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PM Lauds
Minorities' Role in
Pakistan's Progress

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US, Iran close to some sort of 'peace arrangement': Asif



Staff Report

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Tuesday that the United States and Iran were moving closer to a possible agreement, as Qatar reported progress in talks over managing the Strait of Hormuz despite fresh attacks on shipping in the region.

The comments offered some hope that Iran and the US can end a stalemate that has in effect blocked the vital waterway, through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flowed before the war. Prospects for a deal had appeared to dim on Monday after the sides' latest remarks and demands. In an

interview with Bloomberg News, Asif said: "Things are shaping up again in favour of a peace arrangement or a deal." "The signals in the last two, three days are that we are close to some sort of an arrangement."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Tehran on Tuesday, Araghchi's Telegram channel said on Tuesday, without providing further details. Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson told a briefing earlier on Tuesday that separate discussions between Oman and Iran over management of the Strait of Hormuz were at an advanced stage. Iran's Foreign Ministry's Public

Relations Office did not immediately respond to a call for comment.

Pakistan and Qatar have been the main mediators in the conflict in which thousands have been killed — mainly in Iran and Lebanon — since US and Israeli attacks on Iran on February 28.

Iran has hit back by striking US assets and infrastructure in countries including Oman, Jordan, Kuwait, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Oil pares gains on deal hopes

Oil fell back on Tuesday after hitting a one-week high earlier in trading, although it remains much higher than before the war.

Iran said on Sunday it was nearing a final pact with Oman defining new shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz, which runs between them, but said that in itself would not open the waterway unless the US met certain conditions. Those conditions were largely in line with a memorandum of understanding to end the conflict that was reached between Washington and Tehran in June and included compensation and an end to sanctions and military threats. Iranian FM Araghchi said on Sunday that Tehran and Washington were not holding direct talks, but that messages were being exchanged through intermediaries.

5 terrorists neutralised in Balochistan's Panjgur: ISPR

STAFF REPORT, Security forces neutralised five terrorists belonging to the proscribed Fitna al-Hindustan during a "high-tempo, intelligence-driven operation" conducted in Balochistan's Panjgur district, the military's media wing said on Tuesday.

The federal government last year officially designated all terrorist groups operating in Balochistan as 'Fitna al-Hindustan', accusing India of sponsoring a proxy war through these outfits.

"In addition to neutralising the five hostile elements, operational teams recovered and destroyed a significant cache of weapons, ammunition, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on site, followed immediately by sanitisation operations to clear any remaining threats in the area," said a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). It added that the operation was executed as part of a "relentless, ongoing counter-terrorism campaign dedicated to eliminating Indian-sponsored proxies and restoring enduring peace in the region", referring to Operation Shaban.

The ISPR further stated that the relentless counterterrorism campaign under the vision "Azm e Istehkam", as approved by the Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan, by security forces and law enforcement agencies would continue at "full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country". Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to the security forces for the successful operation. The premier said that security forces were achieving "remarkable successes" against terrorism. "We are resolute to completely eradicate all forms of terrorism from the country," he added. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also paid tribute to security forces for the successful operation. Naqvi praised the professionalism and courage of the security forces for killing five terrorists, adding that the security forces took timely action and foiled their nefarious plans. He further stated that the successful operations of the security forces against the enemies of peace in Balochistan were commendable and terrorists would not find any place to hide.



PM Lauds Minorities' Role in Pakistan's Progress

APP- ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the country's minority communities had played a significant and commendable role in the creation, development and progress of the country in its journey from creation to national development, and underlined that all citizens, regardless of religion, must work together for the country's growth and prosperity.

Addressing a ceremony held here at the Prime Minister's Office to mark National Minorities Day, the Prime Minister said, in line with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's August 11 address, the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed equal rights to all Pakistanis.

He said Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis and members of other minority communities had played a constructive role in the Pakistan Movement and in the country's development.

The Prime Minister particularly appreciated the contributions of the Christian community in education, recalling the educational services of Christian schools and his own and his siblings' early education at Christian educational institutions.

He also mentioned prominent national figures from minority communities, including Cecil Chaudhry, Justice A.R. Cornelius, Jogendra Nath Mandal, S.L. Gibbs and S.P.



Singha, and said minorities had rendered valuable services in national defence and other fields.

He said the sacrifices of minority citizens in the country's wars and the fight against terrorism were unforgettable.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said all Pakistanis needed to work together for the country's development and prosperity, while the younger generation should be equipped with modern knowledge to enable Pakistan to attain a prominent position in the world.

He said the country should move forward while keeping in view the objectives of Pakistan and strive to secure its rightful place among the comity of nations. Referring to the Makkah Defence Agreement among Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye, the Prime Minister said the agreement was not directed against any country but was aimed at promoting peace, development and prosperity. He also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to peace, stability and development in the region.

During the ceremony, Prime Minister, Shehbaz presented awards and honours to members of minority communities in recognition of their services to the country.

Earlier, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said minorities enjoyed protection in Pakistan and that the government was taking measures for their welfare.



Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani along with distinguished guests, cutting a cake during a ceremony held in connection with National Minorities day at Parliament House

Mohsin arrives in Tehran as Pakistan pushes for US-Iran talks on Hormuz

STAFF REPORT, ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi arrived in Tehran for an official visit on Tuesday, as Islamabad continues diplomatic efforts aimed at facilitating dialogue between Iran and the United States amid tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz.

Naqvi is scheduled to meet senior Iranian officials during his stay, with discussions expected to include the situation in the strategic waterway, bilateral relations and other matters of mutual interest. Iranian media reports

confirmed his arrival but did not immediately provide full details of his meeting schedule.

The visit comes as Pakistan continues to maintain contact with both Tehran and Washington as part of its efforts to support diplomatic engagement over the conflict and the wider regional crisis.

