as young as 10.

In response to a Reuters request for comment, a Trump administration official said that the Guatemalan government in August assured the administration that any unaccompanied children sent back would be processed in a safe and orderly manner for possible reunification. The Guatemalan government did not respond to a request for comment. Trump has kicked off a wide-ranging immigration crackdown since taking office, including a campaign to detain and deport unaccompanied children. As part of his deterrent effort, his administration

has deported Venezuelan migrants to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador and sent non-African migrants to distant African nations. Stephen Miller, a top White House official overseeing immigration issues, said in a post on X that the children were being reunited with their parents. But the internal Guatemalan government report and court filings show many families did not want their children sent back to the country.

Parents of one girl told Guatemalan authorities "that if their daughter returned, they would do everything possible for her to leave the country again, as she is under a death threat," the report said. The Guatemalan report said that Guatemalan authorities had only been able to contact 115 families of the 609 children on the list. It said that more than half of them had rejected any efforts to have their children returned, while others agreed to receive their children but did not welcome the situation.

Zelenskiy says Russia engaged in a new troop buildup

KYIV (Reuters): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Russia was engaged in a new troop buildup along certain sectors of the frontline and was still launching strikes on Ukrainian targets. "Now we see another buildup of Russian forces in certain sectors of the front. He refuses to be forced into peace," Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address, referring to Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin.

Zelenskiy provided no further details, but said "Russia continues to launch strikes. Of course, we will respond to this." He said Russian forces had targeted Ukraine with 150 drones overnight, more than 50 in the morning and "dozens" more in the evening. New drone attacks, he said, amounted to "an accompaniment to Russian statements from China," a reference to Putin's visit to Beijing, where President Xi Jinping is hosting the Russian leader and North Korea's Kim Jong Un. "Yesterday, the Russians literally denied what (US President Donald) Trump said about the leaders' meeting needed to end the war. In China, Putin is continuing to spin tales as if he not guilty for the war," said Zelenskiy. Zelenskiy has long backed Trump's call for a meeting between the Ukrainian and Russian presidents as a step towards ending the war, launched by Russia's invasion of its neighbour in February 2022. Russia has said no suitable agenda has been set for such a meeting.

'No miracle' in last-ditch talks with French PM: Far right

PARIS (AFP): Last ditch talks between the French far right and Prime Minister Francois Bayrou did not achieve any breakthrough, its leaders said, heightening the chances that he will lose a confidence vote next week.

Three-time presidential candidate Marine Le Pen and her right-hand-man and National Rally (RN) party leader Jordan Bardella urged swift snap legislative elections after the vote in parliament to end a months-long standoff over the budget. "Jordan and I are calling for an extremely rapid dissolution (of parliament)," Le Pen said alongside Bardella after one hour of talks with Bayrou at his offices in Paris.

Bardella added: "The sooner we return to the polls, the sooner France will have a budget." There was "no miracle" in the meeting which "will not change the National Rally's mind," he added. Analysts expect Bayrou and his government to fall after just over half a year in office, with both the far right and left-wing parties vowing to vote against his minority administration. President Emmanuel Macron will then need to decide if he reappoints Bayrou, chooses a new premier who would be the seventh government chief of his presidency, or calls snap legislative elections. He could also resign, as called for by the hard left, but he has repeatedly ruled out this course of action. Six days ahead of the vote, Macron summoned the chiefs of the minority group of centrist and right-wing parties who back Bayrou and the president for a meeting at the Elysee. He urged them to work with the Socialist Party (PS), said a participant who asked not to be named, in the head of state's latest bid to woo the PS away from a union with the hard-left and Greens. PS leader Olivier Faure has insisted a future prime minister must come from the left if the party is to consider cooperating. All the party leaders present at the meeting, who included Gabriel Attal, the ex-premier who leads Macron's own centrist party, expressed their opposition to calling snap elections should the government fall. But former president Nicolas Sarkozy, who is known to retain informal contact with Macron despite a conviction for graft, said there was "no other solution" to France's political crisis other than snap elections. Speaking to Le Figaro, he described Bayrou's decision to call the confidence vote as "political suicide".

Gaza 'genocide' exposes Europe's failure to act

PARIS (AFP): One of the European Union's most senior officials called the war in Gaza a "genocide," ramping up criticism of Israel and slamming the 27-nation bloc for failing to act to stop it.

"The genocide in Gaza exposes Europe's failure to act and speak with one voice," European Commission vice president Teresa Ribera said during a speech in Paris. Top EU officials have so far shied away from calling Israel's actions in the territory a "genocide." One spokesman said it was for the courts to make a legal judgment on whether genocide was happening.

The EU has struggled to take steps over the war in Gaza due to deep divisions between member states pushing for action against Israel and those backing the country. The splits are also present inside the EU's executive, where Spanish commissioner Ribera has expressed frustration over the failure to push on the issue. Ribera's use of the term "genocide" could put more pressure on EU commission chief Ursula von der Leyen to take a tougher stance against Israel.

Von der Leyen's commission in July proposed cutting funding to Israeli start-ups over the war in Gaza, but so far the move has not received the backing of a majority of coun-

tries. Nearly two years into the devastating conflict, Israel has built up its forces in recent days, with troops operating on the outskirts of Gaza City, the Palestinian territory's largest urban center. The United Nations estimates that nearly one million people live in and around Gaza City in the territory's north, where it has declared famine.

Meanwhile, Israel's foreign minister said that his government would not agree to a visit by French President Emmanuel Macron so long as Paris plans to recognize a Palestinian state.

A statement from Israel's foreign ministry said Gideon Saar told France's top diplomat Jean-Noel Barrot in a phone call that "there is no room" for a presidential visit "as long as France persists in its initiative and efforts that harm Israel's interests." Israel's public broadcaster Kan reported on Wednesday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had rejected a request by Macron to make a brief visit ahead of the UN General Assembly later this month, where the president plans to formally recognize a Palestinian state.

Paris should "reconsider its initiative," Foreign Minister Saar told Barrot, arguing that the move would undermine regional stability and harm "Israel's

national and security interests." "Israel strives for good relations with France, but France must respect the Israeli position when it comes to issues essential to its security and future," Saar said according to the statement.

Tensions between France and Israel have flared since Macron said France would formally recognize a Palestinian state during the UN meeting. Several Western governments have announced similar plans. The row escalated last month when Netanyahu accused Macron of fomenting "antisemitism," with the Elysee hitting back, calling the allegation "abject" and "erroneous." By announcing the move to recognize statehood for Palestinians, France is set to join a list of nations that has grown since the start of the Gaza war nearly two years ago.

Making his announcement in July, Macron said the "urgent priority today is to end the war in Gaza." "We must finally build the State of Palestine" and ensure that it would "contribute to the security of all in the Middle East," he wrote on social media. France is among at least 145 of the 193 UN members that now recognize or plan to recognize a Palestinian state, according to an AFP tally.

Thailand set for vote on new PM amid power vacuum

BANGKOK: The Thai parliament will vote for a new prime minister after royal officials rejected a request by the ruling Pheu Thai Party to dissolve parliament. Caretaker Premier Phumtham Wechayachai said that the Office of the Privy Council had rejected Pheu Thai's request, saying it was "inappropriate to present the draft of the Royal Decree to His Majesty at this time".

The party of former Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, which is still governing in a caretaking capacity, submitted its request to dissolve the legislature to the palace on Wednesday. The office told Wechayachai there were "disputed legal issues" over the authority of a caretaker premier to dissolve parliament.

The decision leaves the way open for the parliament to elect a new leader, amid a power vacuum that has stirred chaos in Thai politics since Friday, when the Constitutional Court sacked Paetongtarn over an

ethics breach. The move to dissolve parliament had come swiftly after the major opposition People's Party announced it would back another opposition force, the conservative populist Bhumjaithai Party, to form the next government.

The royal refusal leaves the path clear for MPs to vote for a new prime minister. The opposition coalition suggests that Bhumjaithai leader Anutin Charnvirakul will win the vote, which is scheduled to take place on Friday at about 10:00am (03:00 GMT). Pheu Thai has said it will nominate former Attorney General Chaikasem Nitisiri, 77, for the premiership. The party has also said it is prepared to call a snap election if Chaikasem wins. "We will immediately dissolve parliament so that the democratic system can continue," acting PM Phumtham told reporters.

The play appears to be a bid by Pheu Thai to undermine the pact between Bhumjaithai and the

People's Party, under which the latter – the largest party in parliament – would back Anutin in return for a promise to dissolve the house in four months. However, People's Party deputy leader Sirikanya Tansakun insisted that her party would honour the agreement. Anutin, 58, previously served as deputy prime minister, interior minister and health minister, but is perhaps most famous for delivering on a promise in 2022 to legalise cannabis.

Pheu Thai has been a dominant force in Thai politics for two decades, cultivating a populist brand which has jostled with the pro-military, pro-monarchy establishment. Paetongtarn's sacking dealt another heavy blow to the Shinawatra dynasty, increasingly bedevilled by legal and political setbacks. Anutin once backed Paetongtarn's coalition, but abandoned it over her conduct in the border dispute with Cambodia, which resulted in her removal last week. — Aljazeera

Argentine police recover Nazi-looted painting

BUENOS AIRES (AFP): Argentine authorities recovered an 18th century painting stolen by Nazis from a Dutch Jewish art collector over a week after it appeared in a property ad only to suddenly vanish. The "Portrait of a Lady" by Italian baroque painter Giuseppe Ghislandi was missing for eight decades before being photographed hanging in the home of the daughter of a senior SS officer, who fled to Argentina after World War II.

Prosecutors said that the woman's lawyer returned the work after a major hunt for it that made headlines worldwide. Showing off the piece, art expert Ariel Bassano told reporters it was "in good condition for its age, as it dates from 1710." He was quoted by the local La Capital Mar del Plata newspaper as valuing it at "around \$50,000." The painting was recognized last week by the Dutch newspaper AD in photographs of a house for sale in the seaside resort of Mar del Plata. It was hanging above a green sofa in the living room of Patricia Kadgien, daughter of SS financial guru Friedrich Kadgien, one of several high-ranking Nazis to escape to Argentina after the war.

The painting was among over 1,000 artworks stolen

from Amsterdam art dealer Jacques Goudstikker's collection after the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands in 1940. Its discovery generated a flurry of excitement on both sides of the Atlantic. But no sooner had it been identified than it disappeared again. When Argentine police went to raid the premises after being tipped off about the property ad they found no trace of the artwork. Kadgien and her husband were placed under house arrest after several failed police searches for the portrait. According to Argentine daily La Nacion, the couple admitted in a court filing that they owned the artwork and said they believed any lawsuit over its ownership would fall under the statute of limitations.

Their lawyer, Carlos Murias, said that prosecutors were seeking to charge his clients with "concealing smuggling." If framed within the context of the genocide of Jews during World War II, the crime would not be bound by the statute of limitations. The investigation arose from a visit to Kadgien's home by Dutch journalist Peter Schouten, who was investigating her father's past. "We wanted to talk about her father because there were a lot of news stories about him in the

Netherlands about ten years ago," Schouten told Argentina's Radio Rivadavia. Schouten said he knocked on the door of the house and got no response but noticed a for-sale sign. After searching online property ads, he spotted the painting in a photo of the house's interior. "I freaked out, of course," Shouten recalled. "I sent all the information to Holland, where they worked with the official institutions and confirmed that yes, it was that painting, that there was no chance it was a replica," he added.

He said he immediately contacted Kadgien to get her version of events but received no response and that shortly afterwards, the for-sale listing was removed from the property site. Goudstikker, a leading dealer of Italian and Dutch 16th- and 17th-century masters during the wars, fled the Netherlands days after the Nazi invasion. He left behind an extensive art collection, which was divided up by top German officials, led by Gestapo founder Hermann Goering. After the war the Dutch state retrieved some 300 works from the collection, most of which it later returned to Goudstikker's heirs. But many others remain scattered around the globe.

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Strong defense with a strong economy

HAS war become the best outcome to absolve Europe of its economic mistakes? Europe is today facing an economic reckoning. As I watched last month's meeting at the White House between US President Donald Trump and European leaders, I could not help but wonder if we were indeed heading to war. There is no doubt that Russia invaded Ukraine and this represents a risk to European security. Yet, as Trump presented a potential outcome for ending the war, the European stance surprised me. I would have thought that the European leaders would have jumped at the chance and supported a deal to end this major risk to the future of the old continent. But the opposition and conditions they put forward came at a time when they do not have the military-industrial capacity for war and their finances are in terrible shape.

So, I cannot help but wonder if drifting toward war might not solve, in appearance, an economic problem by shifting toward an economy of war with no limits on government spending and debt. In short, as Europe needs to invest in defense when it is financially strapped, will it drag itself into war, falling into the Russian trap? Now, don't get me wrong, I will stand with my country, France, right or wrong, against any war, and in no way do I justify Russia's actions. But the trend is worrying.

Not long after the Washington meeting, two news stories stood out, both concerning European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The first was her declaration that there are concrete EU plans to send troops to Ukraine, suggesting this is now outside the scope of the peace settlement force that had previously been discussed. This means that, the longer the conflict lasts, the EU's support of Kyiv will only grow. As a result, though it has not yet been mentioned, perhaps this will even mean combat. Yet, no matter what they do while there, boots on the ground are boots on the ground and this means that these countries will be directly at war with Russia and its allies. The second news item was the suspected jamming of Von der Leyen's plane's GPS by Moscow, which in a way is a message that war is war and is dirty, from space to Earth. This was all topped up with the revelation, made by a French newspaper, of an official request to healthcare institutions in France to be ready for a major engagement, which means war and receiving soldiers. This preparation is a necessity, but the general direction of events is not reassuring.

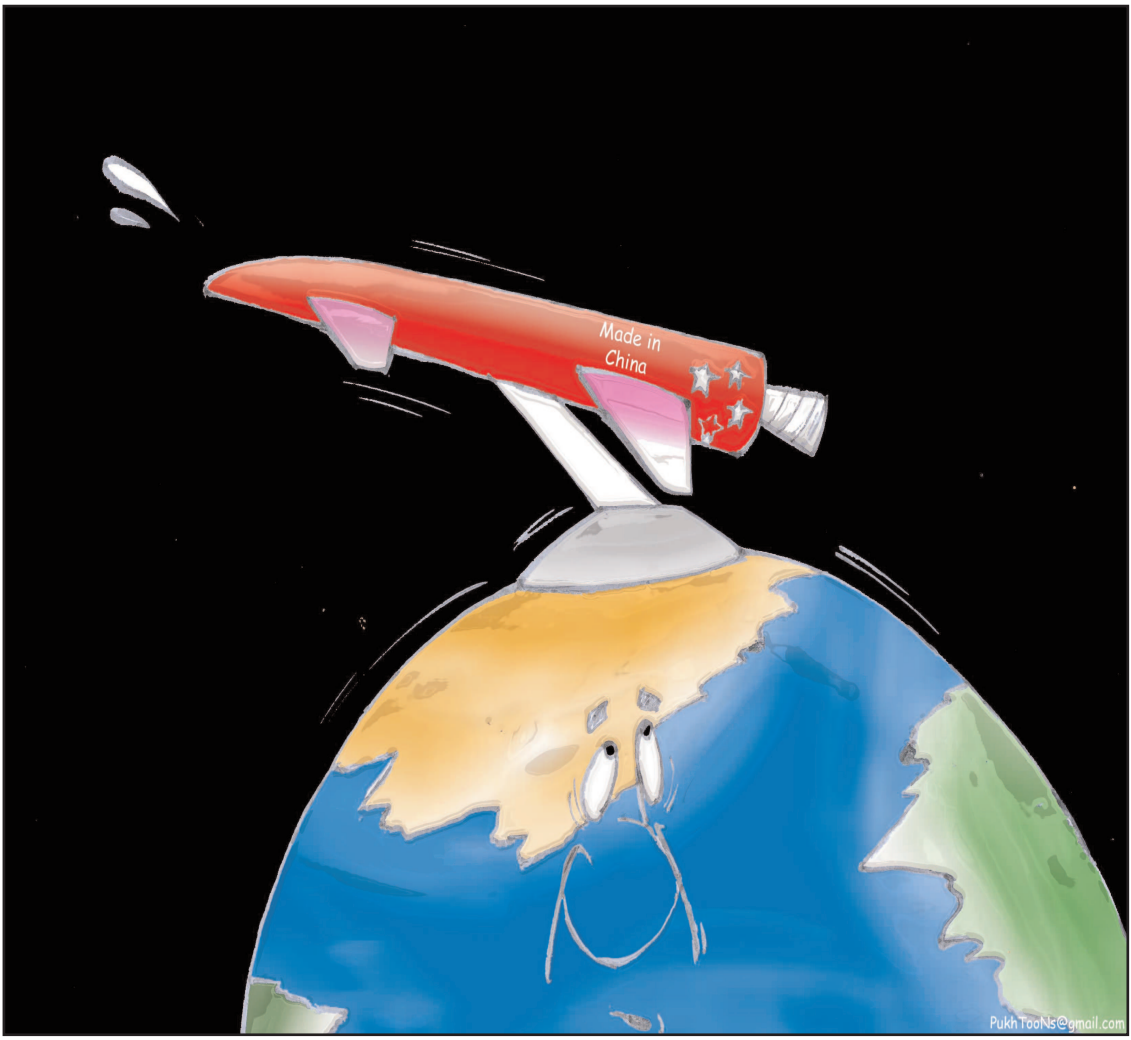
This comes at a time when France has reached a debt level of 114 percent of gross domestic product, weighed down by high public spending and persistent budget deficits, while it is also drifting into unprecedented political instability. Germany, meanwhile, faces stagnation as its export-driven economic model suffers due to weaker global demand and a costly energy transition, limiting expansion despite relatively lower debt. Italy, whose public debt is nearly 138 percent of GDP, struggles with chronic low productivity, political instability and an aging population, making its heavy debt burden unsustainable and growth prospects minimal. Spain, at about 102 percent, is constrained by high unemployment and a dependence on services, leaving its economy fragile to external shocks.