The Strait of Hormuz is expected to feature prominently in discussions during Naqvi's meetings in Tehran. The strategic waterway is a crucial route for global energy

shipments, and its security has remained one of the key issues in discussions between Iran and the US. Pakistan has emerged as an important intermediary in diplomatic contacts between the two sides. Islamabad has hosted negotiations and has continued communicating with Tehran and Washington as efforts continue to address outstanding issues and prevent further escalation. Naqvi has travelled to Iran several times in recent months as part of Pakistan's diplomatic engagement.

Three Pakistanis Killed in Houthi Vessel Attack

MONITORING DESK, Four crew members were killed and four others wounded on Tuesday after the Houthis attacked a commercial vessel carrying food supplies in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, the Yemeni Ministry of Transportation said. The dead included three Pakistani crew members and one Indonesian sailor, while four others were wounded, the ministry said. A member of the rescue team was also injured. A ministry statement said the Yemeni-flagged vessel Tihamah was struck

three times by ballistic missiles while sailing through the strategic waterway, setting the ship on fire and causing material damage. The ministry said Houthi forces fired another missile at the vessel as rescue teams were attempting to reach the crew in an attempt to disrupt the rescue operation and cause further casualties. It condemned the Houthi attack as a "terrorist crime", saying it threatened the safety of maritime navigation and international trade.



Federal Minister for Defence Production Muhammad Raza Hayat Harraj calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

Jamshoro: Attempts to close elementary school in Manjhand, alleged threats to children and teachers by influential people, principal reaches court

Staff Report, Jamshoro:

Principal Benazir Rajar, an activist for education, has approached the court against alleged obstructions in the construction of an elementary school building in Khasai area of Manjhand tehsil, harassment of children and teachers and attempts to close the school.

Principal Benazir Rajar has filed a petition in the Jamshoro court through Supreme Court lawyer Agha Kashif Hussain.

Talking to the media in the court premises, Benazir Rajar said that in 2016, she purchased a plot from Khamiso Shoro and built a school there, while in 2025, she started the Penza Education System by purchasing a plot from Tajo Shoro under a legal agreement and established an elementary school in the Manjhand tehsil area.

According to him, about 250 children from the area are studying in the school, however, some influential people, including Taj Muhammad Shoro and Khamisu Shoro, are alleged-



edly obstructing the construction of the school building.

Benazir Rajar alleged that the school was attacked from time to time, vandalized, the solar system and school records were also allegedly taken away, while he was being harassed by giving death threats.

He further alleged that Khamisu Shoro, Taju Shoro and some other influential people are allegedly interfering in the educational activities of the school, while they are also allegedly supported by some influential elements.

According to Benazir Rajar, many

children have stopped coming to school due to the constant threats and fear, which is severely affecting their education.

He said that applications have also been made to the Deputy Commissioner Jamshoro and SSP Jamshoro regarding the matter, but no significant action has been taken so far. He said that the purpose of approaching the court is to provide protection to the children, teachers and the school and to continue educational activities without fear.

Benazir Rajar demanded that the administration and the police immediately take notice of the matter, provide security to the school, investigate the alleged threats and harassment incidents and secure the educational future of more than 250 children of the area.

He said that depriving children of education is not acceptable in any case, the administration should take action according to the law without pressure from influential people and provide complete security to the school.

On the instructions of Gujranwala Chief Commissioner FBR Khalid Jameel, Commissioner Ali Adnan Khan, the campaign regarding tax awareness among small traders is ongoing, an awareness session regarding *"Special procedure for small shopkeepers"* was held at Main Bazaar Kamonki



Gujranwala (Bureau Report)

According to details: On the instructions of Chief Commissioner FBR Khalid Jameel, Commissioner Ali Adnan Khan, a campaign regarding tax awareness among small traders is ongoing. In Main Bazaar Kamonki. Special procedure for small shopkeepers. While this

In the session the important points of the scheme and its benefits were highlighted. In the session 1. General Secretary Trade Union Mr. Haji Faiz 2. President Shoes Merchant Mr. Tanveer3. President General Store Traders Mr. Zakaullah 4. Vice President Garments Association Mr. Ajmal Bhatti 5. President Grocery Merchant Sheikh Munir Ahmed participated while an awareness meeting was organized at Main Bazaar, Wazirabad. The meeting was presided over by Aamir Yunus Khokhar, Inland Revenue Officer, Unit No. 16,

Wazirabad on the instructions of Hon'ble Commissioner Inland Revenue. The President of Trade Union of Main Bazar, Wazirabad also participated in the meeting and an awareness meeting was organized with Mobile Market Association of Model Town, Gujranwala on behalf of Unit No. 10. The meeting was held in compliance with the instructions of Hon'ble Commissioner Inland Revenue, Zone-II, Gujranwala. The meeting was attended by Mr. Owais Butt, President of Mobile Market, Model Town, office bearers of the association and other shopkeepers. The participants were given detailed information about the key features, objectives and benefits of the special scheme. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate the implementation of tax rules for the small shopkeepers and to make them aware of the scheme was finally organized by Unit No. 12 with the traders of Main

Bazaar Khyali, Gujranwala. The meeting was organized as per the instructions of the Honorable Commissioner Inland Revenue, Zone-II, Gujranwala. The meeting was attended by the following officials: * Mr. Imran Shahzad, President * Mr. Yasir Saeed Mughal, Secretary * Mr. Muhammad Sufian Jat, Vice President Main Bazar Khyali, Gujranwala. And a detailed briefing was given about the benefits. The meeting focused on creating awareness among small shopkeepers, removing their apprehensions regarding the implementation of tax laws and encouraging them to fulfill their tax obligations under the scheme. To ensure wide awareness, the key points of the special scheme were also shared through the official WhatsApp group of Main Bazar Khyali traders, so that the information could also be conveyed to the shopkeepers who attended the meeting in person.

Timely completion of WASA projects under the Punjab Development Program should be ensured, roads should be restored on an emergency basis so that the problems faced by the citizens in transportation and transportation can be solved immediately and better services can be provided



Gujranwala (Bureau Report)

According to details: Commissioner Gujranwala Division Muhammad Ali along with Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala Naveed

Ahmed visited Vasa Office People's Colony. MD Wasa Abdul Waheed gave a briefing on the progress of ongoing development projects. Commissioner Gujranwala directed the WASA authorities to complete all

the ongoing projects within the stipulated period while the rehabilitation of the affected roads should be completed on an emergency basis to relieve the citizens from traffic and other problems.

Gujranwala district administration GAPCO and the poor strategy of the contractor imposed a double punishment on the traders of the satellite town market, The satellite town market has imposed the double punishment of unannounced load shedding for 10 to 12 hours three days a week, bringing the business of traders to the brink of collapse



Gujranwala (Bureau Report)

According to details: Patron-in-Chief Satellite Town Market Malik Abdul Khaliq has said while talking to the media that since last one year, the bad governance of the district administration and the contractor

has broken the back of the satellite town market traders in the name of beautification. This project was supposed to be completed in one year, but due to the corruption of the contractors and the use of poor materials, it could not be completed on time. For the past one year, the roads

have been in disrepair. The commissioner and deputy commissioner should be strictly instructed to complete the ongoing beautification and development works in the satellite town market on an emergency basis and exempt the area from unannounced load shedding.

Successful kidney transplant at PIMS, a big success of Professor Dr. Sajid Rafique Abbasi and team

Islamabad (Special Reporter)

Another important success was achieved in the field of kidney transplant at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), where a team of expert doctors under the supervision of Professor Dr. Sajid Rafique Abbasi successfully transplanted a young man's kidney. After the transplant, the patient not only became free from dialysis, but even after almost two years, both the patient and his father are living a healthy life.

According to sources, about two years ago, a young man was brought to PIMS in a very critical condition. The young man was unconscious and was facing severe difficulty in breathing, while during the medical examination, it was found that both his kidneys had completely failed.

Since this was the only son of the patient's parents, the situation was very emotional and worrying. The doctors immediately started the patient's dialysis process, while simultaneously completing the necessary medical work-up for the transplant and planning for a kidney transplant.

According to sources, the patient's father decided to donate his kidney to save the life of his only son. Later,



the transplant was performed under the supervision of Professor Dr. Sajid Rafique Abbasi, in which the medical team including Dr. Khawar Sultan and Dr. Abdul Qadir played an important role.

After the successful transplant, the young man's condition improved significantly and he became completely free from dialysis. Even after almost two years, both the young man and his father are healthy and leading a normal life.

The patient's family thanked the

doctors and medical team of PIMS for the successful treatment, calling it a new life. The successful transplant is also being described as an important proof of the professionalism of expert doctors and modern medical facilities at PIMS.

On this occasion, the family also congratulated young Mati on his marriage and said that the beginning of Mati's new life after successfully overcoming the difficult phase of illness and treatment is a source of joy for the entire family.



A child vendor displays Independence Day-themed children's dresses to attract customers at Wada Mahar village.

PBM, NTC agree to strengthen digital connectivity for vulnerable communities

APP- ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) and the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) on Tuesday agreed to strengthen institutional cooperation to improve PBM's nationwide digital connectivity and ensure reliable and sustainable communication services for its programmes serving vulnerable and underprivileged communities. The agreement was formalised through the signing of a Document of Intent (DoI) at PBM headquarters, paving the way for a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two organisations.

Managing Director PBM, Senator Capt. Shaheen Khalid Butt and Managing Director NTC Maj. Gen. (ret'd) Ali Farhan signed the document at a ceremony attended by officials from both organisations.

The framework aimed to strengthen PBM's connectivity infrastructure and ensure uninterrupted technical support and operational sustainability for its nationwide services.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Shaheen Khalid Butt said reliable technology and communication services had become essential for the effective



delivery of PBM's programmes across the country.

He said PBM was a mission-driven public-sector organisation serving widows, orphans, patients, students, persons with disabilities and other deserving segments of society.

"Every rupee we save on operational costs goes directly to a beneficiary; a widow, an orphan, a patient or a student," he said, adding that favourable terms from NTC would ultimately benefit the people relying on PBM's programmes.

The PBM managing director requested NTC to consider subsidised

or concessional rates for internet connectivity, point-to-point links, email and web hosting, and cloud services, describing these facilities as essential operational infrastructure for PBM rather than administrative conveniences.

He said uninterrupted digital services were vital for ensuring continuous delivery of assistance to beneficiaries across the country.

Senator Shaheen Khalid Butt also expressed his commitment to aligning PBM's objectives with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Uraan Pakistan initiative.



ایف آئی آر رپورٹ

فراڈ کرنے والے آپ کے پیاروں کی آواز نقل کر سکتے ہیں، مگر ایک خفیہ کوڈ انھیں بے نقاب کر سکتا ہے

ڈیپ فیک فراڈ میں آپ کی آواز تو استعمال کی جاسکتی ہے لیکن دھوکے باز یہ نہیں جانتے کہ آپ کیا سوچتے ہیں۔ صرف پانچ منٹ کی تیاری آپ کے عزیزوں کو دھوکے سے بچا سکتی ہے۔ نیویارک کے شہر ہفیلو کی رہائشی الزبتھ ہینز کو بھی ایسے ہی ایک دھوکے سے متعلق ستمبر 2025 میں ایک فون کال موصول ہوئی۔ وہ کہتی ہیں کہ 'یہ میری زندگی کا سب سے خوفناک لمحہ تھا۔ یہ میرا 16 سالہ بیٹا جان تھا۔ وہ رورہا تھا اور کہہ رہا تھا کہ ماں، میرا دوست مر گیا ہے، وہ مر گیا ہے۔'