Together, these numbers point to Europe's looming crisis: high debt levels, weak competitiveness, structural inefficiencies and limited growth potential, with eurozone expansion projected to be only 0.9 percent in 2025 and 1.4 percent in 2026. This exposes the continent to financial and social pressures that could erupt in the near future. There is no denying the geopolitical situation, but if we can avoid the horrors of war, which we are already witnessing today, this has to be done now. The issue is that, even if there is peace, Europe will need to strengthen its defenses to act as a true deterrent. And it must find a way to restore its finances while ramping up its defense spending to record levels, with EU member states having allocated 326 billion (\$379 billion) in 2024, or 1.9 percent of GDP. This is projected to reach 381 billion in 2025. The new "Readiness 2030" plan aims to mobilize 800 billion through budget flexibility and the 150 billion Security Action for Europe loan program for joint procurement. This is why it is important to come up with a solution that allows European nations to do the necessary on the defense side, while staying accountable on their economic agenda. This is why I believe that relaxed deficit rules should apply only to defense spending, with countries continuing to be forced to work to restore their finances. This is a necessity, as Europe's determination to boost its defense spending will give a strong signal of its capacity to defend itself. But this cannot and should not be a justification for poor finances, which could push the continent to war. A broader mutualization of this effort should be urgently sought.

This is in no way justifying Russia's position but, if a resolution were to be found today, it would reflect the balance of power on the battlefield - there is no escaping this reality. I disagree with the experts who say this would open the door to more confrontation with Russia and more expansionist activities. Seeking a total defeat of Russia is not realistic and should not be the objective. There has been enough bloodshed. War settlements have taught us that what matters is not the day that a peace deal is signed, but what happens after that. And strong defense with a strong economy is the best way for Europe to turn the page, even with Russia.

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Israel risks isolation due to its Middle East policies

Dr. Turki Faisal Al-Rasheed

THE Israeli government's actions under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have significantly contributed to the growing instability in the Middle East. This includes the ongoing conflict in Gaza, marked by extensive destruction and civilian casualties, as well as Israel's military operations in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, often executed without sufficient international oversight.

Netanyahu's recent announcement of intent to occupy Gaza, following a tense exchange with Iran, highlights a strategy that could lead to irreversible regional escalation. Although these policies may provide Netanyahu with immediate political advantages that strengthen his domestic position amid internal challenges, they ultimately undermine Israel's long-term security and international reputation.

Experts argue that aggressive measures, such as the prolonged Gaza offensive and reports of widespread human rights violations, are unlikely to deliver lasting success for Israel. Rather, they drain economic resources, damage the nation's global image and position it as an outlier in the international community. This view is increasingly shared in the US, where members of Congress from both parties have called for a halt to arms deliveries, signaling a shift from long-standing unconditional support. These concerns arise not from a lack of allegiance to Israel but from apprehensions about self-inflicted harm: involvement in endless asymmetric conflicts, rising military losses and the burdensome responsibilities of occupying a territory that is home to more than 2 million Palestinians. Even among progressive Jewish groups, there is a growing movement to "protect Israel from its own policies," perceiving Netanyahu's direction as a route to national decline.

American journalist Chris Hedges has described Israel's operations in Gaza

as going beyond ethnic cleansing, amounting to the systematic erasure of Palestinian identity, culture and history. Such actions, he contends, erode the moral foundations of Israel's establishment. Hedges also criticized US presidents like Joe Biden and Donald Trump, along with European leaders, for enabling these developments through superficial condemnations while providing continued support. Netanyahu's assertiveness may stem in part from perceived encouragement from Trump, who reportedly advocated for a decisive approach without compromises. However, Trump's later comments have added nuance, cautioning that unrestrained actions could harm Israel's standing in Congress and internationally.

To offer a balanced perspective, it is crucial to recognize Israel's valid security challenges, including threats from armed groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. These organizations have conducted attacks, taken hostages and disrupted civilian life, as was particularly evident in the October 2023 incident that claimed numerous lives. Supporters of Israel's position maintain that robust military responses are essential to neutralize these dangers and safeguard citizens, arguing that restraint could invite further aggression. Nonetheless, as a critic of the current approach, I believe the intensity of Israel's retaliation, characterized by disproportionate force and significant civilian impact, surpasses what is necessary for defense. This overreach perpetuates a vicious cycle of violence, breeding resentment and instability rather than resolution.

Netanyahu's handling of different fronts illustrates this inconsistency: he has shown relative pragmatism toward Hezbollah, acknowledging its strength, yet remains unyielding on Gaza, rejecting multiple hostage negotiation proposals. This inflexibility seems

influenced by his coalition's ultranationalist factions, who favor expanding settlements in northern Gaza over diplomatic solutions. The plan to occupy Gaza after months of bombardment, which the International Committee of the Red Cross has deemed incompatible with safe civilian evacuation, reflects an extremist outlook. Without counterbalancing with moderate voices, this path courts disaster. Regionally, leaders in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere have strongly denounced these developments via diplomatic statements, condemning tactics such as food blockades, population transfers and displacement as breaches of Palestinians' long-standing rights to their homeland. The Saudi Foreign Ministry has emphasized that the international community's passivity weakens global standards, paving the way for additional violations and threatening broader peace efforts.

On a global scale, the Gaza crisis has highlighted contradictions in Western commitments to democracy and human rights, exacerbating social rifts and revitalizing support for the Palestinian cause, especially among younger demographics in the West. This shift challenges Israel's strategy of deterrence through overwhelming force. While official Western policies largely align with Israel, public opinion increasingly views it as isolated. Initiatives like the Saudi-French conference on a two-state solution, Egyptian-Qatari mediation for ceasefires and European countries' recognition of Palestinian statehood represent attempts to reduce tensions. Yet Netanyahu continues underdetermined, supported by US assistance. Future pathways for resolving the Gaza situation appear uncertain, given Israel's internal fractures: demonstrations by families of hostages, opposition parties endorsing negotiations and public surveys favoring an end to hostilities. In contrast,

Netanyahu's allies insist on absolute victory, seeing any compromise as a blow to deterrence that might terminate his leadership. Western criticisms, though prominent, frequently lack concrete consequences. Still, factors such as Palestinian endurance, cohesive Arab resistance to forced relocations, Saudi-led diplomacy and potential changes in US policy under Trump could encourage a pivot toward talks.

Ultimately, while Israel's need for self-defense must be acknowledged, the prevailing policies hazard not only regional turmoil but also the country's sustainability. A more equitable strategy, emphasizing negotiation over unilateral control, is vital for enduring stability. In this context, Saudi Arabia holds substantial promise as a mediator for peace and development in the Middle East. This role hinges on a deep comprehension of the region's multifaceted disputes. Frameworks like the two-state solution, envisioning independent Israeli and Palestinian states, provide structured avenues for reconciliation. However, implementation faces hurdles, including entrenched mistrust and competing territorial claims.

Achieving meaningful advancement requires authentic political resolve, a dedication to equity and an inclusive dialogue that accommodates the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Through spearheading diplomatic efforts, rectifying past injustices and supporting economic initiatives, Saudi Arabia can drive positive change. As a connector between conflicting parties, the Kingdom can transform antagonism into partnership, instilling optimism for a stable future. This vision of a harmonious Middle East, blending security with prosperity, depends on collective dedication from all involved - fostering conversation, empathy and shared respect in a historically divided area. Though challenges abound, a cohesive and thriving tomorrow is attainable through persistent collaboration.

Xu Wenhong

historical perspective for short-term gains, cognitive dissonance arises, followed by a host of complex contradictions, problems and disputes. And when humankind abandons the correct historical perspective, the world falls into turmoil, and confrontations and wars have proliferated. After the end of World War II, the international situation underwent drastic changes. The Cold War broke out, with the US and the Soviet Union vying for global hegemony. This led to a change in the US' strategic need for Japan. In order to contain the Soviet Union's influence in Asia, the US chose not to cleanse Japanese society of militarism and instead began supporting Japan's policies.

As a result, many Japanese war criminals escaped punishment, with some of them even assuming important positions in the Japanese government. Also,

due to Japan's constitutional monarchy form of government, the emperor's family members continued to be involved in Japanese politics, creating a complex web of connections between high-ranking officials and war criminals.

Consequently, some Japanese politicians today continue to cover up, avoid or refuse to reflect on their country's wartime past. Some even deny, try to whitewash, and glorify Japan's history of militarism, with certain Japanese politicians, rather a part of Japanese society, distorting history and confusing the people. Worse, eighty years have passed, and the signs of this scar flaring up again are becoming increasingly evident, every year on the anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, Japanese prime ministers and Cabinet members visit or send offerings to Yasukuni Shrine, which honors, among

Science fiction in Pakistani literature

Dr. Muhammad Anwar Farooq

WALK into any bookshop in Pakistan or scroll through local publishing pages and something stands out. You will find novels on politics, family drama, love stories, even sweeping historical epics. What you will not find is much science fiction. The genre barely exists here. That absence is not because Pakistanis lack imagination. It is because imagination has been boxed in, redirected or dismissed. And that gap matters more than most people realize.

Science fiction is not only about flying cars, aliens or time travel. At its core it is about asking "what if?" What if technology changes our lives in ways we cannot predict? What if the environment collapses? What if society chooses a different path? Countries that take science fiction seriously often end up better prepared for the future. American writers imagined the internet, artificial intelligence, even space travel long before they became reality. In Pakistan, that kind of speculative imagination has never entered the mainstream.

The silence comes from several places. The first is education. Our schools treat science as memorization rather than wonder. Students are drilled in formulas but rarely encouraged to ask questions such as "what if the laws of physics were bent?" or "what would life look like on another planet?" Without curiosity, science becomes a dead subject instead of fertile ground for storytelling. The second reason is publishing. Local publishers chase safe bets: romance, history, Islamic literature, political biographies. Science fiction is treated as risky, too foreign, too strange. Writers who might have the imagination find little encouragement.

The third is cultural habit. Pakistan's storytelling tradition is built around realism and morality. We prefer to read about society as it is or as it should be. Science fiction by definition drags us into the unfamiliar. It asks us to picture new worlds. That discomfort clashes with a culture that values continuity. The absence of science fiction costs us more than we think. Imagine if Pakistani writers had explored climate disaster stories fifty years ago. Today's conversations about floods, heat waves and water scarcity might not feel like sudden shocks but warnings we saw coming. Silicon Valley thrives on the imagination of sci-fi writers. Pakistan's tech sector grows without that creative spark. Too often our startups copy existing models instead of exploring radical ideas. Science fiction could shift that mindset by teaching us to imagine bigger.

There is also a cultural cost. Science fiction is a mirror. It reflects who we are by exaggerating, twisting or projecting us into strange futures. A Pakistani science fiction writer could ask what Karachi might look like in 2100 if sea levels rise, or

how a divided society would respond if artificial intelligence could predict crime before it happened. These are not just stories. They are thought experiments and social commentary.

Other regions are already finding their voices in science fiction. Indian writers are experimenting with climate fiction, futuristic cities and AI politics. In Africa, authors like Nnedi Okorafor are shaping Afrofuturism, a movement that imagines futures rooted in African history and culture. Pakistan has no equivalent. And that absence means when global conversations about the future unfold, we are silent. Our imagination is outsourced.

Yet the story does not have to end here. Small sparks already exist. Some short stories appear online. A few independent writers are experimenting with speculative ideas. But they remain underground. For a true culture to grow, something must shift. Universities could lead the way by encouraging students to blend science and storytelling. Picture a course where engineering students write short sci-fi about the inventions they are designing. Or literature departments that pair Shakespeare with Octavia Butler and Ursula Le Guin.

Digital spaces could help too. Pakistan's meme culture is already vibrant. Imagine if some of that creativity went into web comics or short animated sci-fi stories. Young people are online anyway. Why not give them futures to imagine instead of only pasts to debate? And of course publishing needs courage. A bold publisher could launch a "Pakistani Futures" series. Anthologies could invite writers to imagine anything from Mars colonies populated by Pakistani expats to dystopian versions of Lahore run by algorithms.

Without science fiction, a society remains stuck in the present. We keep circling the same debates about politics, corruption and survival while ignoring the bigger question of where we are heading. That is dangerous. The future is not going to wait. Climate change, artificial intelligence and biotechnology are coming whether we prepare or not.

Science fiction is not a luxury. It is rehearsal. It is practice for the futures we may face. For Pakistan it could be more than entertainment. It could be a tool for survival. The absence of science fiction in Pakistan is not only about books missing from shelves. It is about imagination missing from our culture. And without imagination, nations stagnate. We need our own dreamers, futurists and storytellers who dare to ask "what if?" Because if we do not imagine our future, someone else will do it for us. That, in the long run, would be the greatest loss of all. The writer is serving as Director of the Institute of Humanities and Arts at Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

Honor sacrifices of China, Russia in WWII

FOUR score years ago, our predecessors were caught up in an unprecedented arduous war in human history. And the scars the World Anti-Fascist War left behind can never be erased. Fortunately, however, in the battle between good and evil, good ultimately triumphed. Commemorating the sacrifices our predecessors made to protect us against evil on the 80th anniversary of the victory in that war will endow us with greater strength, enabling us to move forward.

Given the Western-dominated historical narrative of World War II, many are aware of the significance of the Miracle of Dunkirk, the Normandy landings and the Battle of Midway. But in the main theater in the East, China had already been engaged in a grueling and heroic Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-

45) for 10 years before the Pearl Harbor attack, following which the United States ultimately declared war on Japan. China, the main battlefield against Japanese aggression, paid a heavy price for resisting fascist forces - with 35 million casualties - during World War II. In Europe, the Soviet Union was the main battlefield against German fascist forces and suffered the heaviest loss - about 27 million lives. It was against Nazi Germany, and fascist Japan and Italy that the advocates of justice around the world came together. China, the US, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom mainly formed the antifascist alliance, after more than four years of tenacious struggle, ultimately achieving victory. These four countries, along with France, became the cornerstone of the United Nations Security Council, and the guardians of world peace and order.

When a country loses its sense of right and wrong and

others, 14 Class A war criminals, rubbing salt into the historical wounds of the people of Asia. Given these facts, Japan is unlikely to reflect on its militaristic past. Instead, it could once again become a belligerent, warmongering power.

Yet in the Western narrative, it was the United States and the United Kingdom that defeated fascist Germany in World War II. China endured 14 years of bloody struggle, suffering 35 million casualties, but according to the Western historical narrative, China's contributions in World War II are deliberately downplayed. The hard-won victory in World War II at the cost of the blood and lives of tens of millions of Chinese and Russian people, have been deliberately overlooked by many Western historians and observers. China and Russia both are major countries in the fast-changing world. But their relationship today is not an alliance; it is a strategic cooperative partner-

ship in the new era based on the common cognition of global peace - and their need to safeguard national security. If signs of a resurgence of Japanese militarism become evident, China and Russia, together with other peace-loving countries, will firmly oppose it. The two countries, along with others, stood together during World War II to defend justice, and remain committed to preventing any return of militarism that threatens peace and stability in Asia. China and Russia have the responsibility to address the root causes that threaten Asian security and lay the foundation for lasting peace in East Asia and the world.

In this context, China's Victory Day military parade on Sept 3 should be seen as a display of the country's peace-loving forces, aimed at pursuing peace through deterrence. This is the best way to stop those who are eager to trigger conflicts.

The China Daily

Brexit didn't solve Britain's woes, but no matter

THERE will be fireworks and celebration at Nigel Farage's party conference this weekend. Burgeoning membership and council seats as Reform UK tops 30% in the polls. Immigration is the boat that sailed him here: the more small boats arriving, the broader his wolfish grin. Prime inflamer of foreigner hatred that he is, black and brown people report what they call the Farage effect in a wave of attacks: Mothin Ali, new deputy head of the Greens and a Leeds councillor, was attacked with bottles while with his family last week on Cromer beach in Norfolk, and racist abuse was hurled at them. He said that Reform rhetoric was causing people to blame immigrants and non-white people for Britain's problems.

As immigration powered the Brexit campaign, surely the most shocking Brexit failure for his supporters must be the rise in immigration that followed. No wonder Farage never mentions Brexit now that its disastrous effects have struck home with most voters: Bregret grips 61%, who say leaving was more of a failure than success, only 31% still say leaving was right, while 56% think it was wrong to vote to leave the EU. Who do they blame? The Conservatives and Boris Johnson top the list, with more than two-thirds (67%) blaming Nigel Farage, the Ukip outsider who captured the Tory party.

After the great Brexit failure, Farage and the Tories turn instead to leaving the European convention on human rights (ECHR), blamed for small boat arrivals of undocumented migrants. Escape from the convention is the new "take back control". "Fool me once, shame on you;

fool me twice, shame on me" should be the warning to all who were taken in by the snake oil last time from Farage and Johnson, both life-long charlatans and deceivers. As was the case with Brexit, leaving the ECHR sounds simple: just quit and deport the migrants to anywhere.

Leave aside moral and human rights questions, which are unlikely to influence Reform backers. Instead, confront them with the brutal facts about what leaving the ECHR means. This would be Brexit with knobs on, bringing yet worse damage to Britain and its economy. Leaving the ECHR would jeopardise the Brexit trade and cooperation agreement with the EU, as EHCR membership is a requirement of that partnership. This could project us into the "no deal" Johnson originally threatened. It is likely to mean sky-high tariffs and steep border barriers.