وہ یہ سن کر گھبرا گئیں لیکن ابھی صورتحال مزید خراب ہونے والی تھی۔ پھر ایک انتہی نے فون سنہال لیا۔ اگلے 20 منٹ تک اس شخص نے انھیں بتایا کہ اس نے ان کے بیٹے کے دوست کو قتل کر دیا ہے اور اگر وہ والمارٹ کی ایک پارکنگ میں 500,7 ڈالر (570,5 پاؤنڈ) لے کر نہ آئیں تو وہ ان کے بیٹے کو بھی مار دے گا۔

ہینز کہتی ہیں کہ اس نے دھمکی دیتے ہوئے کہا ہم تمھارے بیٹے کو مار دیں گے۔ اس کال کے کچھ ہی دیر بعد وہ وہاں جانے کے لیے گاڑی چلا رہی تھیں لیکن تین وقت پر جان کے بھائی نے اس سے رابطہ کر لیا۔

وہ ایک فلیاں صفحہ میں موجود تھا۔ جان کی خطرات میں نہیں تھا اور فون پر سنائی دینے والی آواز بھی اس کی نہیں تھی۔ یہ سب ایک اسے آئی ڈیپ فیک فراڈ تھا۔

الزبتھ ہینز کہتی ہیں کہ مجھے یقین ہی نہیں آ رہا تھا۔ ڈیپ فیک فراڈ کی تیاری پر ہونا بھی ضروری ہے۔ اگر آپ سمجھتے ہیں کہ آپ یا آپ کے عزیز اسے سمجھدار ہیں کہ ڈیپ فیک کے دھوکے میں نہیں آئیں گے تو آپ غلط ہیں۔ اب اسے آئی اتنی ترقی کر چکی ہے کہ صرف اپنی آنکھوں اور کانوں پر بھروسہ کرنا کافی نہیں رہا اور مجرم ایسے فراڈ بڑے پیمانے پر کر رہے ہیں۔

یہ ایک جدید ٹیکنالوجی سے جڑا مسئلہ ہے لیکن خوش قسمتی سے اس کا حل بہت سادہ ہے اور یہ آپ کو زندگی بھر کے پچھتاوے سے بچا سکتا ہے۔ اگر آپ کو بھی مار دے گا (570,5 پاؤنڈ) لے کر نہ آئیں تو وہ ان کے بیٹے کو بھی مار دے گا۔ اب اسے آئی اتنی ترقی کر چکی ہے کہ صرف اپنی آنکھوں اور کانوں پر بھروسہ کرنا کافی نہیں رہا اور مجرم ایسے فراڈ بڑے پیمانے پر کر رہے ہیں۔

اس طرح کی صورتحال کے لیے پہلے سے ایک خفیہ لفظ موجود تھا۔ اس پریشانی میں میرے ذہن میں یہ بات ہی نہیں آئی کہ میں وہ خفیہ لفظ پوچھوں، ایسے فراڈ میں انسان اس قدر گھبرا جاتا ہے کہ صحیح طرح سوچ ہی نہیں پاتا۔ اس کا مطلب یہ ہے کہ صرف خفیہ لفظ طے کرنا کافی نہیں بلکہ ذہنی طور پر تیاری



جاری ہے ہیں۔ وہ کہتے ہیں 'ڈرا تصور کریں کہ رات دو بجے آپ کو ایک فون کال، واٹس میل یا ویڈیو کال موصول ہوتی ہے اور کوئی عزیز کہہ رہا ہے کہ وہ مشکل میں ہے۔' یا پھر آپ کے ادارے کا سربراہ فون پر گھبراہٹ بھری آواز میں کہہ رہا ہو کہ اسے فوری طور پر لاگ ان ہونے میں مدد چاہیے۔ عام لوگ اس طرح کی صورتحال کے لیے تیار نہیں ہوتے۔

فریڈ اور دیگر ماہرین متفق ہیں کہ خفیہ لفظ یا کوڈ ورڈ آپ کو محفوظ رکھنے کا سب سے آسان طریقہ ہے۔ وہ کہتے ہیں کہ 'میری اہلیہ اور میرے درمیان ایک پاس ورڈ طے ہے۔ اگر ہم میں سے کسی کو کوئی غیر معمولی کال آئے تو ہم شناخت کی تصدیق کے لیے اسے استعمال کرتے ہیں۔'

ایسا لفظ منتخب کریں جو یاد رکھنا آسان ہو لیکن دوسروں کے لیے اس کا اندازہ لگانا مشکل ہو۔ خاندانی مذاق یا ایسی باتیں جو صرف آپس میں معلوم ہوں اس مقصد کے لیے موزوں انتخاب ہو سکتی ہیں۔

فریڈ کہتے ہیں کہ اگر میری اہلیہ فون کرے مجھ سے دودھ لانے کو کہیں تو میں پاس ورڈ نہیں پوچھوں گا۔ لیکن اگر مجھے معلوم ہو کہ وہ کسی بینک میں ہیں یا وہ کہیں کہ ان کا حادثہ ہو گیا ہے اور انھیں فوری طور پر رقم منتقل کر دانی ہے یا کوئی بھی غیر معمولی بات ہو تو پھر پاس ورڈ استعمال کرنے کا وقت ہوتا ہے۔ لیکن جب آپ کو ایسی کال موصول ہو اور آپ کسی عزیز کو مشکل میں میں تو گھبراہٹ آپ کی ساری منصوبہ بندی کو درہم برہم کر سکتی ہے۔ اس لیے ضروری ہے کہ آپ جانتے ہوں کہ کب اور کیسے غیر معمولی حالات میں تیار رہنا ہے۔