As it is, the minimalist existing trade agreement led to this Office for Budget Responsibility assessment: "Our forecasts have assumed that the volume of UK imports and exports will both be 15% lower than if we had remained in the EU." That 15% loss in trade "will lead to a 4% reduction in the potential productivity of the UK economy". Now Farage and the Tories want to double down on that disaster.

Catherine Barnard, professor of European law at Cambridge University, warns of all the consequences: it would immediately end the better deals being negotiated, such as easy animal and plant trade, she tells me. Food prices would rise, so would inflation, as trade falls. The Good Friday agreement would fall apart overnight: the ECHR runs

Polly Toynbee

through it "as in a stick of rock", as with every EU agreement. (Farage admits he would have to renegotiate the agreement: good luck.) Outrage in Ireland at the fallout would ensure the EU took its revenge. Forget data exchange on crime or extradition of criminals.

France would be among the most indignant: any assistance in preventing small boats would be stopped. In fact, as Barnard writes, leaving the ECHR would do nothing at all to aid deportations of migrants. The 1951 refugee convention is the one that bans "refoulement", sending asylum seekers back to dangerous countries. But leaving that would, says Prof Barnard, have all the same political and trade consequences with the EU as leaving the ECHR.

Pariah Britain even further out in the cold, divorced from its democratic allies and falling further behind them economically: that's the exciting offer from Farage and the Tories, and it won't even "stop the boats".

But "nothing can be done" is no answer, when people in every country feel their borders should be secure, delineating who belongs, who pays tax and who shares the public benefits. Rising numbers of small boat arrivals, which makes up only a tiny proportion of total immigration, undermine the case for welcoming all the people we need to encourage here to build 1.5m homes, keep the NHS and social care on its feet, fund our universities, spur on our life-sciences and much more.

Right across Europe, governments face the same dilemmas, the anti-immigrant right riding the wave. But there are moves to

reform both the ECHR and the refugee convention, with nine EU leaders writing a letter calling for "reinterpretation". The two leading signatories are the rightwing Italian prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, and Denmark's Social Democrat prime minister, Mette Frederiksen. They call for making it easier to deport foreign criminals, which Barnard sees as a significant step towards change.

A Europe-wide collaboration on rethinking asylum looks possible. Few think a 1951 convention designed for escaping political refugees was meant to cover everyone globally from any war-torn or poverty-stricken dictatorship in an era of easy travel. Nor does it make moral sense to rescue only those with the money to get to Europe.

Reprising Brexit, Farage and the Tories want to go it alone. It's impossible to imagine them working collaboratively with the EU on anything, let alone a complex rethinking of these conventions, as they protest that any Labour deal is sneaking us into the EU by the back door.

At prime minister's questions, the Liberal Democrat leader, Ed Davey, asked: "Will the prime minister categorically rule out withdrawing from the ECHR or suspending it or watering down our rights in any way?" The PM replied: "We will not withdraw from the ECHR," but added, "we do need to make sure both the law and other instruments fit the circumstances we face". Yes indeed. But that can only be done by agreement. Labour needs to get on the front foot against Farage and the Tories. No better way than hammering home the damage their Brexit did, and how quitting the ECHR would bring us new kinds of hell.

The Guardian

Regions calling: The unhealed wounds of Caucasus

Leyla Latypova

HELLO and welcome to Regions Calling by The Moscow Times, your guide to developments beyond the Russian capital. In this issue, we unpack the confrontation between residents of the North Caucasus republics of Ingushetia and North Ossetia-Alania that unfolded on a highway at their shared border late last month.

The two republics fought a brief war in 1992 for control over the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia - a territory alienated from Ingush after the 1944 Soviet deportation - that resulted in North Ossetia retaining control over the district and expelling up to 60,000 ethnic Ingush from its territory. More than three decades later, the wound of 1992 is far from healed for either Ingush or Ossetians. So is the recent incident at the border an omen of instability to come? Before we dive into this question, let's look at what else has been going on in Russia's regions:

Motorists in the Russian Far East as well as annexed Crimea are reporting long lines and supply issues at local gas stations as gasoline prices continue to rise nationwide. Last week, authorities in the Sakhalin region's Kurilsky district, which incorporates the Kuril Islands, introduced a temporary ban on sales of benchmark A-92 fuel due to supply shortages. You can read more about the underlying causes of Russia's fuel crisis - and whether the country is prepared to weather it - in this op-ed by independent energy analyst Sergei Vakulenko. At least 10 tons of fuel oil spilled into the Black Sea during a loading operation near the port city of Novorossiysk in the Krasnodar region on Friday. Volunteers of a bird rehabilitation center in the nearby coastal resort of Anapa on Sunday said they took in 18 birds contaminated with mazut, linking the birds' state to the latest spill. A satellite image study by Greenpeace confirmed that the 50 square-meter-large spill has almost reached the shores of Crimea, Novaya Gazeta reported Wednesday. Meanwhile, volunteers in Anapa are still grappling with the consequences of the December 2024 Kerch Strait fuel oil spill. Also in the Krasnodar region, emergency services battled a forest fire after a Ukrainian drone crashed in a wooded area near the resort town of Gelendzhik. The fire, which started early on Aug. 28, spread across more than 42 hectares (104 acres) within 24 hours. Initial reports said one of the blaze spots was located near the mansion widely known as "Putin's Palace," though the fire at that location was extinguished the same day.

Russian authorities added prominent Altaian activist Aruna Arna to the federal register of "terrorists and extremists." Arna is one of the leaders of a widespread movement opposing a Kremlin-backed local governance reform and the expansion of Moscow-owned businesses in the republic of Altai. Meanwhile in Vladivostok, the Federal Security Service (FSB) unveiled a monument to Felix Dzerzhinsky, the first Soviet secret police chief credited with architecting the Red Terror. In Russia's Caucasus, a "Domestic Dispute" Reminds of a Fragile Status Quo

Late in the evening on Aug. 24, a fight broke out between two groups of men near Chermen, a village that stands at the modern-day border between the republics of North Ossetia-Alania and Ingushetia in Russia's Caucasus. The fight, divided along ethnic lines between the Ingush and Ossetians, quickly grew in size. Dozens of people joined the brawl on each side, with their cars blocking the major Caucasus highway at the juncture of the two republics, according to local media reports and videos from the scene. Russian police and National Guard officers sent to the scene eventually broke up the fight.

"The recent brawl is certainly the largest flare-up of tensions at the border in some time, but regional and federal authorities are heavily incentivized to assuage tensions quickly," said

North Caucasus analyst Harold Chambers. "Crackdown on civil society [by authorities in Ingushetia] eroded the positions of some of the leaders who would typically help mediate such scenarios. There are additional tensions in both republics not related to interethnic conflict, so the Kremlin wants even more to avoid a flare-up at this time," Chambers told The Moscow Times. Founded by the Ingush in 1844 under the name Bazarokino, Chermen is located in North Ossetia's Prigorodny district, one of the territories alienated from the Ingush following the forced deportation orchestrated under Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

In 1944, between 450,000 and 650,000 residents of the Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic were loaded onto cattle cars and deported to Central Asia during the Soviets' Operation Chechevitsa (Lentil). Nearly one-third of the Chechen and Ingush populations died in the deportation. The Chechen-

that could complicate the already fragile balance in Ossetian-Ingush relations," Evloeva told The Moscow Times. Yet shortly after the incident, former Justice Minister Yuri Chaika, who now serves as Vladimir Putin's special envoy in the North Caucasus, paid a sudden visit to Ingushetia.

Evloeva believes Chaika's visit "speaks to the level of concern among the authorities," especially those in the government who could see in it all the ingredients for "a potential hotbed of destabilization: a blocked federal highway, a mass gathering of people and the intervention of security forces." The conflict in Chermen is not the first time the unhealed wound of the Prigorodny conflict has flared up in recent years to the inconvenience of the government in Moscow, which remains preoccupied with its assault on Ukraine. Nearly a year ago, rumors that North Ossetian officials had been planning to redraw a shared border to take parts of Ingushetia's Dzhelyrakhsky district put the region on the brink of large-scale unrest. This time, analysts

"This is understandable: their task is to prevent escalation, avoid mobilization along ethnic lines, and not to give the conflict an interethnic feel that could complicate the already fragile balance in Ossetian-Ingush relations," Evloeva told The Moscow Times. Yet shortly after the incident, former Justice Minister Yuri Chaika, who now serves as Vladimir Putin's special envoy in the North Caucasus, paid a sudden visit to Ingushetia. Evloeva believes Chaika's visit "speaks to the level of concern among the authorities," especially those in the government who could see in it all the ingredients for "a potential hotbed of destabilization: a blocked federal highway, a mass gathering of people and the intervention of security forces." The conflict in Chermen is not the first time the unhealed wound of the Prigorodny conflict has flared up in recent years to the inconvenience of the government in Moscow, which remains preoccupied with its assault on Ukraine.

Ingush ASSR was disbanded and its territory redistributed to neighboring regions and republics, including the present-day republics of Dagestan and North Ossetia.

Though the Chechens and Ingush were allowed to return to their homeland 13 years later, their republic was never restored in its entirety. The Prigorodny district remained a part of North Ossetia. In 1992, the two republics fought a brief war for control over the area that resulted in the death of 192 Ossetians and 409 Ingush, as well as the expulsion of up to 60,000 ethnic Ingush from North Ossetia. Once an important center of Ingush political life, Chermen plays a special role in the present-day dispute, hosting a border checkpoint where travelers crossing the border of the two republics must be inspected by a Moscow-controlled police unit. North Ossetian officials say the checkpoint, which was taken over by federal authorities during the 1992 war, must remain in place as a vital part of counter-terrorism measures.

But most Ingush advocate for dismantling the border post that reinforces the line of separation from their historic lands, where many ethnic Ingush still live to this day. Commenting on the most recent incident at the border, North Ossetia's head Sergei Menyailo dubbed it "a domestic dispute" that was "exploited by provocateurs on social media." Menyailo also suggested restricting entry to the republic in case of similar incidents in the future - a proposition that infuriated many in Ingushetia. "Regional authorities tend to downplay situations like this by describing them as 'domestic disputes,'" said Isabella Evloeva, an independent journalist from Ingushetia. "This is understandable: their task is to prevent escalation, avoid mobilization along ethnic lines, and not to give the conflict an interethnic feel

and regional commentators differ when it comes to assessing the longevity of the latest flare-up and its real impact. "I do not think this incident will evolve into a broader conflict. Flare-ups on the border happen every so often, with tensions usually subsiding within a week or so after smaller incidents," analyst Chambers told The Moscow Times. "I do not see any indicators so far that suggest the situation will deteriorate this time." But journalist Evloeva said that the incident, while in no way a marker of a new phase of the decades-long conflict, is surely "a reminder of how fragile the current status quo is."

"At the core of this conflict lies the unresolved issue of the Prigorodny district and the [collective] trauma of 1992, which continues to surface in such trigger points. That is why the authorities seek to downplay the ethnic dimension and publicly refer to the events as a 'domestic dispute,'" said Evloeva. Residents of the town of Beslan in North Ossetia this week paid tribute to the victims of the 2004 terrorist attack on a local school, one of the deadliest attacks in Russian history. On the morning of Sept. 1, 2004 - the first day of the new school year in Russia - armed terrorists took more than 1,100 civilians hostage at School No. 1, demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from neighboring Chechnya and the recognition of Chechnya's independence.

The hostages were forced inside the school's explosives-rigged gymnasium and kept there without food, water or proper sanitation for three days. On Sept. 3, a series of explosions erupted inside the school, plunging the situation into chaos and triggering an assault by Russian special forces. The siege ended with more than 330 civilians killed, 186 of whom were children, as well as more than 700 injured.

Trump and Putin both agree

Stephen Collinson

DONALD Trump and Vladimir Putin are on the same page again. The US and Russian presidents are now both singling out Europe as stasis envelops efforts to end the Ukraine war three weeks after their high-profile but low-impact summit in Alaska. Trump called on Europe to do more in a call with European leaders on Thursday - even though the only incremental diplomatic activity to do with the war is coming from US transatlantic allies as they try to work out security guarantees to protect Ukraine after any peace deal.

The latest twist in the president's erratic Ukraine diplomacy came a day after he told reporters he planned to speak with Putin again soon so he could work out "what we're going to be doing." He refused to say whether he'd sign off on severe direct sanctions on Russia if Putin continued to slow his peace initiative after the Russian president ignored repeated two-week deadlines, the latest of which expires on Friday. "Whatever his decision is, we'll either be happy about it, or unhappy. And if we're unhappy about it, you'll see things happen," Trump said in the Oval Office on Wednesday. Trump did speak to Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday, along with the other European leaders. The Ukrainian president said afterward that the conversation covered economic pressure on Russia and "depriving Russia's war machine of money."

But the message from the US side after the conversation faulted the Europeans more than Russia. Trump "emphasized that Europe must stop purchasing Russian oil that is funding the war - as Russia received 1.1 billion in fuel sales from the EU in one year," a White House official said after the call. "The president also emphasized that European leaders must place economic pressure on China for funding Russia's war

efforts," the official said.

On one hand, Trump has a point. Given the grave security threat that European nations perceive from Russia, it's odd that there would be any European Union countries still buying Russian energy at a time when the West has imposed sanctions to try to debilitate Moscow's economy over its illegal 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Still, like many of Trump's positions on the war, his pressure on Europe contains illogical and even hypocritical elements. After all, he's demanding that Europe take on China over its Russian oil purchases when he's not prepared to sanction Beijing himself. The United States is locked in trade talks with the Chinese after the president unleashed a trade war with high tariffs despite rather unfavorable US cards. Trump seems loath to do anything that will harm his chances of a deal.

But his stance on Europe mirrors his treatment of another erstwhile friend, India, which is struggling under a 50% tariff on its exports to the United States that Trump justified by its continuing purchases of Russian oil. His move shattered a three-decade-long bid by successive Democratic and Republican presidents to keep India out of the orbit of fellow rising Asian superpower China. The cost of his strategy was underscored this week when Chinese President Xi Jinping offered Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi a jovial welcome at a summit of strongman leaders. Modi, meanwhile, spent an hour in Putin's limousine, in an echo of the Russian leader's ride in Trump's Beast armored car during their summit in Alaska three weeks ago.

In any case, hiking pressure on Europe to ease off its purchases of Putin's oil is unlikely to be decisive. The continent has been taking steps

to decrease its dependence on Russian energy as war has raged in Ukraine. Russia was once the largest supplier of petroleum to the EU. But member states have since imposed a ban on maritime oil exports and refined oil products. CNN's Lauren Kent reported last month that oil imports to Europe fell to \$1.72 billion in the first quarter of 2025, down from \$16.4 billion in the equivalent period in 2021. Russia, meanwhile, is intensifying its classic strategy of trying to drive wedges between NATO allies as it seeks to create room for its forces to press for more gains on the frontlines in eastern Ukraine.

During his visit to China, Putin met Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and accused Europeans of whipping up "hysteria" over Moscow allegedly planning to attack Europe. "Any sane person is perfectly aware that Russia has never had, does not have, and will never have any desire to attack anyone," said a Russian president whose forces entered Ukraine in 2014 and 2022. In Alaska, Putin warned - as he stood side-by-side with a US president who has frequently criticized America's allies - that Europe should not "throw a wrench in the works" of his diplomacy with Trump.

And earlier this week, the European Commission said a plane carrying its top leader Ursula Von der Leyen was targeted with GPS navigation jamming while landing in Bulgaria on Sunday and that Russia was suspected. Moscow blasted the claim as "fake" and a symptom of European "paranoia." In another swipe at Europe this week, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters that Russia found the idea of any deployment of foreign troops to Ukraine in the event of a peace deal "unacceptable." It was Moscow's latest effort

CNN

Is Britain really the new North Korea?

TELL me, fellow Brits, how are you getting used to our island version of North Korea? How are you coping with life, now that we are a global pariah alongside Pyongyang? How do you feel about modern Britain having to vie with North Korea, Myanmar and Afghanistan for the wooden spoon on every international index of oppression?

For that is the country Wednesday's Daily Mail front page insists we have now become. It is tempting to laugh off a headline that asks "When did Britain become North Korea?" as just another here-today-gone-tomorrow piece of journalistic hyperbole. That's even more the case when you read the cobbled-up pandemonium of provocations that form the contents of the headline-writer's charge that Britain is being strong-armed into "Starmer's socialist utopia" - nervy bond markets, the possibility of compulsory ID cards, the arrest of the Father Ted writer for his tweets and, of course, Angela Rayner.

But there is something more at work here. The plain fact is that this list simply does not compare with North Korea's place near the top of the global slavery index or at the foot of the international index of economic freedom. Some actions of the British state are undoubtedly annoying and wrong - even sometimes iniquitous. But there is still a gulf between the charge sheet and what Amnesty International calls the North

Korean state's untrammelled ability to "exercise total control over all aspects of life".

These things should hardly need saying, yet the increasing reality is that they now must be said. Parts of Britain's political debate, if you can use that word any longer, are now routinely infused with a hysterical dystopianism, of which the Mail front page or the casual use this week by a Telegraph columnist of the phrase "Starmer's Stasi" are classic examples. Both the old and the new media facilitate this, provoking governments - Labour today but previously also the Conservatives - into poorly thought-out legislative responses to manageable problems.

The net result, however, is that overstatement and exaggeration dominate our debates, squeezing out much-needed truth, proportion, fairness, reason and judgment in politics and government. Even now, a strong dose of all five of these qualities would surely have made a better job of clarifying - and in some cases, preventing - the four different genuine problems on which the Mail based its silly North Korea comparison.

First, it is true the UK bond market moved up again this week. The UK economy is stuck. But the main cause of nerves in the bond markets is global - caused by Donald Trump's assaults on the Federal Reserve's independence. That is washing over into many European markets, not just Britain.

Martin Kettle

The idea that the UK market is uniquely spooked is false.

Second, it is also true that ID cards are again on the UK government's agenda. In other circumstances, the Tory press might be in favour, because digital IDs might bar unregistered migrants from working in the informal economy. But even a convert to ID cards, like me, who prefers the state rather than Elon Musk to control the digital world, needs to grasp that the system may not shrink the shadow economy very effectively. When Britain used wartime ID cards to enforce rationing, the black market still thrived.

The Heathrow arrest of the Father Ted creator Graham Linehan looks, on the evidence, a very questionable use of police time. As the Met commissioner says, the law should be redrafted to be more sensitive to legitimate disagreements. All the same, one of Linehan's tweets did suggest an act of violence. Social media, like the internet, has to be policed so that incitement is prevented and deterred, and I would rather the police did this than the untrustworthy tech giants.

Unlike the Tory press, I have no problem with Angela Rayner's ambition or dress sense. I also know a popular politician when I see one, and that popularity probably explains why Rayner is such a media target. Yet she herself now admits she paid less tax on a property than she should have. Few of us know the full facts, so we must

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 1,611 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index continued with bullish trend on Friday, gaining 1,611.47 more points, a positive change of 1.06 percent, closing at 154,277.19 points against 152,665.72 points last trading day.

A total of 1,078,410,471 shares were traded during the day as compared to 954,327,333 shares the previous trading day, whereas

the price of shares stood at Rs 59.949 billion against Rs 46.053 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 479 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 239 of them recorded gains and 210 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 30 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 146,093,956 shares at Rs 19.69 per

share, F. Nat. Equities with 55,753,605 shares at Rs7.74 per share and Fauji Foods Limited with 50,935,429 shares at Rs18.72 per share.

Sitara Chemical Industries Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 79.77 per share price, closing at Rs 877.47, whereas the runner-up was Siemens (Pakistan) Engineering with Rs50.17 rise in its per share price to Rs1,603.17.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 834.67 per share closing at Rs 25,506.00 followed by Hoechst Pakistan Limited with Rs 96.79 decline in its share price to close at Rs 4,004.48.

Meanwhile, in the future market, as many as 316 companies traded shares in the market out of which 181 witnessed gain, 133 loss where the prices of 2 companies remained

Weekly inflation goes up by 1.29pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.29 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on September 2, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 335.41 points as compared to 331.14 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 5.07 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 also increased of 2.01 per cent by going

up to 327.73 from last week's 321.82 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733 to 22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175,increased by 1.90 percent, 1.61 percent, 1.48 percent and 0.99 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 23 (45.10%) items increased, 04 (07.84%) items decreased and 24 (47.06%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (46.03%), wheat flour (25.41%), onions (8.57%), rice basmati broken (2.62%), garlic (2.04%), potatoes (1.38%), pulse moong (1.29%), bread (1.19%), LPG (0.88%), shirting (0.27%), long cloth (0.17%) and lawn printed (0.07%).

The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average

prices on a week-on-week basis included bananas (3.86%), diesel (0.91%), sugar (0.13%) and mustard oil (0.10%).

On year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed increase in prices included tomatoes (83.45%), ladies sandal (55.62%), wheat flour (30.27%), gas charges for q1 (29.85%), sugar (27.43%), gur (13.21%), beef (13.15%), pulse moong (12.99%), firewood (11.47%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (11.36%), chicken (10.89%) and lawn printed (7.72%),

The commodities which recorded decrease in their average prices on year-on-year basis included onions (47.00%), garlic (25.50%), pulse mash (22.93%), potatoes (19.25%), pulse gram (19.04%), electricity charges for q1 (18.12%), tea packet (17.93%), pulse masoor (6.07%), rice irri-6/9 (4.60%) and LPG (3.71%).

US labor market cracks widen as job growth nearly stalls in August

WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. job growth weakened sharply in August while the unemployment rate increased to nearly a four-year high of 4.3%, confirming that labor market conditions were softening and sealing the case for an interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve this month.

The Labor Department's closely watched employment report on Friday also showed the economy lost jobs in June for the first time in 4-1/2 years. Job growth has shifted into stall-speed, with economists blaming President Donald Trump's sweeping import tariffs and an immigration crackdown that has reduced the labor pool. Softness in the labor market is mostly coming from the

hiring side. There were more unemployed people than vacancies in July for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trump's duties, which have boosted the nation's average tariff rate to the highest level since 1934, stoked fears of higher inflation, prompting the U.S. central bank to pause its interest rate cutting cycle. Just as some of the uncertainty over trade policy was starting to lift with most tariffs now in place, a U.S. appeals court ruled last Friday that many of the duties were illegal, keeping businesses in a state of flux.

"The warning bell that rang in the labor market a month ago just got louder," said Olu Sonola, head of

U.S. economic research at Fitch Ratings.

"The Fed is likely to prioritize labor market stability over its inflation mandate, even as inflation drifts further from the 2% target. It's hard to argue that tariff uncertainty isn't a key driver of this weakness."

Nonfarm payrolls increased by only 22,000 jobs last month after rising by an upwardly revised 79,000 in July, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls would rise by 75,000 positions after a previously reported gain of 73,000 in July. Estimates ranged from no jobs added to 144,000 positions created.

Revisions also showed

payrolls declined by 13,000 jobs in June, the first drop since December 2020, rather than rising by 14,000, as had been reported last month.

The unemployment rate increased from 4.2% in July, in part due to more people entering the labor force.

Some of the sharp job growth slowdown last month could be tied to a seasonal quirk. The initial August job count has tended to exhibit a weak bias, with revisions subsequently showing strength. Nonetheless, employment growth has softened considerably, averaging 29,000 jobs per month in the last three months, compared to 82,000 during the same period in 2024.

Wall St eases from record highs

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Wall Street's main indexes eased from record highs on Friday after concerns about a slowdown in the world's largest economy outweighed optimism about interest-rate cuts from the U.S. Fed following a weaker-than-expected August jobs report.

Economically sensitive sectors led declines. Banks (.SPXBK), opens new tab fell 2.2%, energy (.SPNY), opens new tab shed 1.7% and industrials (.SPLRCI), opens new tab lost 1%.

Data showed the U.S. economy created only 22,000 jobs last month compared to an estimate of 75,000 additions, confirming that labor market conditions were softening and making a stronger case for interest-rate cuts from the Federal Reserve in September.

Traders of futures tied to the Fed's policy rate added to bets that the U.S. central bank will trim rates in quick succession, starting this month, with a jumbo 50-basis-point reduction now on the table.

While a 25-bps rate cut later this month was a near certainty before the data, traders now also see a 16% chance of a larger 50-bps rate cut in September - a stark change from no such bets a month ago, CME's FedWatch Tool showed.

"This is more of a recessionary jobs report than not. It doesn't indicate that we're necessarily in a recession now, but it definitely is more in the negative column than it is in the positive column," said Kevin Gordon, senior investment strategist at Charles Schwab.

"If they're (the Fed) is cutting in response to a weakening labor market because it's getting away from them, that is initially not a bullish setup for the stock market."

The unyielding resolve of 1965 reverberates in 2025

Hamna Obaid

FOR Pakistan, 6th September is less a date on the calendar and more a mirror reflecting sacrifice, resilience and patriotism. Defence Day of Pakistan, commemorated annually stands as a solemn reminder of the sacrifices, unity, and indomitable spirit demonstrated by the nation during the 1965 Indo-Pak War. It reflects the unwavering determination of Pakistan's armed forces and civilians, who united side by side to defend the sovereignty of their nation. While Defence Day is celebrated with ceremonies, military parades, and tributes to martyrs, its significance also lies in contextualizing the conflict within regional geopolitics, military strategy, and national identity formation.

The Indo-Pak War of 1965 was rooted in the unfinished agenda of Partition and the unre-

The living legacy of defense and Martyr's Day

Zartaj Chaudhary

6 September is the day when soldiers became the backbone of our national pride, when sacrifice became the language understood by the heart, and when the world witnessed that Pakistan's defenders do not merely react, they prevail. Defense and Martyrs' Day is not just a commemoration of the past; it serves as a reminder of Pakistan's continuous commitment to protecting its sovereignty, preserving peace, and securing its future. What often goes unnoticed, however, is that the spirit of that day did not end in 1965. It lives on in every soldier who patrols our borders, every operation that neutralizes emerging threats, and every strategic decision that keeps the nation safe from chaos and disorder. From the legacy of past heroism to modern milestones like Operation Marka-e-Haq, Defense and Martyrs' Day reflects a story still unfolding-one in which sacrifice and strategy walk hand in hand, and patriotism speaks louder through action than rhetoric.

When the Indian army crossed Pakistan's international border on the morning of 6 September 1965, it was not just an act of aggression; it was a test of whether a nation barely 18 years old could defend its existence. Outnumbered nearly three to one in men and machines, Pakistan's forces stood their ground with a resolve that far outweighed statistics. The martyrs who fell in those days did more than secure Lahore or Sialkot; they etched into Pakistan's consciousness the idea that sovereignty is sustained by sacrifice, not by numerical strength. Analysts often recall how the Battle of Chawinda became one of the largest tank battles since World War II, but its real significance lies in the message it carried: that Pakistan's survival would always rest on the courage of its people in uniform. Beyond numbers, the war carved a psychological victory; it proved that defense is not merely a function of weaponry but of unity, conviction, and an unshakable belief in one's cause. Defense and Martyrs' Day, then, is not only about remembering the past; it is about recognizing that the sacrifices of 1965 provided the strategic confidence on which Pakistan's defense doctrine continues to stand.

That foundation of sacrifice has since shaped an institution that is no longer defined solely by the battlefield. The Pakistan Army today is as much a force of adaptation as it is of defense. The valor of 1965 resonates even more profoundly in today's complex security landscape, where threats are no longer defined by tanks crossing borders but by terrorism, hybrid warfare, cyber incursions, and regional instability. In response, the armed forces have broadened their mandate: from clearing terrorist strongholds in the tribal belt to constructing bridges in flood-hit areas, from safeguarding borders in Balochistan to contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions abroad. Each role reaffirms the same principle forged in 1965, that defending Pakistan means protecting not only its territory but also the dignity, stability, and future of its people. In this sense, the soldier of today carries the legacy of the martyrs, but with tools and responsibilities far more complex, proving that resilience is not just inherited, it is constantly renewed.

Nowhere is this evolution more visible than in Operation Marka-e-Haq, which demonstrated how the resolve of 1965 has been transformed into the strategy of today. Where martyrs once stood firm against invading armour, today's soldiers confront terrorists' networks and asymmetric warfare with the same clarity of purpose. Marka-e-Haq was not only about eliminating hostile elements; it was about reaffirming the state's writ, restoring public confidence, and proving that Pakistan's armed forces remain the ultimate guarantors of national stability. In its execution, the operation bridged past and present-demonstrating that while the theatre of conflict has shifted from open fields to shadowy frontlines, the spirit of sacrifice, discipline, and vigilance remains unchanged. Just as the soldiers of 1965 gave the nation belief in its survival, Marka-e-Haq has given Pakistan renewed faith in its future.

The martyrs of 1965 and the victories of Marka-e-Haq both whisper the same truth: resilience is born when people place absolute trust in those who guard their tomorrow. For today's youth, that means moving beyond ceremonial admiration to practical ownership of this legacy-whether by guarding national unity against division, embracing resilience in the face of crisis, or simply refusing to let cynicism dilute trust in the defenders of our soil. Today, as hybrid wars and shifting geopolitics test our resolve, the Pakistan Army continues to embody that covenant, standing as shield that absorbs threats so the nation can dream of progress. Defense Day is therefore not a ritual of remembrance; it is a call to renew the covenant between soldier and citizen, ensuring that blood once shed for survival continues to give strength for progress.

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solved dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. Tensions escalated after Kashmiri Freedom Fighters rose against Indian illegal occupation. India blamed Pakistan and committed a naked aggression by crossing international border, leading to a full-scale war. Most intense battles were fought in Lahore, Sialkot, and the deserts of Sindh. Pakistan regards the conflict as a testament to the valor and strategic capacity of its armed forces. Importantly, the 17 days long war forged a sense of collective resilience in Pakistan's national consciousness.

Central to Defence Day is the commemoration of martyrs who laid down their lives in defence of the motherland. Figures such as Major Raja Aziz Bhatti Shaheed, recipient of the Nishan-e-Haider, symbolize the spirit of selfless service. His legacy epitomizes courage under adversity. PAF played an equally significant role. Air Commodore MM Alam, with his record of downing five Indian aircraft in less than a minute, emerged as a legendary figure whose heroics uplifted the morale of the nation. Beyond the military front, civilians demonstrated remarkable resilience. Stories of villagers helping the army with food, shelter, and even intelligence illustrate that the war was not fought by soldiers alone but by an entire nation united against external aggression.

The 1965 war demonstrated Pakistan's tactical strength and steadfast resilience. The Battle of Lahore stands as a central narrative of Defence Day. India launched a major offensive towards Lahore, aiming to capture the city. Pakistani forces, supported by civilians, repelled the attack, preventing India from achieving its strategic objectives. Widely regarded as one of the largest tank battles since World War II, the Battle of Chawinda in Sialkot underscored the Pakistan Army's exceptional defensive capabilities.

being numerically inferior, Pakistan's armored divisions successfully contained India's advance. Perhaps the most enduring "victory" of 1965 was the demonstration of unity. The war bridged social and political divides, creating a shared sense of national identity rooted in the defense of sovereignty.

Just as the defence of Lahore in 1965 became a symbol of Pakistan's unyielding resolve, Marka-e-Haq of May 2025 has entered the nation's memory as its modern echo. In both moments, Pakistan faced a numerically superior adversary, yet turned the tide through unity, sacrifice, and sheer determination. From the trenches of Lahore to the battle-grounds of May 2025, one thread remains unbroken: Pakistan's sovereignty has been secured not merely by weapons, but by the blood of its martyrs and the will of its people.

Seen together, Defence Day and the Marka-e-Haq are not isolated episodes but chapters of the same story - a story of resilience, sacrifice, and the will to endure. They remind us that while battlefields may change, the demands of sovereignty and unity remain constant.

KPRA team pays surprise visits to registered tax payers

PESHAWAR (APP): A corporate team of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) including Assistant Collector Dr. Zia Ur Rehman and Audit Officer Sikandar Hayat carried out surprise visits to registered tax payers.

The purpose of the visits were to ensure compliance with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sales Tax on Services (KPSTS) Act, 2022 (updated 2025), said a press release issued here on Friday.

During the inspections,

new tax rates were verified

from records.

(نوٹس مشتری ہوشیار باش)

بذریعہ نوٹس ہذا مشتری کیا جاتا ہے کہ مکان نمبر CB-14/G-8/96، سروے نمبر 597، واقع خانم سید نسیم روڈ شیادور کیٹ کے اوپر کارکنان راشی کی رہبر ماک ولاء البرٹ ماک کے نام پر موجود ہیں یہ کہہ کر رہبر ماک، مورخہ 08-10-1983 کو قہراً پائے گئے اور سیدان احمد فیروز، سید علی کوٹاہ مسعود ایڈیٹر پریس، مسماۃ آرزو پریس، وکٹوریہ ٹاؤن (پہران) دوختران رہبر ماک، لیفٹ آف ایڈیٹر فیضی، محکمہ ستر سول نیچ شیادور مورخہ 14-01-2020 کے تحت ان کے قانونی دروازہ پر پائے اب یہ کہہ سیدان احمد فیروز فیروزہ مکی یا سول علی کوٹاہ فیضی احمد کر کے مذکورہ بالا مکان کو اپنے ناموں پر حاصل کر دئے گئے ایک دوسرے خواست بعد لیفٹ آف ایڈیٹر فیضی احمد فیروزہ ایڈیٹر راشی ہے اگر کسی شخص، بینک، ادارے کو مذکورہ بالا مکان کی منتقلی پر کوئی اعتراض ہو تو اشتیادور کی اشاعت کے پندرہ (15) دن کے اندر اعتراضات پیش کرے، بعد ثبوت چیل کریں بعد ازاں منتقلی کی کارروائی مندرجہ بالا درخواست کاروں کے ناموں پر شیادور کی یا شیادور کی طرف سے نقل قبول نہ ہوگا۔

انتہی: کنٹریکٹس یا دیگر بینکار شیادور

Defence Day 2025: Bunyan Un Marsoos — The eternal wall of Pakistan

Kaneez Ayesha Abbasi)

THE dawn of 6th September 1965 broke like any other. Lahore was waking up gently, its streets filled with schoolchildren in uniforms, traders raising shutters, and the sacred call of Fajr echoing across the horizon. But in the stillness of that morning, an enemy advanced with arrogance, its tanks rumbling across borders, its eyes fixed on our heartland. They believed that Pakistan would be shaken, that the young nation would collapse under the weight of their power.

What they did not realize was that Pakistan was no ordinary land-it was faith breathing in the hearts of millions, it was sacrifice etched into the veins of its defenders, it was resolve forged in fire. On that day, the enemy confronted not just an army but an entire nation standing as one: farmers, teachers, children, women, and soldiers, welded together like a Bunyan-un-Marsoos - a solid wall of faith, unbreakable, immovable, eternal.

The guns thundered, fighter jets soared, and the earth shook with battle, but Pakistan did not flinch. Ordinary men became legends, ordinary women became symbols of sacrifice, and ordinary children became voices of courage. It was not just a defence of land; it was a defence of honor, of dignity, of the very soul of Pakistan. And the world witnessed a miracle-the miracle of a nation that refused to surrender even an inch of its soil.