امریکہ کے شہر فلوریڈا میں تحقیق رکھنے والے وکیل گیری ہلڈ ہورن 2023 میں خود بھی ایک ڈیپ فیک فراڈ سے بال بال بچ گئے تھے۔ یہ تجربہ ان کے لیے اتنا پریشان کن تھا کہ اب وہ اپنے فارغ وقت میں لوگوں کو فراڈ سے بچاؤ کے بارے میں آگاہ کرنے کا کام کرتے ہیں۔ ہلڈ ہورن کہتے ہیں کہ 'ایسے فراڈیوں کے کال کرنے کی تین بڑی نشانیاں ہیں۔ ان کے مطابق ان سب کا مقصد ایک ہی ہوتا ہے کہ فراڈ کرنے والے چاہتے ہیں کہ آپ خوفزدہ ہوں اور دوسروں سے کہیں کہ آپ کو بچنے کا وقت نہ ملے۔

وہ کہتے ہیں کہ انہی نشانی وقت کا دیاؤ ہے۔ ہر کام فوراً کرنے کو کہا جاتا ہے۔ دوسری یہ کہ وہ کبھی ایسی رقم نہیں مانگتے جس کا ریکارڈ رکھا جاسکے۔ اگر وہ

بت کو اس، گفٹ کارڈز یا فنڈ رقم مانگیں تو آپ سمجھ جائیں کہ معاملہ مشکوک ہے۔ ان کے مطابق 'تیسری یہ کہ وہ کوشش کرتے ہیں کہ آپ کسی اور سے بات نہ کریں۔'

'ہنگامی کال آئے تو گھبرا نہیں' روایتی فراڈ کی ان نشانیوں کو پہچانا بہت اہم ہے، لیکن صرف آگاہی کافی نہیں۔ اسے آئی کیورٹی تربیتی پروگرام بنانے والی کمپنی ایڈاپٹیکورنی کے شریک بانی برائن لاگ کہتے ہیں کہ 'سب سے اہم بات یہ ہے کہ آپ ایسے حالات میں رد عمل کیسے دیتے ہیں۔ آپ کو ذہنی طور پر خود کو اس طرح کی صورتحال کے لیے تیار کرنا ہوگا۔' اور یقیناً یہ بھی ضروری ہے کہ آپ اور آپ کے عزیز اس خفیہ لفظ کو نہ بھولیں۔ اس کا بہترین طریقہ مشق کرنا ہے، تاہم اس کے لیے بہت زیادہ وقت یا محنت درکار نہیں ہوتی۔ گیری ہلڈ ہورن کہتے ہیں کہ 'میں کئی سال سے فراڈ کے بارے میں ماہرین سے بات کرتا آ رہا ہوں اور میں نے اپنے لیے ایک سادہ طریقہ بنا رکھا ہے۔ میں نے اپنے فون میں ایک یاد دہانی (ریماینڈر) لگا رکھا ہے جو ہر تین ماہ بعد مجھے یاد دلاتا ہے کہ میں اپنے گھر والوں سے بات کروں اور یہ یقینی بنائوں کہ ہم سب کو وہ خفیہ لفظ یاد ہے۔'

The Arctic remains a zone of sustained competition

LUKE COFFEY

US President Donald Trump’s recent statements about the need to acquire Greenland caused considerable division within the transatlantic community. Fortunately, these tensions appear to have been resolved for now. One positive consequence of the Greenland debate, however, has been to elevate the strategic importance of the Arctic region on the international agenda.

The Arctic region is home to some of the harshest terrain and environmental conditions on Earth. There are eight countries that can call themselves Arctic states: the US, Canada, Denmark via Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Many more countries are now seeking to expand their influence in the region. The region is important for scientific, environmental, trade, transit, and energy reasons. Tourism has also been growing, boosting local economic activity. The region is widely believed to contain vast amounts of untapped oil and gas reserves, along with significant quantities of rare earth minerals. The challenge lies

in finding ways to access and extract these resources that are both economically viable and environmentally responsible. This is made even more difficult by the lack of infrastructure and limited logistical connectivity.

The Arctic Council, an intergovernmental body led by the eight Arctic states, was established to promote cooperation on issues such as search and rescue coordination, environmental protection, and scientific research. However, the council has all but stopped functioning since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, severely limiting one of the few institutional mechanisms for Arctic-wide cooperation.

For the US, it is clear that the Trump administration views the Arctic primarily through the lens of great power competition. The US became an Arctic state in the 1860s with the purchase of Alaska from Russia. What was widely seen at the time as a mistake has since proven to be one of the most strategic decisions made in the post-Civil War era. Despite the rhetoric from multiple Washington administrations, however, relatively little emphasis has been placed on

improving American capabilities or presence in the Arctic. For example, the US Coast Guard currently operates only one heavy icebreaker there.

So far in his first year in office, Trump has placed renewed focus on the region, including moving forward with a significant purchase of new icebreakers in cooperation with Finland. Even during the first Trump administration, the US role in the Arctic was framed largely in the context of great-power competition, particularly in relation to China. There is little reason to assume the second Trump administration will approach the region any differently.

Russia is the world’s largest Arctic state, with roughly half the world’s Arctic coastline located within the Russian Federation. For Moscow, the Arctic has long been a source of national pride and identity, dating back to the era of Peter the Great. After many Arctic bases and military facilities were shuttered at the end of the Cold War, President Vladimir Putin has invested heavily in reopening, modernizing, and expanding these installations. In recent years,

Russia has also fielded specialized military units designed to operate in extreme Arctic conditions.

Moscow also views the Northern Sea Route, the shipping corridor between Europe and Asia that runs along its Arctic coastline, as both geopolitically and economically significant. Russia has invested substantially in infrastructure along this route in an effort to attract more commercial shipping between European and Asian markets. However, many of Russia’s ambitious cargo-volume targets have not been met, and it remains unclear whether the route will become as commercially viable as Russian officials hope. For China, the Arctic represents yet another region where Beijing seeks to expand its global influence. Although China is not an Arctic country, it has declared itself a “near-Arctic state,” despite being roughly 1,200 km from the Arctic Circle at its closest point. Beijing has leveraged international institutions such as the Arctic Council to expand its presence in the region and has taken advantage of Russia’s growing isolation from the West to deepen Arctic coopera-

tion with Moscow, often in ways that disproportionately benefit China.