From that day onwards, 6th September became more than a date. It became a covenant, a pledge, a living reminder that Pakistan's sovereignty rests in invincible hands. It is a day when history proclaims: this nation, though young, cannot be subdued; this land, though tested, cannot be broken; this people, though challenged, cannot be conquered.

Today, as we mark Defence Day 2025, the spirit of Bunyan-un-Marsoos shines brighter than ever. Our armed forces stand not as three separate branches but as one inseparable whole-custodians of land, air, and sea, guardians of every heartbeat of this nation. Their strength does not lie in machines alone but in the spirit that fuels them: faith in Allah, love for the homeland, and the sacred duty to protect at all costs.

They are the sons and daughters of this soil, molded by sacrifice, hardened by trials, and elevated by faith. They carry on their shoulders not just weapons but the trust of millions. Their oath is not ink on paper-it is blood on the battlefield, sweat in training grounds, and tears in the prayers of their families. They are warriors in war, guardians in peace, and saviors in calamity. When floods devastate villages, it is their hands that rescue. When earthquakes topple homes, it is their arms that rebuild. When enemies threaten, it is their courage that answers.

The defence of Pakistan is not bound by geography-it is a living spirit that flows through every desert, mountain, and ocean. It is carved into the snowy peaks of Siachen, carried across the waves of the Arabian Sea, and etched into the skies where the Shaheens soar. It is a spirit that whispers in the wind, beats in the drums of parades, and echoes in the azaan at dawn. It is eternal.

Our enemies know well: whenever they dared to test Pakistan, they found themselves shattered against an unyielding wall. Tanks rusted before reaching Lahore, aircraft fell before touching our skies, and ambitions drowned before crossing our waters. For the defenders of Pakistan do not fight for conquest-they fight for survival with dignity. They do not fight for power-they fight for faith, honor, and homeland. And those who fight with such purity can never be defeated.

In 2025, the challenges have evolved, the threats have shifted, but the resolve remains unchanged. Today's wars are fought not only with bullets but with narratives, not only with tanks but with technology, not only on battlefields but in hearts and minds. Yet, Pakistan's defenders stand ready, armed not only with weapons but with wisdom, not only with strategy but with spirit. Hybrid warfare, psychological operations, digital propaganda-none can pierce the shield that is formed when the nation and its defenders stand as one.

This unity is Pakistan's true weapon. It is what transforms our armed forces into something beyond military might-it transforms them into a living, breathing embodiment of national pride. Every soldier at the border knows he is not alone. Behind him stand mothers whispering prayers, fathers raising their hands to the sky, children waving flags, and a nation that will never let him fall. This bond cannot be broken; it is the essence of Bunyan-un-Marsoos - the wall that no enemy can breach.

And so, every Defence Day, we do not just remember-we renew. We renew the pledge of faith, the covenant of sacrifice, the promise of resilience. We remind the world that Pakistan is not defended by fragile hands but by invincible ones. Its sovereignty is not a gift to be taken; it is a right safeguarded by blood. Its flag is not a piece of cloth; it is a symbol dyed in the sacrifices of martyrs.

As the bugles sound and the flags rise high on 6th September 2025, one truth resounds louder than ever: Pakistan is eternal. Its soil is sacred. Its defenders are immortal in spirit. No matter the challenge, no matter the enemy, no matter the storm-this nation will never bow, never break, never surrender.

For Pakistan stands as it always has-unshakable, untouchable, unyielding. It stands as Bunyan-un-Marsoos, the eternal wall of faith and courage. Those who dare to cast an evil eye upon it will find themselves defeated not just by weapons, but by the indomitable spirit of a people united with their defenders.

Pakistan is not merely defended-it is destined to endure. Its walls are built with sacrifice, its foundation rests on faith, and its future is secured by courage. Truly, Pakistan's defence lies in invincible hands.

Pakistan Hamesha Zindabad

Name Correction

My correct name is Khadijah Akhlaq while mistakenly written in my documents as Khadija Akhlaq please make the required correction in it as Khadijah Akhlaq D/o Arbab Akhlaq Ahmed Khan R/o Asadabad Jahangirabad, Tehkal Bala, University Road Peshawar

Court Notice

In the Court of Quat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/ Judge Family Court Swabi. Umra VS Abid Khan, Suit Number : 127/FC, Institution Date: 26-05-2025, Hearing Date: 13-09-2025, Subject: Dissolution of Marriage. Notice to: (1) Abid Khan son Shiraz Khan, (2) Shiraz Khan Son Hassan Khan (3) Shaqfat-un-Nisa wife Shiraz R/o Moh, Tawas Khan Pabini, Teh, & District Swabi, dependent No.1 presently Abroad Dependent. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 13-09-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding



In brief

Trump set for first US Open final since 2015

NEW YORK (Agencies): President Donald Trump will attend the US Open men's singles final on Sunday in what will be his first visit to the Grand Slam tennis event since 2015. Trump, who was re-elected in 2024 for a second term in office, has not been to the New York City tournament since he first came to power in 2016. He had previously visited Flushing Meadows on several occasions before being joined by wife Melania on his last visit a decade ago. A White House official confirmed to the BBC that the president was expected to attend. In 2015, Trump was greeted by American six-time major champion John McEnroe as he watched from a hospitality area. Trump, 79, was born in the Queens borough of New York City where the Grand Slam tournament is held. No American players will compete in the men's final, which starts at 14:00 (19:00 BST) on Sunday. The finalists will be decided by Friday's last-four matches, when Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays Spain's Carlos Alcaraz, followed by Italy's Jannik Sinner against Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Ross Taylor out of retirement to play

WELLINGTON (AFP): New Zealand cricket great Ross Taylor announced Friday he was coming out of retirement, nearly four years after quitting, to help Samoa qualify for next year's Twenty20 World Cup. The 41-year-old former Blackcaps skipper said it would be a "huge honour" to represent the country of his mother's birth. "It's official -- I'm proud to announce that I'll be pulling on the blue and representing Samoa in cricket," he said on social media. "This is more than just a return to the game I love, it's the huge honour to represent my heritage, culture, villages, and family. "I'm excited for the opportunity to give back to the game, join the squad, and share my experience on and off the field." Taylor played 450 times for New Zealand across all three formats, including 112 Tests. He last pulled on the black jersey in early 2022 and only became eligible to represent Samoa in April after the required stand-down period before switching allegiances. "I always wanted to give back in some capacity but didn't know that I'd be giving back in a playing capacity," he told New Zealand media. "I always thought it would be coaching and coaching young kids and donating gear where I could. But being able to get into the playing side of it, it's something that I'm looking forward to." Taylor will pad up at the World Cup Asia-Pacific qualifying series in Oman in October, where Samoa are pitted against the hosts and Papua New Guinea in Group 3. Teams are split into three groups of three, with the top two from each group advancing to the Super Six stage. At the end of the Super Six, the top three earn their place in the 2026 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

Ashwin approached for Big Bash stint

MELBOURNE (Agencies): Spinner Ravichandran Ashwin could be the first high-profile Indian cricketer to play in the Big Bash League (BBL) after being approached by the Australian board, according to a media report on Friday. Cricket Australia CEO Todd Greenberg is in talks with the spinner, who ended his Indian Premier League (IPL) career last month, over a possible stint Down Under this season, according to cricbuzz.

USA cricket approves Global Celebrity League (GCL) 2025

E.P. Report

HOUSTON, Texas: USA Cricket has officially approved the Global Celebrity League (GCL) 2025, a star-studded T20 tournament, which will be held at Moosa Cricket Stadium in Houston from October 24 to November 2, 2025. A spectacular launch ceremony took place in Houston, featuring live music, celebrity appearances, and an enthusiastic crowd of fans. Pakistani superstars taking part include Mohammad Amir, Imad Wasim, Younis Khan, Yasir Shah, Ahmed Shehzad, Kamran Akmal, Imran Nazir, Sharjeel Khan, Sohail Tanvir, Junaid Khan, Rumman Raees and other star players will also be in action. International legends confirmed include AB de Villiers, Hashim Amla, Imran Tahir, Moeen Ali, Kevin Pietersen, Dawid Malan, Dwayne Bravo (DJ Bravo) and with other current global cricket stars expected to participate as well. Emerging players will also be selected for the league. League Ambassador and Officials Shoaib Akhtar appointed as League Ambassador, Waqar Younis as League Icon, Munaf Patel as League Mentor, Arif Malik serves as the League Chairman. While talking to media Shoaib Akhtar and Waqar Younis stated that this league will be a game-changer for the promotion of cricket in the USA. Franchise Teams Announced The inaugural edition will feature six franchise teams representing major

US cities: Houston Riders New York Liberty Chicago Wind Chasers Miami Waves Las Vegas Aces Washington DC Eagles The tournament will follow a format including league matches, two semi-finals, and one final, all to be played over 10 days. League President Arif Malik stated that the Global Celebrity League is ready to make a massive impact in the USA. With cricketing giants from around the world, fans will enjoy top-quality cricket." According to USA Cricket, the league was approved with certain regulatory conditions, such as: Involvement of retired cricketers Participation of both centrally contracted and non-contracted players Alignment with interna-

tional broadcasting standards to ensure a world-class event Organizers confirmed that the matches will be broadcast across major sports networks and OTT platforms to reach a wide local and global audience. ESPN Cricinfo has joined as the official scoring partner. Full broadcast partners, match schedule, and ticketing details will be announced in the coming weeks. The grand launch event in Houston concluded with a memorable live performance by popular Pakistani singer Ahmed Jahanzeb, leaving the audience thrilled. Organizers hailed the league as a major milestone for the development of cricket in the USA, blending competition and entertainment at an international level.

Anisimova on redemption mission v Sabalenka in US Open final



NEW YORK (AFP): Amanda Anisimova will bid to crown her improbable redemption mission at the US Open on Saturday as world number one Aryna Sabalenka seeks to grab her final chance of the year to win a Grand Slam. Two months after suffering a catastrophic 6-0, 6-0 thrashing in the Wimbledon final, Anisimova has bounced back to stand on the brink of completing a fairy-tale comeback in New York. The 24-year-old eighth seed held her nerve to battle past Naomi Osaka in the semi-finals, winning 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 in an instant classic that finished in the early hours of Friday morning. For Anisimova, the win represented a personal triumph after the trauma of her drubbing by Iga Swiatek at Wimbledon in July. The American, who took an eight-month break from tennis in 2023 citing burnout and depression, says her success in New York is attributable to the steps she has taken to prioritise her mental health. "Obviously, it served me well, and I'm really happy with the choice that I made," Anisimova said of her decision to step away from the sport. "It's clearly paying off now, and I feel like I have a whole new perspective when I step onto the court.

Even on regular days or training days, I think I appreciate the process a lot more than I used to." Mental muscle memory That resilience was on full display in Thursday night's thriller with Osaka, when she banished any negative thoughts to claw her way into the final. "I could have easily said, 'Oh, she's playing better than me, and I can't really do anything,'" Anisimova said afterwards. "I really tried to find a way, any way I could to stay in the match, even though it was extremely tough." Anisimova will also head into Saturday's final armed with the mental muscle memory of having beaten reigning US Open champion Sabalenka in six of their nine previous meetings. That winning record includes a defeat of Sabalenka in the semi-finals at Wimbledon, where she prevailed in another tense three-setter. "We've had very, very tough matches," Anisimova said of Sabalenka. "But I think the standout one was probably Wimbledon. It was really a seesaw match, which is almost always the case when I play her." Sabalenka, who advanced to Saturday's final with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 defeat of American fourth seed Jessica Pegula, is bracing for another dog-

fight, admitting she still dwells on her Wimbledon defeat by Anisimova. "I have to trust myself, and I have to go after my shots," she said. "I felt like in that match at Wimby, I was doubting a lot my decisions, and that was the main thing that was bringing a lot of unforced errors. Tough lessons" "I gave her a lot of opportunities, and of course, she played incredible tennis, but I feel like I had my opportunities. I didn't use them." The 27-year-old from Belarus is also determined to avoid finishing her Grand Slam season empty-handed. The powerful right-hander was beaten in both the Australian and French Open finals this year before her Wimbledon exit, and is in no mood to let another chance to claim a fourth career Grand Slam singles title pass her by. That sense of steely determination was on display at the Arthur Ashe Stadium on Thursday as she fought back from a set down to squeeze past Pegula. "I badly wanted to give myself another opportunity, another final, and I want to prove to myself that I learned those tough lessons and I can do better in the finals," said Sabalenka, referencing this season's losses in Melbourne and Paris. Sabalenka is also aiming to achieve something that has become increasingly rare over the years in successfully defending the US Open. No woman has retained the title since Serena Williams won three in a row in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Asked earlier in the tournament for her thoughts on the fact that the last 11 US Open titles have been shared between 10 players, Sabalenka quipped: "My thought is to change it."

Norris fastest from Leclerc in Monza practice

MONZA (Agencies): Lando Norris said the Formula 1 field was "a bit close for my liking" after setting the pace in Friday practice at the Italian Grand Prix. The McLaren driver needs to make inroads into team-mate Oscar Piastri's championship lead after dropping to 34 points behind the Australian with nine races remaining following a retirement in last weekend's Dutch Grand Prix, the first race after Formula 1's summer break. Norris was 0.083 seconds ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in second place, ahead of Williams' Carlos Sainz, Piastri, the second Ferrari of Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen's Red Bull. The Briton said: "I just need to make the gap a bit bigger to make things a bit more comfortable." Norris and Piastri were among several drivers to have moments as they tested the limits at the high-speed and historic Monza circuit. Norris had a big slide at the second chicane, known as Roggia, and Piastri had his

own moment, running a little wide and kicking up the gravel at the second Lesmo. The biggest incident involved Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli, who brought out a red flag when he had a spin at the second Lesmo. High-speed Monza is a different style of track from Zandvoort last weekend. "This is the complete opposite downforce to Zandvoort," Norris said. "Zandvoort, we were easily quickest and it felt pretty amazing. Here is quite the opposite. Not a surprise, probably what we were expecting, but we don't perform quite to the same level in these low-downforce conditions as when we are at high-downforce. "The competitors catch up and it looks a bit close and makes our life a bit trickier. But we're still in a reasonable place." Piastri had an impressive day considering he missed first practice after handing his car over to Irish McLaren protege Alex Dunne. Australian Piastri was just 0.181secs slower than Norris despite setting his best time on his second

lap on the soft tyres, when they would be past their best, after making a small error and running slightly wide on his first attempt. "Today has been a good day," Piastri said. "Not doing P1, I had a bit of catching up to do in P2. I feel like I hit the ground running. "The car felt pretty good. I maybe got the set-up wrong on the softs and the second lap was pretty decent considering it was the second lap on the tyres." In first practice, Hamilton led a Ferrari one-two, with Norris sixth, behind Sainz, Verstappen and Antonelli. The seven-time champion, who has a five-place grid penalty for an infringement at the Dutch race, said his first experience of driving a Ferrari at Monza was "amazing, just the whole experience." "To drive out the garage in a red car is all I ever thought it would be and more," he added. "P1 was feeling really strong, P2 much more of a struggle but we made some changes and can go back on them.



Sterling in Chelsea exile with £30m left on his contract

LONDON (Agencies): Just four years ago Raheem Sterling was widely regarded as England's best player in their run to the Euro 2020 final. But the following season he was on the bench more for Manchester City and, despite winning his fourth Premier League title, was sold to Chelsea, the first marquee signing of their new owners. This move hasn't worked out at all. Now, aged 30, Sterling faces a season in exile at Chelsea, the £30m remaining in wages on his contract a key factor in the stalemate. So what is going on? Chelsea move turns sour Sterling signed a five-year £325,000-per-week contract in 2022, relocating his young family in the process. The £50m transfer was a statement of intent by Todd Boehly, who at the time was acting as sporting director, and Clearlake Capital. A problem for Sterling has been the people behind such a big deal are no longer in charge at the club. In addition to Boehly's diminishing influence, Thomas Tuchel was the head coach who oversaw Sterling's arrival. Then came Graham Potter, then Frank Lampard, and then Mauricio Pochettino, all within Sterling's first two seasons at the club, in which he played 81 times and scored 19 times as Chelsea finished 12th and then sixth. But two years into his contact Chelsea effectively ended his role as a first-team player when new manager Enzo Maresca decided Sterling was not in his plans. He has not played for the club since and spent last season on an underwhelming loan at Arsenal. The contract issue and life in the 'bomb squad' Unless the Blues and Sterling reach an agreement over a severance package for the £30m remaining on his contract, the earliest we are likely to see the England international play first-team football again is January. The prospect of that scenario seems small. There now appears to be a reluctance from the London club to pay Sterling up. He appears reluctant to give Chelsea an easy route out of their agreement. Both stances are somewhat understandable. In the immediate future, Sterling will remain with Chelsea's 'bomb squad' that now includes only Axel Disasi and David Datro Fofana. Sterling is waiting for a clearer picture of how his future as a Chelsea exile looks after the international break. Life in Chelsea's bomb squad is far from luxurious. With limited use of first-team facilities, it is a lonely existence.

Almeida takes first Vuelta stage win amid protests



ALTO DE L'ANGLIRU (AFP): Portuguese rider Joao Almeida climbed to victory in the 'queen' stage 13 of the Vuelta a Espana on Friday, just ahead of Danish race leader Jonas Vingegaard as repeated roadside pro-Palestinian protests continued to upset the peloton. Almeida pipped Vingegaard on the line with Australian Jai Hindley crossing in third place, 28 seconds off the pace after the 202.7-kilometre run between Cabezon de la Sal and the Angliru climb, a steep mountain road in Asturias in northern Spain. Visma-Lease a Bike rider Vingegaard leads team UAE's Almeida by 46sec in the overall standings with Britain's Tom Pidcock of Q36.5 third at 2min 18sec. "I was on the limit, I think we both were," said Almeida. "I was ready for him to attack me at any moment. "I thought he was going to pass me before the finish, but I know the line well from that finish two years ago. "I knew I had to

be first at the last corner, and since he didn't pass me, it was good. The Angliru is the hardest climb I've ever done, it's really crazy." The race was once again targeted by pro-Palestinian protestors aimed at the Israel-Premier Tech team. Some 12 kilometres from the finish, as the climb to Angliru began, several protesters waving Palestinian flags interrupted the lead riders. The stoppage, which lasted a few seconds until security forces intervened, affected the progress of the breakaway riders -- Ecuadorian Jefferson Cepeda, Luxembourgish Bob Jungels, and Kazakh Nico Vinokurov -- who at that point had a three-minute lead over the peloton. "We were slowed down a bit by a demonstration during the race, but that didn't change anything; we knew we would be caught by the best," conceded Vinokurov. Almeida and Vingegaard pulled ahead with three kilometres left to reach the

summit, after shaking off Hindley and American Sepp Kuss. Vingegaard stayed behind the Portuguese rider for the remainder of the race. "Joao deserves his victory. I didn't let him win; I simply couldn't pass him in the final corners," said the Dane. The win gives Almeida an opportunity to catch up with Vingegaard. "Of course I'm still thinking about winning the Vuelta," said the UAE team leader. "There's still plenty of time to catch Vingegaard, but he looks really phenomenal. It's going to be tough, but we're not going to give up." The longest stage of this year's race also took its toll on the peloton with Spaniard Pablo Castrillo, winner of two stages in the last edition, tearfully exiting after a crash on the Alto La Mozqueta descent. Saturday's stage will be short, covering 135.9 km between Aviles and La Farrapona, featuring two first-category climbs, making it ideal for experienced climbers.

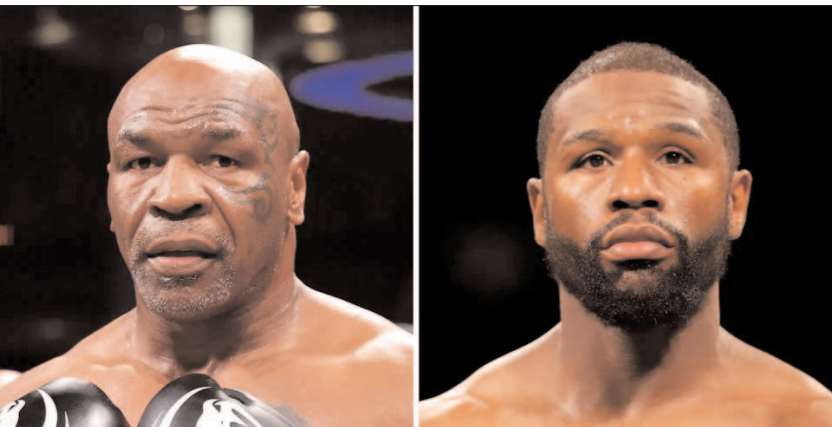
England rest Duckett for South Africa T20s

LONDON (AFP): England announced Friday they were resting opening batsman Ben Duckett from an upcoming T20 series against South Africa following successive one-day international losses to the Proteas, with Sam Curran recalled for the first time this year. Duckett, a first-choice all-format player, was out for scores of five and 14 in this week's two ODIs, with defeats at Headingley and Lord's leaving England 2-0 down in a three-match contest ahead of Sunday's finale in Southampton. The usually lively left-hander has looked weary after being one of a handful of England cricketers involved throughout a gruelling five-Test series at home to India before a month of action in the domestic 100 balls per side Hundred competition. Duckett is set for a key role at the top of England's order when they bid to regain the Ashes in

Australia starting in November. It remains to be seen if he will keep his ODI place at Hampshire's Rose Bowl ground this weekend. England white-ball captain Harry Brook had rejected suggestions Duckett should be rested immediately after Thursday's five-run loss at Lord's, but team management appear to have changed course. They also seem to have had a rethink about the role of Surrey all-rounder Curran, whose England exile has coincided with head coach Brendon McCullum taking over as limited-overs boss in addition to his Test duties. Curran was a key figure as the Oval Invincibles won their third straight Hundred title. As well as being added to the England T20 squad to face South Africa, he will also join the three-match trip to Ireland. His value as a seam-bowling all-rounder was thrown

into sharp focus as South Africa secured an ODI series win at Lord's after plundering part-time spinners Jacob Bethell and Will Jacks for 112 runs in 10 overs. England great Stuart Broad, speaking before Friday's announcement, urged some of the all-format players be given a break ahead of the Ashes. "I thought England looked a bit tired," he told Sky Sports. "It's understandable." "They played 25 days solid, hard cricket against India in the Test series and two days later they were straight into the The Hundred. Now they're playing a white-ball series and the winter is only getting busier. "Now they have lost this series I would be half-tempted to send Ben Duckett and Joe Root up the M1 (motorway to go home) rather than down to Southampton," the former paceman added. "I think there are some jaded minds," said Broad.

Tyson and Mayweather to fight in exhibition match



LAS VEGAS (Agencies): Former world champions Mike Tyson and Floyd Mayweather are set to compete in an exhibition bout next year. The event will be put on by CSI Sports/Fight Sports but details regarding the date, location, broadcasters and rules are yet to be announced. Tyson, 59, is a former undisputed heavyweight champion while Mayweather, 48, retired undefeated after 50 fights, winning multiple titles across a number of weight classes. "This fight is something

neither the world nor I ever thought would or could happen. However, boxing has entered a new era of the unpredictable and this fight is as unpredictable as it gets," said Tyson. Tyson is competing for the first time since ending his 19-year retirement in November in a controversial defeat by Jake Paul. He spent the entirety of his career, which yielded 50 wins from 59 fights, in heavyweight while the latter stages of Mayweather's career were at welterweight. Mayweather, who has won titles across five

weight classes, has competed in a number of exhibition bouts since retiring in 2017 with his last outing coming against John Gotti III last August. Formal winners are not usually declared in exhibitions and the results do not count towards either fighter's career record. "You already know that if I am going to do something, it's going to be big and it's going to be legendary," said Mayweather. "I'm the best in the business of boxing. This exhibition will give the fans what they want."



In brief

Man killed in Chauntra land dispute firing

RAWALPINDI (APP): A land dispute in the Chauntra area of Rawalpindi turned deadly on Friday when a man was killed and another injured in a firing incident. The scuffle, which took place on Chak Belly Road, resulted in the death of a man identified as Usman. According to a spokesperson for the Rawalpindi Police, preliminary investigations suggest the clash was a result of a land dispute between two rival groups. During the altercation, one side reportedly opened fire, killing Usman instantly. His companion, Rafaqat, was also injured, though his injury was not from a firearm. Superintendent of Police (SP) Saddar Nabeel Khokhar, along with other senior officers, arrived at the scene. The police sent the deceased's body for a post-mortem examination and moved the injured individual to a hospital for treatment. Investigators have collected evidence from the crime scene. SP Khokhar stated that teams had been formed to arrest the culprits and bring them to justice.

IRSA releases 396,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 396,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 433,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1549.90 feet, which was 147.90 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 187,600 cusecs and 186,300 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1229.50 feet, which was 179.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 43,300 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 205,700, 236,500, 327,500, and 277,400 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 29,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 171,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

2 arrested; liquor & arms seized

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police have arrested two suspects and recovered liquor and illegal arms in separate operations across the district, a police spokesman said on Friday. In an operation by the Bani Police, one person was detained and five liters of liquor were seized. Separately, the Taxila Police arrested another individual and recovered illegal arms and ammunition. Both incidents have led to the registration of separate cases.

PFA destroys 2,500 kg diseased meat

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Rawalpindi has taken action against a beef shop in the Safdarabad Pirwadhai area, seizing and destroying 2,500 kilograms of what was deemed unsafe meat. According to a PFA spokesperson, a veterinary doctor examined the meat and declared it unfit for human consumption as it was of diseased animals. The inspection revealed that the meat did not have the official seal of any slaughterhouse and had also been mixed with water. Following the raid, a First Information Report (FIR) was registered against the accused at the Pirwadhai Police Station. The spokesperson urged citizens to report any complaints regarding food quality by contacting at the Helpline 1223.



RAWALPINDI: A beautiful illuminated view of the street decorated with lights in connection of 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal the Birthday Ceremony of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) coming ahead, in Rawalpindi.

NA Speaker slams PTI's walkout amid national emergencies

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, while addressing the National Assembly session, said that highly important national issues were to be discussed today, including the tragic incidents of terrorism in Balochistan, the widespread devastation caused by floods across the country, and the recent earthquake in Afghanistan.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had taken timely and effective measures during the flood situation and, through early warning system, saved the people from major losses.

The Opposition, he said,

should have taken a direct briefing from NDMA and familiarized themselves with its performance.

He further added that if the Opposition members so desire, a separate briefing can also be arranged for them.

Expressing regret over the non-serious conduct of the Opposition, he said that pointing out quorum in such sensitive circumstances is an irresponsible approach. At a time when the people of the country are facing severe hardships due to the most devastating floods in history, the Opposition's act of pointing out quorum and walking out of the House is regrettable and contrary to national responsibility.

The Speaker of the National Assembly empha-

sized that the Opposition should demonstrate seriousness on national issues so that the House can collectively play its role in resolving the problems of the country and the nation.

Meanwhile, Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, has condoled the passing of the father of Deputy Director National Assembly Syed Irfan Iqbal.

In his condolence message, the Speaker National Assembly expressed profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of the father of Syed Irfan Iqbal.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant eternal peace to departed soul and patience and strength to bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity.

Rawal Dam spillways opened after attaining maximum storage capacity

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration on Friday opened the spillways of Rawal Dam after water levels reached the prescribed limit of 1,752 feet. Authorities said the decision was taken to ensure safe water outflow and prevent any risk of flooding in surrounding areas.

According to spokesman of district administration, once the water level recedes to the safe mark, the spillways will be closed again. At present, the process of water discharge from the dam is ongoing. The administration has also issued precautionary guidelines for residents, advising them to stay away from rivers, streams, and low-lying areas.

In this regard, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Nilore, along with relevant teams, remained on-site to monitor the situation when the spillways were opened. The teams are coordinating with local authorities to keep the discharge under control and to respond quickly in case of any emergency.

The administration has stressed that the measure is a routine safety step taken whenever water in the dam reaches its maximum storage capacity. Officials highlighted that the spillways help regulate water flow, especially during the rainy season, when heavy inflows into the dam raise water levels. The timely release of water reduces pressure on the dam structure and maintains a balanced supply downstream.

Residents living near natural drains have been asked to remain alert and avoid visiting water channels until the discharge process is completed. The administration has also directed rescue teams and local police to stay on high alert in case support is needed in vulnerable areas.

The administration further appealed to the public to cooperate by avoiding unnecessary movement near rivers and streams.

Gilani felicitates Muslim Ummah on Eid Milad-un-Nabi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, on Friday, extended heartfelt felicitations to the entire Muslim Ummah on the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi.

He described the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) as a momentous and joyous day, bringing an eternal message of mercy, blessings, and guidance for all humanity.

In his message, the Chairman Senate said that the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet are a complete code of conduct, a source of mercy, and a beacon of guidance for mankind.

"The Prophet taught us the golden principles of patience, humility, tolerance, justice, compassion, brotherhood, and peace.

The challenges confronting the Muslim world today can only be overcome if we practically adopt these values in our individual and collective lives," he emphasised.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani stressed that Eid Milad-un-Nabi is a reminder for all Muslims to strengthen unity, rise above divisions, and foster harmony in society.

He said that promoting peace and eliminating hatred were the true lessons of the Prophet's life, adding that following this path is the only way to attain success in this world and the Hereafter.

Highlighting the importance of social responsibility, the Chairman Senate urged people to remember the poor, orphans, the destitute, and the underprivileged on this sacred occa-

sion. "The entire life of the Holy Prophet reflects unparalleled service to humanity. Embracing this spirit of compassion and service is the greatest need of our time," he said.

He further underlined the responsibility of imparting the teachings of the Prophet to the younger generation, so that they may embody high moral standards, honesty, and selflessness, becoming a valuable asset for the nation in the future. "We must also reform our collective systems on the principles of justice, equality, and fraternity in order to build a prosperous and peaceful society," he added.

Gilani stressed upon adhering to the teaching of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) in order to imbibe the virtues of unity, compassion and tolerance in our conduct and life.

Pakistan, Bangladesh vow closer cooperation on religious affairs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Bangladesh on Friday reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen cooperation in the field of religious affairs and interfaith harmony during a meeting between Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, and A.F.M. Khalid Hussain, Advisor to the President of Bangladesh on Religious Affairs.

The high-level Bangladeshi delegation, led by Hussain, expressed sorrow over the human and material losses caused by recent floods in Pakistan and conveyed solidarity with the Pakistani people.

Minister Yousaf underscored the brotherly sentiments of the Pakistani nation toward Bangladesh, noting

that relations between the two countries are rooted in centuries of shared traditions, Islamic heritage, social values, and literary expression. He emphasized that improved ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh would play an important role in ensuring regional peace and prosperity.

The Bangladeshi advisor thanked the government and people of Pakistan for their warm welcome, adding that Dhaka is committed to enhancing bilateral cooperation in religious affairs. Both sides agreed to strengthen collaboration between their respective ministries of religious affairs, with special focus on promoting interfaith harmony.

As part of this commitment, the two sides agreed to establish a Joint Working

Group on Interfaith Harmony and explore opportunities for regular exchanges of scholars and students from religious seminaries in both countries.

Minister Yousaf proposed initiating structured scholar and student exchange programs to deepen mutual understanding and foster closer people-to-people contacts.

The Bangladeshi delegation is also scheduled to participate in the 50th International Seerat-un-Nabi Conference, a two-day event in Islamabad that brings together scholars and leaders from across the Muslim world to discuss the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and their relevance to contemporary challenges.



ISLAMABAD: Bangladesh's Advisor to the President of Religious Affairs A.F.M Khalid Hussain calls on Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf.

Mustafa Kamal calls for strengthening local govts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, on Friday emphasized the urgent need to reform Pakistan's disaster management system in light of increasing climate-related challenges such as floods and heavy rainfall.

Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister highlighted that approximately 20 percent annual damage is caused by natural disasters linked to climate change, with rainfall increasing even in previously dry areas.

He warned that current discussions often focus on responding to disasters after they occur rather than proactively preventing them.

The minister criticized the highly centralized management system under which disaster response and governance currently operate. He noted that the concentration of power and resources limits effective local response, as representatives often cannot physically manage their large constituencies.

For example, he mentioned that in Balochistan, it can take several days for lawmakers to travel across their own constituencies.

He said that the solution lies in empowering local governments by decentralizing authority and resources.

He stressed that strong local governance is essential for timely disaster management, as local officials like union council chairmen and councilors are best positioned to oversee and address issues in their communities. This approach, he said, has been successfully implemented worldwide for centuries.

Using the polio eradication campaign as an example, Mustafa Kamal explained that misinformation and resistance persist in many communities. However, local leaders from within the community running awareness campaigns could significantly improve acceptance and reach.

Currently, he said, a large number of families have refused polio vaccination due to misconcep-

tions. The minister urged lawmakers in both the National Assembly and the Senate to play their role in strengthening and empowering local governments by ensuring they are provided with adequate authority and resources.

He also highlighted the need to increase the number of government officials dedicated to disaster management from the current 1,200 to 200,000 to better serve Pakistan's vast population.

Furthermore, he raised concerns over water scarcity, stating that Karachi relies on purchased water for 90 percent of its supply.

He called for a serious discussion in the Assembly on building reservoirs and dams to manage the country's water resources efficiently.

Syed Mustafa Kamal urged lawmakers to convert the recurring flood disasters into opportunities for reforming the governance system to better face future challenges posed by climate change.

ITP issues diversion plan for 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police on Friday announced a special traffic diversion plan for the 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal procession in the federal capital, deploying over 400 officers and personnel to ensure smooth traffic flow and public convenience.

An ITP official told APP that the central procession will commence from Jamia Masjid Al-Raza in G-7 and conclude at Darbar Sakhi Mahmood after passing through its designated routes. He said that several diversions will remain in place during the course of the procession.

He said traffic from Sitara Market to Iqbal Hall will be diverted, while motorists have been advised to use the service road via Dak Khana, Fire Brigade, Suharwardy Road and Faisal Avenue.

He said a diversion will

also be in place from Iqbal Hall to Razia Sharif Plaza through Service Road G-7/3. Citizens have been advised to use Seventh Avenue instead.

He said traffic on Fazal-e-Haq Road, from China Chowk to Kulsoom Plaza, will be diverted, with Jinnah Avenue available as an alternative route. He said traffic from Shaheed Chowk to GPO Chowk and Aabpara Chowk will face diversions. Citizens have been asked to use GPO Chowk and Shaheed-e-Millat Road.

He said traffic from Aabpara Chowk to Suharwardy Road, Seventh Avenue Chowk, will be diverted. Vehicles coming from Zero Point and Rawalpindi are directed to use Seventh Avenue, Faisal Avenue and Srinagar Highway.

He said Chand Tara Chowk to Dhokri Chowk

on Srinagar Highway will also remain closed for traffic. He said traffic from Bhara Kahu is advised to use Srinagar Highway or Rawal Dam Chowk, and from Faizabad to Faisal Avenue. He said vehicles heading to Bhara Kahu and Murree from Motorway should use the route via Zero Point, Faizabad and Murree Road.