China has tried to pursue investments in key Arctic infrastructure projects, including some located in NATO members, and maintains a small, but strategically significant, scientific outpost in Norway’s Svalbard archipelago. While China has not conducted overt military activity above the Arctic Circle, it has sent numerous scientific missions, research vessels, and icebreakers to the region – assets that could serve dual civilian and military purposes. In the years ahead, China can be expected to seek an even greater role in the Arctic. Meanwhile, it has not always been clear to Europeans, beyond those countries that are Arctic states, what role the rest of the Continent should play in the region. While the EU as an institution holds policy competencies over many issues that directly affect the Arctic, member states that are Arctic countries have largely kept decision-making at the national level. In fact, the EU has attempted multiple times to join the Arctic Council as an observer, only to be blocked.

— Arab News

Fragile consensus as Africa heads to the polls

HAFED AL-GHWELL

Africa enters 2026 with elections scheduled in more than a dozen countries and with voter rolls that now exceed 600 million people across the continent. Elections have become the most common ritual of political life in Africa, more frequent than coups, civil wars, or constitutional rewrites. Yet frequency has not produced comfort. Voting has turned into a dual-use instrument: a tool for peaceful transfer of power in a minority of cases, and a method for laundering political capture in many others. It is a contradiction that now sits at the heart of what this year is likely to bring. Uganda offers a useful example. Yoweri Museveni, the country’s president, secured another term, extending a rule that began in 1986. Official results awarded him almost three-quarters of the vote, despite urban districts breaking heavily for the opposition and youth unemployment hovering around 60 percent. Turnout slipped below 60 percent as security forces ring-fenced the process, curtailed opposition rallies, and intermittently restricted digital platforms. Uganda demonstrated how elections now function in many entrenched systems: a choreographed exercise that delivers continuity while preserving the appearance of democracy.

Similar dynamics will likely shape several of the other headline contests this year. First, Benin is often cited as a reform success story of the 1990s. Today, it offers a perfect illustration of the “buy-in paradox.” President Patrice Talon is constitutionally barred from a third term, but the political field has been narrowed to the point where succession remains a controlled affair. Electoral laws passed since 2019 require parties to meet high national thresholds before fielding candidates, a rule that has sidelined most opposition groups. Parliamentary races since then have produced legislatures with over 80 percent pro-government seats.

Yet voters are still asked to participate, foreign observers invited, and results tabulated in public view. Opposition leaders face a puzzle: boycott and concede legitimacy or compete and validate a contest structured against them. Many will choose the latter, because absence guarantees irrelevance.

Second, Ethiopia’s general elections will be the most complex event on the calendar. The country has more than 120 million people, dozens of armed factions, and federal regions that are still operating under emergency regulations since the Tigray

war. The 2021 polls were held in stages because of insecurity and logistical failure. In 2026, similar obstacles remain. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali retains national visibility, but his coalition is thinner than when he took office in 2018. Ethnic parties control large regional blocs, and voter registration in contested areas remains incomplete. The result may still produce a government with a parliamentary majority, but one whose mandate is geographically uneven and politically fragile.

Third, Somalia plans indirect elections again, relying on clan delegates rather than universal suffrage. Roughly 14,000 elders select members of parliament, who then choose the president. The system is defended as pragmatic in a country where Al-Shabab is steadily increasing the territory it controls. Zambia and Gambia represent a rather different picture. Zambia’s 2021 election removed an incumbent through the ballot box for the third time since 1991. President Hakainde Hichilema enters 2026 with approval ratings near 60 percent, buoyed by debt restructuring, and the return of International Monetary Fund support. Inflation remains high, and youth job creation lags behind population growth, but institutions showed resilience in the last transfer of power.

Gambia, after ousting Yahya Jammeh in 2017, held a competitive vote in 2021 and is preparing for another. Turnout exceeded 80 percent, among the highest on the continent. Media pluralism has expanded, and civil society monitoring is now routine. Neither country is immune to backsliding, yet both demonstrate that electoral credibility can still compound over time. Similarly, Cabo Verde, with a population under 600,000, continues to rank among Africa’s strongest performers on electoral integrity. Power has alternated peacefully multiple times since the 1990s, and voter turnout remains above 60 percent. Politics there is dull in the best sense, with arguments over budgets, ports, and tourism strategy rather than existential questions of who controls the state. Across these cases runs the same thread: Elections are cheaper than repression and more acceptable to donors than open autocracy. Authoritarian incumbents have learned to keep polling stations open while closing political space. Over the past 15 years, average turnout in competitive African elections has fallen. At the same time, margins of victory for long-serving presidents have widened. Citizens show up less often, but winners win by more.

— Arab News

Greenlanders’ fever dream over but nightmares continue

NIC ROBERTSON

On Sunday, after two and a half weeks’ reporting from Nuuk, Greenland, my team and I finally boarded a plane and said goodbye. Leaving is hard. Greenland has me in its thrall, in rapture of its raw beauty and seduced by its quiet Inuit culture. But it’s a good thing to exit. Tonnes of journalists and equipment, clearing out, making space for Greenlanders to reflect on what just happened.

As our producer, Ben, sagely observed, their fever dream has broken. Residents of this giant, icebound Arctic island could be forgiven for thinking they might awaken back to a simpler time, before the trauma of President Donald Trump’s ratcheting up of demands to own Greenland just a few weeks ago.

But they are not where they began and they know it. Instead, they are awakening to an uneasy new reality. Trump’s capricious claims over their sovereignty are not over and his apparently flimsy grasp of basic facts about their homeland does not appear to have improved.