Chief Traffic Officer Captain (retd) Hamzah Humayun directed that no parking will be allowed along the main procession routes. He appealed to citizens to plan their travel with an additional 20-minute margin to avoid inconvenience and to cooperate with police instructions.

He said citizens can obtain real-time updates and assistance from the Traffic Police Helpline 1915 and FM 92.4.

Mehfil-e-Milad gatherings gaining momentum during Rabi-ul-Awal

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the blessed month of Rabi-ul-Awal unfolds, homes across the Capital have transformed into serene spaces of devotion, echoing with the melodious recitation of Na'ats, Hamd and Darood-e-Pak.

A quiet but powerful trend is gaining momentum in Islamabad—women-led Mehfil-e-Milad gatherings held in homes, reflecting a deep-rooted spiritual tradition revitalized with contemporary purpose.

This Rabi-ul-Awal, as homes across the city glow with candles, the fragrance of ittar, and voices in unison sending blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it is clear: the tradition of Milad is not only alive—it is being lovingly carried forward by the women of the Capital.

From the prominent sectors of the city including G-6, G-7, G-9, I-8 and I-9, to the elite enclaves of F-6, F-8, F-9 and F-10, living rooms are adorned with green bunting, floral arrangements, and twinkling lights, welcoming guests for intimate and soulful gatherings led entirely by women.

In a society where public religious platforms have traditionally been male-dominated, women are now finding spiritual space within their

homes. These Mehfils are not merely rituals of devotion—they are forums for learning, reflection, and healing. Talking to APP, Sadia Arif, a housewife and resident of Sector G-6, said she has been holding Mehfil-e-Milad at home for the past few years during the holy month of Rabi-ul-Awal.

"My home becomes sacred when we gather to remember the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)," she shared. "It's more than just tradition. Through these Mehfils, we connect with the Prophet's teachings on compassion, humility, and unity—and pass those values down to our children," she remarked.

At one such Mehfil in F-10, three generations of women gathered, continuing a family tradition that spans decades. Sharmeen, a grandmother, shared stories of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in honor of his contributions to the spread of Islam. Her daughter, Nisa, led the Zikr, while her two young granddaughters recited Na'ats with devotion. "It's not just a religious event—it's educational," the family shared. "We learn how the Prophet (PBUH) treated people with justice and mercy. It inspires us to lead better lives."

Not only housewives, but working women are also taking the lead in

organizing Mehfil-e-Milad with religious fervor.

In a conversation with APP, Mubashira, a working professional and resident of G-9, said, "Every year, I host a small Milad for 20–25 women in my home. It's our way of showing love for the Prophet (PBUH). No microphones, no stages—just hearts united in faith." Rizwana, a dental hygienist and a resident of F-6, told APP she was inspired by the growing trend of home-based Mehfil-e-Milad in the Capital, especially during Rabi-ul-Awal. This year, she too has planned to host a gathering.

"We've invited a local Qaria and our neighbors for this spiritual gathering. It will begin with Tilawat, followed by Naats. The Qaria will then share the teachings and Seerat of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), based on Islamic guidelines. We will conclude with collective prayers for the nation and the Ummah," she explained.

"We also plan to serve food and distribute donations to deserving families," she added. These domestic mehfil are also fostering a renewed sense of community bonding. For many women, these gatherings offer a space of solace, support, and sisterhood.

Bangladesh sends aid to quake-hit families

KABUL (Amu tv): A Bangladeshi aircraft carrying humanitarian aid for victims of Afghanistan's this week's earthquake arrived in Kabul on Friday. The Bangladeshi Ministry of Foreign Affairs shared images of the aid shipment and said the country stands in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and will continue its support. The delivery comes in response to the devastating earthquake that struck eastern Afghanistan on August 31, killing and injuring thousands.

Wedding dispute leaves 1 dead

KABUL (Pajhwok): A dispute during a wedding ceremony in the capital of eastern Laghman province left one person dead, while three others were arrested in connection with the incident. In a statement, the Laghman Police said the clash occurred Thursday night in the "Baba Sahib Camp" area of Mehtarlam City. The statement noted that the incident started as a verbal altercation during the wedding and ended in the killing of a young man named Abbas.

Qosh Tepa Canal phase two will finish in five months: Mujahid

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, says the government is continuing its efforts to implement national economic projects, including the Qosh Tepa Canal.

Mujahid stated that the second phase of this agricultural project will be completed in the near future, and the third phase will begin soon afterward.

"The Qosh Tepa Canal is one of Afghanistan's major agricultural projects. Its first phase was completed last year. The second phase, which is currently underway, will be completed in five months, according to the National Development Corporation, and work is ongoing at its final point," said Mujahid.

Officials at the National Development Corporation (NDC), which is responsible for implementing this large-scale national economic project, have reported sig-



nificant progress in constructing the main dam and advancing the second phase. They say efforts are underway to complete the project ahead of schedule.

Meanwhile, a number of local residents and farmers are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to benefit from the Qosh Tepa Canal and are urging the Islamic Emirate to accelerate efforts to complete this major project.

One farmer said, "We urge the government to complete the Qosh Tepa Canal as soon as possible

so that the lands can be irrigated and we can begin harvesting our crops."

The Qosh Tepa Canal is one of the largest water transfer canals in Afghanistan and the region, measuring 285 kilometers in length, 108 meters in width, and 8.5 meters in depth.

Once completed, the canal will irrigate 550,000 hectares of land across the country and is expected to bring significant transformation to Afghanistan's agricultural economy.

Originating in Kaldar District of Balkh Province and extending to Andkhy District in Faryab, the canal has a water transfer capacity of 650 cubic meters per second.

It is estimated to transfer approximately 20.5 billion cubic meters of water annually from the Amu River, helping to irrigate vast areas of dry land throughout the country.

Afghanistan faces Quake-induced health disaster

KABUL (TOLONews): Doctors working in medical camps in eastern Afghanistan's earthquake-affected areas have expressed concern over shortages of medicine and medical facilities.

They say that the lack of proper equipment and essential medicines has created serious challenges for treatment efforts.

They also warn that local residents are in urgent need not only of medicine but also of shelter, food, and clean drinking water.

Shamsher Khan, one of the doctors on the ground, said with concern: "These medicines are neither sufficient, nor these services. These people need more medicine, tents, food, and clean drinking water. They are in a lot of pain and have suffered greatly. As a doctor, seeing this situation has deeply worried me; even my own mental state has worsened, despite being a doctor."

Adil Hairan, another doctor present at the site, shared his account: "On the first day, we went to the village of Diwa Gol. There were many injured, but resources were very limited. In the initial count, between 98 to 102 bodies were identified. Later, some of the wounded were taken to the city for treatment, and a helicopter came and transferred all of them to Jalalabad."

Meanwhile, the Regional Hospital has turned into a major treatment center for hundreds of injured people.

Survivors have also shared their pain and suffering. Ebadullah, one of the victims, said: "I lost five members of my family, my parents, two of my children, and my niece. Ten other relatives, including my children, wife, and other family members, were injured. Nothing has been left for us."

Mahmood Khan, another severely injured survivor, said: "My leg is broken, two of my children are injured, and another child is slightly hurt. By the grace of God, my wife and two other children survived unharmed. But we lost all our belongings, everything is gone."

These accounts are only part of the shared pain of thousands of families who lost loved ones in the recent Kunar earthquake. Despite ongoing search and rescue operations, the need for urgent and sustained humanitarian assistance is greater than ever.

Women writers silenced under Taliban rule

KABUL (Amu tv): Several women who are writers and poets in northern Afghanistan say they have faced severe restrictions on their creative expression since the Taliban returned to power four years ago.

Many say they are no longer allowed to publish their work or participate in cultural events, including poetry readings and literary gatherings. Despite the constraints, some continue to write in private and are calling for support to keep their voices alive.

Marwa, a young writer from Balkh province, said she was in 10th grade when the Taliban regained control. Banned from school due to Taliban policies restricting girls' education, she turned to writing full-time and has since completed several stories, including a 340-page novel.

"I started writing when I was 16," she told Amu TV. "Even though I had an interest in childhood, I began seriously with the story Queen of the Sword. I completed it in a year. Despite all the restrictions, including on publishing, I kept writing."

Due to security concerns, interviewees requested their faces not be shown. Other women writers echoed similar frustrations, saying they are barred from publishing books and attending cultural events. They urged local and international organizations to support their work and safeguard women's literary voices under the Taliban regime. "There are countless restrictions on women like us," said Andesha, another writer. "We can't publish our books.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees prepares strategy to curb migration push factors



KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has developed a new national strategy aimed at reducing the motivation for migration. The initiative was highlighted by Minister Mawlawi Abdul Kabir during a meeting with Roza Otunbayeva, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan. Minister

Kabir stated that the strategy will be finalized following technical assessments.

Otunbayeva, while expressing her condolences for the victims of the recent earthquake, praised the Afghan government's efforts in managing natural disasters and migration issues. She noted that these efforts have helped to convince the international community of the Islamic

Emirate's commitment, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation.

She also announced that the United Nations, in coordination with the Ministry of Refugees, is implementing a \$23 million project in northern Afghanistan, with a second phase planned for Nimroz and Farah provinces.

Minister Kabir added

that a special committee has been tasked with overseeing aid distribution to earthquake victims and urged international agencies to coordinate their humanitarian assistance through the government.

He expressed support for UNAMA's work and reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to continued cooperation with UN agencies in Afghanistan.

31 injured as earthquake jolts Nangarhar, Laghman



KABUL (Pajhwok): At least 31 people were injured due to an earthquake in eastern Nangarhar and Laghman provinces and residents also suffered financial losses, local officials said on Friday.

Last night, around 10:00 PM, an earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale struck, shaking several provinces.

According to a statement from the Nangarhar provincial office, 22 people, including women and children, were injured in the villages of Mujandol, Stan, and Amlee in Dara-i-Noor district of Nangarhar

province as a result of the earthquake.

The source added that ambulances and medical teams from the Public Health Department's emergency services reached the affected district and treated some of the seriously injured on site.

The statement did not provide details about any financial losses caused by the earthquake in Nangarhar province.

Additionally, Abdul Malik Afghan, spokesperson for the governor of Laghman, said nine people were injured and 18 houses were damaged in

the earthquake in that province.

This follows another earthquake measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale that struck around midnight on Sunday night, causing damage in Kunar, Nangarhar, Laghman, Panjshir and Nuristan provinces.

The greatest damage occurred in Kunar.

Hamdullah Fetrat, deputy government spokesman, said on Thursday that the death toll from the previous earthquakes had risen to 2,205, with 3,640 people injured so far.

Japan, Russia send aid to Afghan quake victims

KABUL (Pajhwok): Emergency aid for earthquake victims has arrived in Kabul from Japan, while Russia has also dispatched its first shipment of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

On Friday morning, Japan's emergency aid — including tents and blankets — arrived in Kabul and was handed over to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Afghan Red Crescent Society.

The Embassy of Japan in Afghanistan announced on

X that the aid will soon be distributed to those affected by the earthquake in the eastern provinces.

The statement also reaffirmed Japan's continued support for the people of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, according to reports, the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations has sent its first shipment of humanitarian aid to the earthquake-hit regions in eastern Afghanistan.

Russian media reported that the shipment, which includes 20 tons of food supplies, was sent on the

orders of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Hamidullah Fitrat, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, said on Thursday that the death toll from the earthquake in Kunar province has risen to 2,205, with 3,640 others injured. Rescue operations are still underway.

The earthquake struck around midnight on Sunday, affecting the provinces of Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar, Nuristan and Panjshir — with Kunar bearing the brunt of the casualties and destruction.



Over 250 tourists visit Ghazni historical sites

GHAZNI (TOLONews): Officials at the Department of Information and Culture in Ghazni say that this year, in addition to thousands of domestic tourists, over 250 foreign tourists have also visited the province's historical landmarks.

According to them, most of these foreign visitors came from Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Finland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Russia, with the primary purpose of exploring Ghazni's historical sites.

Mozammel Hotak, Director of Tourism at the Department of Information and Culture in Ghazni, stated: "Since the beginning of this year, 256 foreign tourists have visited Ghazni's historical monuments. These tourists traveled from countries such as Germany, Iran, Pakistan, Finland, Poland, Turkey, and several others to visit Ghazni."

However, a number of tourists have expressed concern over poor road conditions leading to the historical sites and the lack of basic facilities in these areas.

They say that if better

amenities are provided for tourists, the tourism sector could witness significant growth.

Mohammad Khan Niazi, a tourist, said: "If the government wants to increase the number of tourists, generate revenue from these historical sites, and demonstrate to the world that we can preserve our history, then access roads to these areas, water supply systems, and rest areas must be developed."

International organizations should also be engaged to support these efforts," Mohammad Kabir Mushfiq, another tourist, said: "It is extremely important to restore roads leading to historical areas and to establish rest facilities at these sites. This would encourage both domestic and international tourists to visit Ghazni's historic locations."

Hokmaran, a tourist, stated: "Government attention to these historical sites is absolutely necessary. There is a serious need for transportation services, parks, and retail shops. Some saplings have been planted, but due to water

shortages, they have dried up. At present, anyone coming here feels exhausted due to the lack of proper services."

Meanwhile, the head of the Department of Information and Culture in Ghazni says that in addition to the restoration of certain historical sites, practical steps are being taken to improve amenities for tourists.

Hamidullah Nisar, Director of Information and Culture in Ghazni, said: "The restoration of roads leading to the shrines of Shams Baba and Khwaja Balgaar Baba is underway in coordination with the Municipality. We have also shared a list of access routes to other historical sites with the Municipality, and we hope that work on the remaining roads will begin soon."

According to the Department of Information and Culture, around 40 new historical sites have also been discovered this year across the provincial center and districts of Ghazni, which officials believe will positively impact the growth of the tourism industry.

Khost hosts cricket match for quake relief

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) has announced that a charity cricket match will be held today (Friday) in south-eastern Khost province to raise funds for victims of the recent earthquake in the eastern provinces.

According to the ACB, Afghan cricket players—split into two teams—will take the field in a friendly match aimed at collecting donations for those affected by the earthquake, particularly in Kunar province.

The match is scheduled to begin at 2:30 PM at the Rahmat Wali Masroor Cricket Stadium in Khost.

Sources confirmed that tickets for the event are priced at 50 afghanis each, and all proceeds will be donated to the earthquake relief effort. The ACB urged citizens to attend the event, stating: "Come watch this exciting match live and contribute to helping our fellow citizens in need. Kunar is not alone—Khost and the entire nation stand with them." The match will feature a mix of current national team players, former internationals, and domestic cricket stars.

Fariba turns handicraft skills into livelihood



KABUL (Pajhwok): Fariba Hosseini, a young woman from Kabul, turned unemployment into opportunity by mastering ribbon embroidery online. Once staying at home due to the suspension of girls' education, she now creates and teaches decorative handicrafts to empower others.

Fariba Hosseini, a resident of Mahdia Township in Dasht-i-Barchi, Kabul, told Pajhwok Afghan News that four years ago she was a 12th-grade student. However, after the Islamic Emirate suspended girls' education, she was forced

to stay home.

She said she had hoped to study journalism through the national university entrance exam (Kankor), but when those plans were halted, she chose not to remain idle and instead turned to learning tailoring. "I discovered ribbon embroidery — also known as Fitch-doozi — through online tutorials on YouTube," she said. Her first project was a decorative newborn set, which she adorned with great care.

Fariba recalls that at the beginning, she faced several challenges, including a lack

of confidence from her family. "At first, they didn't believe I could do it," she said. "But over time, when they saw my talent and dedication, they began supporting me. Now, even my mother and sisters help me."

She added, "Initially, I had trouble purchasing materials — especially ribbons, which were expensive. But now prices have dropped, and I can afford them more easily."

Today, Fariba crafts a variety of handmade decorative items using ribbon embroidery. Her products include bridal and baby

dowries, decorative wall hangings, ornaments, and other artistic pieces.

She also works as a ribbon embroidery instructor at a local tailoring training center. "I'm happy to be teaching this skill to other young women," she said.

Reflecting on her journey, she shared: "I never imagined I could learn this craft. In the beginning, when I took my products to market, no one bought them. But now I sell both online and in local shops."

She concluded, "Every girl has potential. Everyone faces challenges in life — we may fall many times, but with effort and perseverance, we can achieve our goals."

Fariba believes girls should seize every opportunity available to them and never give up on learning, regardless of their circumstances.

Meanwhile, her elder sister, Anis Hosseini, said: "At first, we didn't think Fariba could do it. But with time and hard work, she mastered ribbon embroidery. She's now an inspiration to me. I've learned the craft alongside her and developed a deep passion for it."



KASUR: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visiting flood-affected areas in Punjab.

CCPO vows action against street crimes

Shah Faisal

PESHAWAR: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Peshawar, Dr. Mian Saeed Ahmed, has said that crack-down is underway against criminal elements, street crimes, land grabbers, drug dealers, and those possessing or displaying illegal weapons, warning that no one will be allowed to endanger the lives and property of citizens.

This he was said during a meeting with Crimes and Terrorisms Journalist Forum (CTJF). He added that the police are not only targeting criminals operating in neighborhoods but are also keeping a strict check on factors that corrupt the younger generation. The CCPO maintained that vulgar and immoral content on TikTok and other social media platforms would not be tolerated under any circum-



stances, and effective measures are being taken to protect youth from negative influences.

Dr. Saeed Ahmed added that the police investigation system is being modernized to ensure transparent, speedy, and effective probes so that offenders cannot escape the grip of the law. For this purpose, modern technology, forensic facilities, and trained personnel are being deployed. He made it clear that there is no room for black sheep in the police

force, and any officer or official found involved in misconduct or injustice toward the public would face strict action. He stressed that making the police a transparent, public-friendly, and professional institution is his top priority.

The CCPO further said that police and media share a close relationship, and the media has always played an important role in exposing crimes and raising public awareness. He emphasized that in the future, a joint campaign by police and journalists would be carried out against crime and social evils. Dr. Saeed Ahmed reiterated that the Peshawar police are utilizing all resources and energies to make the provincial capital a cradle of peace and that the struggle for protecting the lives, property, and dignity of citizens will continue at all costs.

UK deputy PM resigns over tax error

LONDON (AP): UK deputy prime minister Angela Rayner resigned Friday after an independent inquiry found that she fell short of the standards expected of government ministers over a tax error on a recent house purchase.

Rayner, who acknowledged that she didn't pay enough tax on her purchase of an apartment in Hove, on England's south coast, conceded that she should have sought more specific advice, while stressing that the report found that she had acted in good faith. "I take full responsibility for this error," she said in her resignation letter to Prime Minister Keir Starmer. "I would like to take this opportunity to repeat that it was never my intention to do anything other than pay the right amount."

In response, Starmer voiced his sadness, but said that Rayner had made the right decision to stand down. "I have nothing but admiration for you and huge respect for your achievements in politics," Starmer wrote. The handwritten letter signed off "with very best wishes and with real sadness." Rayner will remain a UK lawmaker on the back benches. She referred herself to the independent adviser on ministerial standards, Laurie Magnus, on Wednesday, who delivered his report to Starmer on Friday.

Though Magnus concluded that Rayner had "acted with integrity and with a dedicated and exemplary commitment to public service," he said that "with deep regret" she had breached the ministers' code of conduct. In the UK levies are charged on property purchases, with higher charges due on more expensive homes and secondary residences.

KP CM visits Afghan Consulate, offer condolence

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, visited the Afghan Consulate in Peshawar on Friday to offer prayers and condolences for the Afghan citizens who lost their lives in the recent earthquake.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, also accompanied him. Expressing deep sorrow over the human and material losses caused by the earthquake in Afghanistan, the Chief Minister said that the provincial government and the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand shoulder to shoulder with their Afghan brothers and sisters in this hour of grief.

He assured that the provincial government would extend every possible assistance to the victims. On the request of the Afghan Consul General, the Chief Minister directed that an additional 1,000 tents and medicines be dispatched for the earthquake victims, and further instructed that injured Afghans arriving in Peshawar for treatment be provided with all necessary medical facilities. He also announced food aid for the affected families.

The Chief Minister recorded his condolence message in the visitor's book at the Afghan Consulate. The Afghan Consul General, Hafiz Mohibullah Shakir, thanked the Chief Minister and the provincial government for their strong support and assistance. The Chief Minister was



warmly received by the Consul General upon his arrival.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has ordered strict emergency measures to curb the spread of dengue across the province, particularly in Charsadda district, where 718 cases have been reported so far.

As per the CM's directives, assistant commissioners will lead union council-level teams to monitor anti-dengue activities, while deputy commissioners have been instructed to personally oversee field operations. The CM also ordered an inquiry into possible negligence and lapses in preventive measures in Charsadda.

Meanwhile, the Health Department has deployed five entomology experts to the district, while all leaves of health staff, district administration, and relevant departments in Charsadda have been cancelled. The Deputy Commissioner has been tasked with convening an emergency meeting, setting up med-

ical camps at the union council level, intensifying anti-dengue spraying, and designating separate wards and beds for dengue patients in local hospitals.

A detailed list of medicines and medical supplies is to be submitted to the Commissioner's office by this evening. Earlier, Commissioner of Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud, who visited Charsadda and chaired a high-level meeting, was informed that 786 dengue cases have been confirmed across the division including 718 in Charsadda, 49 in Peshawar, 19 in Nowshera, and one each in Khyber and Mohmand districts, both being travel-related cases. The Commissioner stressed urgent and coordinated action, directing assistant commissioners to closely supervise field teams. He also ordered an inquiry into the unusually high number of cases in Charsadda, with a report to be submitted by the Additional Deputy Commissioner.

KP PA calls for accelerated efforts to mitigate sufferings of flood victims

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly met under the chairmanship of Speaker Babar Saleem Swati here Friday called for accelerated efforts to mitigate sufferings of floods victims in the province.

After the recitation of the Holy Quran, the Speaker said that due to an ongoing cabinet meeting, ministers were absent from the house. Therefore, the regular agenda was suspended, and a discussion on law and order and flood situation may be continued. Opposition member Rishad Khan said that floods have severely affected Shangla, Buner, Swabi, Swat, and other districts. He said that 37 people died in Shangla alone where, roads are closed, water supply schemes are disrupted, and no government officer has yet reached the area.

He criticized the alleged "chit culture" of the administration and demanded release of compensation amount directly to flood victims. In Bisham Shangla, he said there's not even clean water available for tourists and called for a public health scheme that serves both locals and the tourism industry. MPA Aiman Jaleel said there was no pre-planning to handle floods and criticized political point-scoring, urged practical steps besides mentioned JUI's active involvement in relief through public cooperation. Arifa MPA expressed solidarity with the victims and urged the government to move the homeless to safer areas.

PML-N MPA Amina Sardar raised the issue of a tragic accident in Abbottabad where a dumper killed eight schoolchildren out of whom three died on the spot. She blamed district administration and traffic management, asking the Speaker for a ruling on this alleged gross negligence. She also demanded

attention towards rebuilding homes and bridges and taking climate change issue seriously.

Syeda Sonia Shah MPA said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has once again faced a natural calamity, citing lives lost, livestock killed, roads and communication destroyed. She urged to avoid encroachments, build protective walls, and prevent deforestation. The Speaker said the provincial government has provided financial aid within 24 hours to victims' doorsteps and PTI workers immediately reached affected areas and provided essential supplies.

Afshan Hussain MPA raised concern over deforestation and demanded a retaining wall along Swat River. PML-N MPA Jameela Pracha mentioned that entire villages were swept away, hundreds of homes destroyed in floods. She highly praised Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam for visiting flood affected areas and distributed cheques among flood victims.

Naheeda Noor MPA reported a recent flood in Peshawar's Mathra area and called for relief efforts. MPA Shazia Tahmas demanded women's representation in standing committees while MPA Mehr Sultana called for a joint committee of government and opposition members to ensure transparent distribution of relief funds.

Ashbar Jadoon, Farzana Shireen, and Khadija Bibi also spoke on the issue. Chief Whip of PTI Akbar Ayub complained that the merged tribal districts are being denied funds, questioning how peace is expected without fulfilling promises. He demanded IGP be invited to the Assembly to explain counterterrorism plans, saying the province is suffering daily losses of police, soldiers, and civilians.

He called for a special relief package

for KP and clarified that loss assessments are being conducted by third parties, and no schemes have yet been approved. Fateha was offered for martyred police officers killed in a terrorist encounter in Bannu. Speaker Babar Saleem Swati paid tribute to the courage of the police and Abdul Salam Afridi led a prayer for the deceased. On a proposal by PML-N member Afshan Hussain, the House observed one minute of silence to show solidarity with the people of Bajaur, affected by both floods and operations.

PHC issues written verdict on Afghan citizenship petitions

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a written decision regarding the citizenship applications filed by Afghan nationals residing in Pakistan. The court has directed the federal government and the Ministry of Interior to examine the applicants' claims and issue a clear and written order regarding the acceptance or rejection of their applications.

The applicants, represented by lawyer Daniyal Asad Chamkani, argued that they are Afghan citizens who have been living in Pakistan for a long time and have children born in Pakistan. They claimed that they are entitled to Pakistani citizenship under Section 3 of the Pakistani Citizenship Act 1962.

The court's written decision, authored by Justice Waqar Ahmed, states that the applicants have requested citizenship based on their birth in Pakistan.

World witnessed Pak Armed Force resolute response: CNS

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In the chronicles of our national history, certain days stand as luminous milestones, evoking glorious moments of the past. Such days rekindle the fervour of patriotism and reaffirm our solemn resolve to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our beloved homeland at any cost. Among these, 6th September holds an exalted place, commemorating an era of unparalleled valour and sacrifices by the gallant Armed Forces of Pakistan in defence of the motherland.

It is a day that embodies strong resilience, unyield-



ing determination and exceptional courage displayed by the men-in-arms, shoulder to shoulder with their countrymen, in discharge of the sacred duty of national defence. As the decades go by, this historic day continues to inspire national pride,

reminding all that Pakistan's defence remains impervious to any transgression, and if challenged, will be met with a decisive response. Above all, it is an occasion to honour our heroes who have sacrificed their lives to render the nation's defence impregnable.

The indomitable spirit to defend the homeland was reaffirmed during 'Marka-e-Haq' when the adversary attempted a reckless misadventure on a fabricated pretext. The world witnessed resolute response of our valiant Armed Forces, which stood as an impenetrable wall of steel in defence of its sacred soil.

Justice Shah asks CJ to publicly answer six questions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has written a letter to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi asking him to publicly answer six questions regarding "pressing institutional concerns", it emerged on Friday.

In a letter, Justice Shah said he was reluctantly writing it in "discharge of an unavoidable institutional duty", adding that what compelled him was "your (CJP's) persistent and complete indifference". The judge wrote that his "repeated letters and written communications to you (CJP) on the under-mentioned issues have gone unanswered and undiscussed; not once have I received a reply-neither in writing nor verbally", adding that such silence from the chief justice to the senior puisne judge was "not merely discourteous; it undermines the collegial traditions of this court and violates the institutional courtesy without which a constitutional court cannot function".

Justice Shah said that with the new judicial year commencing from Monday, CJP Afridi had convened a judicial conference to review the reforms undertaken under his leadership and to lay down priority areas for the coming year. "It is therefore both timely and opportune that the institutional concerns I raise in this letter be addressed squarely by you in that forum. By doing so, you will not only respond to the questions that remain unanswered but also reassure the judges of this court, the bar and the public we serve that your vision of reform is grounded in collegiality, transparency, and fidelity to the Constitution."

The questions the judge asked the CJP to answer were:

Why has the Practice and Procedure Act Committee never been convened to carry out its statutory responsibilities?

Why was the revision of the Supreme Court Rules 1980 approved by circulation rather than after discussion and deliberation in a Full Court

meeting?

Why was the policy on releasing dissenting opinions adopted by soliciting individual opinions of the judges — saying it was a process "unheard of" — rather than an open deliberation in a Full Court meeting?

Why was a General Standing Order (GSO) on leave issued that subjects judges to controls inconsistent with judicial independence and the Presidential Order of 1997?

Why have the petitions challenging the 26th Amendment not been fixed before the original Full Court?

If CJP Afridi was nurturing independence among judges or "enforcing compliance to turn this court into a regimented force rather than a constitutional court of free and equal judges"?

Justice Shah said the letter must not be construed as a "personal grievance".

"The concerns I now raise do not come from indolence or neglect, but from a judge who has consistently and conscientiously performed his duty. They are, therefore, institutional concerns borne of experience and responsibility rather than personal complaint," he explained. Justice Shah said that he trusted CJP Afridi to use the judicial conference as a "moment of institutional renewal by answering these questions and reaffirming the principles of collegiality and constitutional fidelity". Justice Shah said the questions were those that struck at the "heart of independence" and not only the apex court judges, but also the nation, were looking towards CJP Afridi "not for silence but for clarity".

Elaborating on his questions, Justice Shah said the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, was enacted by the apex court to put an end to the "one-man show" in the formation of benches. He pointed out that it required that all causes, matters, petitions, appeals or reviews be placed before benches constituted by a committee under the act, adding that its purpose was "clear": to review pending cases, devise a transparent case-management plan, categorise cases

intelligently and allocate them to benches through collective deliberation.

"Yet, since your assumption of office in October 2024, not a single official meeting of the PaPa Committee has been convened. Bench formation and cause lists are being issued unilaterally, without any committee deliberation. Rosters are circulated for signatures, expecting members to endorse them blindly without discussion of case allocation or categorisation. As a senior member of the committee, I have had no opportunity to participate in its work as mandated by law. "This is a direct violation of the act and raises serious concerns. Why are junior judges regularly assigned to three-member benches while senior judges are confined to two-member benches? Why are matters of national importance with far-reaching policy implications not fixed before senior benches? The pattern suggests that independent judges are being sidelined, not for reasons of efficiency, but for reasons of control." Justice Shah said that minutes of five "committee meetings" displayed on the court's website could not "cure this defect", arguing that "they were not committee meetings within the meaning of the act but mere discussions about the chief justice's travel schedule. Even then, their minutes were uploaded in violation of a binding majority decision of the committee. I had recorded my dissent on that occasion, arguing for transparency, but it was disregarded. This is symptomatic of a mindset averse to collegiality and inclined towards dictation."

The judge rued that "the genie of the 'one-man show', which Parliament sought to bury through legislation, has been released once again", adding that that was the reason why he had ceased signing the rosters circulated without any meeting. "By sidelining the committee and withholding even basic information (such as the number of cases to be dealt with or those fixed before larger benches), you have reduced a statutory mechanism of collective decision-making into a façade.

"The result is evident: despite the increase in the number of judges, the court's pendency remains at 57,455 cases. The very purpose of enhancing the court's strength — reducing backlog — stands defeated. The unavoidable inference is that enlargement of the court was less about addressing pendency and more about altering its internal balance, thereby diluting the independence and standing of existing judges."

Regarding the revision of the apex court's rules, Justice Shah said they were a constitutional document that governed the institution's functioning and their first revision in four decades was an event of "historic significance". He argued that such a process required a Full Court meeting on the administrative side. "Instead, you chose to approve the draft rules by circulation — a process suited to routine matters, not to reshaping the court's constitutional framework. "By avoiding deliberation, you deprived the court of collective wisdom and diminished judicial dialogue. This course reflects a lack of collegiality and a preference for unilateral authority."

Regarding dissenting opinions, Justice Shah said the court's recent policy on releasing them with the majority judgment was approved through a unique process of soliciting the views of individual judges by the registrar. He said there was no "legal or institutional basis for individual opinion-gathering on such critical matters", unless specifically authorised by the Full Court, and even then, only for matters that were procedural or minor in nature. Justice Shah said the above exercise could not be treated as a substitute for Full Court deliberation, nor could responses to this letter be used to formulate policy in isolation.

"A matter of jurisprudential weight was reduced to a secretive tick-box exercise and the court was denied the richness of open deliberation. "A Full Court meeting is not merely a procedural formality — it is the bedrock of judicial collegiality. It allows all judges of this court to come together,

to deliberate, to exchange ideas and, through open dialogue, to persuade or be persuaded. In such a forum, a judge may revise or refine their view after hearing their colleagues, or may help develop a collective wisdom that is far more robust than isolated responses. This essential element of judicial democracy is entirely lost when opinions are sought in writing and in silos." Justice Shah said that the GSO dated July 29, 2025, was the "first time" in the court's history that something had dictated that judges were "whole-time" at the state's disposal, adding that this was language "wholly alien" to a constitutional court. "Judges are not regimented officers; their independence is constitutionally entrenched."

The judge said the GSO had confined foreign leaves to five categories, but this was a restriction not envisaged in Presidential Order No. 2 of 1997. "In principle, leave can, if at all, only possibly be considered for refusal where: (i) a part-heard case cannot be adjourned; (ii) urgent administrative duty demands presence; or (iii) a judge is negligent in work and seeks leave to evade it. Yet, in practice, leave is being denied even when none of these circumstances exist-apparently to enforce compliance and control, and to prevent independent judges from speaking at international forums. Such arbitrary denials betray a deep institutional insecurity." Justice Shah further railed that the newly introduced requirement under the GSO that a judge must disclose his residential address and contact details was "alien" to the practice of constitutional courts worldwide.

"It borrows from the ethos of civil-service bureaucracy and attempts to transplant it into the judiciary, with deeply corrosive consequences. A judge of this court is not a supervised functionary of the state but a constitutional actor whose independence is both decisional and personal. To compel disclosure of a judge's private residence is not administration — it is surveillance. It reduces the dignity of the office to that of a monitored

employee and cloaks an instrument of control in the garb of procedure. "No constitutional court of repute — the US Supreme Court, the UK Supreme Court, or the Constitutional Court of South Africa — has ever imposed such a condition. You may not realise it, but by imposing it here, you are striking at the very independence of this court. A judiciary under watch ceases to be a judiciary; it becomes an extension of bureaucracy. Kindly note that no apex court of repute across jurisdictions mandates such disclosure, precisely because the ethos of independence demands institutional courtesy, not surveillance." The senior puisne judge pointed out that the GSO had been "weaponised to create a judicial 'exit control list'".

He noted that leave was no longer a matter of "respect and consultation but of bureaucratic obstruction", adding that it was an "authoritarian impulse that undermines judicial independence". The judge further pointed out that "disturbingly, these rigid policies bear the imprint of the civil bureaucracy. The registrar — a retired civil servant — appears to be driving an agenda alien to the ethos of a constitutional court. Judges are not governed by the logic of command and control but by independence and collegiality. Judges are not mere agents of government; they are guardians of the people's liberties." Lastly, Justice Shah said the apex court and CJP Afridi's legitimacy "hangs in the balance" in the pending petitions challenging the 26th Amendment. He pointed out that the petitions remained unheard for nearly a year, though they concerned the Supreme Court's independence. "They must be heard by the original Full Court, excluding judges elevated after the amendment. Until then, any initiative under your leadership remains institutionally fragile, for its foundation is constitutionally suspect. True leadership lies not in managing compliance but in ensuring that the court rises above suspicion as the fearless guardian of the Constitution," the senior puisne judge concluded.