White House tweets make that abundantly clear. Were it not for his declaration at Davos last week, forswearing a military invasion of Greenland, an image posted of the president trudging across a snow field toward a Greenland flag, hand in wing with a penguin, would be triggering a renewed fever for its residents.

The apparent trolling is hard to fathom, much less take seriously. For a start, penguins – as everyone knows – live exclusively at the South Pole. Greenland is at the opposite end of the planet. But such incontrovertible truths seem to have become eclipsed by expansionist ambitions. Trump says he must own Greenland for the US’ “national security,” so he feels “psychologically” empowered to take it for his soon-to-be-built Golden Dome missile protective shield for the US. He might deny that he covets the minerals and rare earths buried below its ice

sheets, but many are skeptical.

What’s more, both objectives are already within his grasp. As Denmark, of which Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory, has made repeatedly clear to Trump’s diplomats, the 1951 defense agreement between these two sovereign nations grants sweeping rights for the US to base missiles and troops, as well as mine minerals and rare earths, to its heart’s content.

What I learned during my all-too-brief time in Greenland is that nature and its preservation are at the heart of Inuit culture. Locals told me they believed that Trump would have no regard for their most precious commodity, which is inextricably linked to their identity. Instead, the White House’s messaging seems to indicate they are either planning to introduce an alien species to Greenland or simply do not understand what it is they covet. Greenlanders, on the other hand, know exactly what they fear and why. They do not trust Trump. The president’s apparent about-face at Davos, rescinding threats of military action and announcing, after meeting NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, that an “agreement” had been hatched, giving him everything he wanted, carries no water – or ice for that matter – in Greenland. For Greenlanders, Trump is an open book, each new chapter strewn with the same falsehoods and self-aggrandizement. They also saw what he did in Venezuela, a leader plucked from a country with air defenses and an army, of which Greenland has neither. Instead, it relies on Denmark and, by extension NATO – and America, to defend it. The night before we left, the power abruptly went out across Nuuk, its 20,000 residents plunged into darkness. A few hours later, the internet also throttled back. Plenty of well-educated and rational Nuummioqs (as the capital’s residents are known) fretted they were about to experience a Venezuela redux.

— Arab News



Demolishing UNRWA headquarters an act of folly and weakness

YOSSI MEKELBERG

In every sphere of activity in which Israel’s government operates, it does so in a thuggish and mindless manner. Nuance, subtlety, restraint, consideration, and weighing options are just not in its vocabulary. The immorality of this approach is obvious and in the long term self-defeating, leaving the country living by the sword, with fewer friends, and constantly losing public sympathy. The latest episode in this long-running series of acts of sheer folly took place last week when the government sent its enforcers, accompanied by security forces, to demolish the headquarters of UNRWA, the UN agency that since 1949 has been in charge of providing services for the well-being and protection of Palestinian refugees until a just resolution of the question of Palestine is found. This is an Israeli government that tries to conceal its true intentions and incompetence with performative politics. Does it really believe that if UNRWA ceases to exist, the Palestinian refugees will disappear with it, and that their political, human, and civil rights will no longer exist? Israel blames UNRWA for perpetuating the Palestinian right of return by granting refugee status to successive generations. However, it is not UNRWA that perpetuates the right of return; it is their legal right in line with international law and UN General Assembly Resolution 194, for instance, which states that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return.” Mistakenly, negotiations over the issue of refugees were framed as addressing the right of return rather than how to translate this right into practical terms that would avoid a mass return leading to new difficulties. The right of return is recognized under international law, and hence not negotiable as such. UNRWA is not the custodian of this right – international law is. Years of negotiations to translate this right into practice have yielded a number of plans for workable solutions, including trade-offs for those who will not return, such as becoming citizens of a Palestinian state, becoming citizens of their current host countries, and compensation for their loss and suffering.

Destroying the UNRWA headquarters in East Jerusalem will not make the Palestinian refugees and their rights go away. It is a mere act of vandalism, which activated a piece of legislation passed in the Knesset in

October 2024, barring the agency from operating in Israeli territory and curtailing its activities in Gaza and the West Bank by banning state authorities from having any contact with it. In addition, late last year, in another act of harassment, a law prohibiting the provision of electricity or water to facilities owned by or operated on behalf of UNRWA passed its third and final reading in the Knesset. This was another Pyrrhic victory, which appeals to the current government’s electoral base that has been fed endless lies about the objectives and operations of this UN agency, leading the base to believe that it is hostile to Israel. Awareness among Israelis of the humanitarian nature of the organization and its contribution to the well-being of millions of Palestinians, to whose plight Israel has been a major contributor for so many decades, is almost nonexistent. By declaring all-out war on UNRWA, Israel gets closer to a moment of reckoning when it must demonstrate that it has found an alternative humanitarian instrument to the UN agency. Unquestionably, UNRWA is at a crossroads. However, the answer to whether it stays or goes should be given by the international community, not by Israel. In December last year, 151 countries supported renewing the agency’s mandate for three years. On the face of it, this was an overwhelming vote of confidence in the work of the organization – support that was earned not only by sweat but also by blood since the war in Gaza has cost the agency the lives of 382 of its personnel and others supporting its activities. Nevertheless, as important as extending the mandate is, it has not been matched by allocating adequate long-term funding to meet the growing needs of the 5.9 million Palestinian refugees eligible for UNRWA’s services, which include health, education, protection, relief, and social services, as well as microfinance. Last year, the agency secured £1.4 billion. However, in light of the surge in humanitarian needs, it needs almost double this amount – a shortfall with grave consequences for refugees. Moreover, international political support is needed while Israel is harassing and bullying the agency and its staff, but this backing is half-hearted. Israel replaced the UN flag with the Israeli flag over the demolished headquarters in Jerusalem, but it has not come up with an alternative in terms of budget and a qualified workforce to supply the services that UNRWA has been providing, despite the fact that the UN did not create the refugee problem in the first place, and it is not the UN that has occupied Palestinian territories since 1967.

— Arab News

Letters to the Editor

Daycare centres

As of 2023, nearly 35 per cent of female doctors remain unemployed, mostly because many of them have had to leave their careers and ambitions after marriage due to societal pressures and concerns about childcare. This challenge can be addressed by introducing affordable and good quality daycare facilities in both private and government hospitals. Subsidised daycare would allow female doctors and nurses – and other working women for that matter – to return to work post-partum without stress or hesitation, knowing their children are safe, cared for and near them. These daycare centres should be equipped with modern facilities like cameras, so parents can check on their children whenever they want. By investing in such childcare solutions, we not only can support working mothers but can also strengthen Pakistan’s healthcare workforce. Setting up daycare centres in Pakistan’s hospitals isn’t just a convenience, it’s vital to keep our healthcare system fully staffed and help save lives.

Alishba Saleem
Karachi

Manageable challenges

As a nation, we are faced with so many fronts on which our performance is negative.

We have to contend with a number of issues, many of which have been carried forward from the previous year or years. A lot of our issues are either external or complicated and would, therefore, require time to sort themselves out. Economic failure is one. Social stagnation is another. Terrorism, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, is yet another. Problematic international relations with our two immediate, important and largest neighbours – India and Afghanistan – is yet still another. And so forth. But what about internal political harmony and stability? Well, this issue is certainly in our control if we can muster the courage to resolve it. An olive branch has already been offered to PTI with its parliamentarians or like-minded ones assuming important responsibilities as the respective leaders of the opposition in both houses of parliament. Fair enough and very good so far.

There is hope that we can bring political harmony in the country in 2026. If we are able to do so, the helmsmen can go about resolving the other issues without any hindrance, fear or favour. Perhaps, ‘political stability’ is the tool that could trigger a positive domino effect on all our remaining contentious issues.

Abbas R Siddiqi
Lahore

GRE: an outdated and unfair metric

The GRE isn’t a measure of intelligence; it’s a rigged obstacle course designed to humiliate you. It’s not a test; it’s a filter. A brutal, outdated gate that stands between you and your future, demanding that you “prove yourself” through things that have nothing to do with your actual field of study. You want to study English? Literature? Language? Too bad. The GRE doesn’t care. You’ll still have to solve math problems. And not just basic math, you’ll be forced to study algebra, geometry, trigonometry, pie charts, bar graphs, number sequences, quadratic equations – topics you haven’t touched since high school. It’s not optional. It’s required, and if you can’t solve them, you’re seen as “not good enough”, even if you’ve read 500 books and written brilliant essays. And if you’re from a Math or Engineering background, don’t think you’re safe either; you’ll be forced to study advanced English and Verbal Reasoning; you’ll be expected to master obscure, outdated vocabulary like obfuscate, recalcitrant, pulchritude, sesquipedalian, turpitude, ersatz, quixotic. Words nobody uses in real life – not in offices, not in classrooms, not even in novels.

Yumna Zahid Ali
Karachi



A daily-wage labourer was killed when a concrete shade collapsed on him at an under-construction house in Media Town. Rescue teams retrieve the body from the debris.

PAL’s third three-day “Nasl-e-Nau Adabi Mela” begins

APP- ISLAMABAD: The inaugural session of the third three-day “Nasl-e-Nau Adabi Mela” was held on Tuesday at the Faiz Ahmed Faiz Auditorium of the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), Islamabad, under the auspices of the National Heritage and Culture Division.

The event was held with great dignity and literary grandeur and was attended by selected young participants from across the country, along with writers, poets and intellectuals from Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The ceremony commenced with a flag-hoisting ceremony and the national anthem. A cake-cutting ceremony was also held in connection with Independence Day, followed by the unveiling of portraits of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

The ceremony then proceeded with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by a Naat presented by Aqdas Hashmi.

Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division Aurangzeb Khan Khichi was the chief guest, while Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar, Chairperson of the National Assembly Standing Committee on National Heritage and Culture Division, attended as the guest of honour.

The session was moderated by Sultan Nasir, while Iftikhar Arif and Atta-ul-Haq Qasmi delivered keynote addresses.

In her welcome address, Chairperson of the Academy of Letters Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Najeeba Arif, said the “Nasl-e-Nau Adabi Mela” was not merely a literary event but an effective platform for connecting young people with creative expression, intellectual dialogue and literary activities.

She said the festival provided opportunities for interaction, harmony and intellectual exchange among young people belonging to different regions of the country. She highlighted the ongoing literary activities of the Academy of Letters Pakistan, the achievements of her three-year tenure and the Academy’s overall performance over the past 50 years.

She also outlined various initiatives and projects, including efforts to establish a Museum of Pakistan’s Regional Languages, the addition of two new awards to the annual national awards, installation of a lift in the Academy’s main building, a 10-day residential programme, and the weekly literary session “Chai, Baatain aur Kitaabain.” She said she had made every possible effort during

her tenure to make the Academy a more active and effective literary institution.

Welcoming the young male and female participants from different parts of the country, she said certificates would be awarded to those demonstrating outstanding performance at the conclusion of the three-day event.

Delivering his keynote address, Iftikhar Arif said the third “Nasl-e-Nau Adabi Mela” was not merely a formal literary activity but a meaningful and effective platform for creativity, thought and dialogue.

Appreciating the literary services of the Academy under the leadership of Dr. Najeeba Arif, he said the Academy of Letters Pakistan, as a literary institution, was performing better than literary institutions in many parts of the world.

Pakistan Ulema Council to observe August 14 as ‘Day of Independence, Thanksgiving, Unity of Ummah’

APP- ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi announced that the Pakistan Ulema Council and its allied religious organizations would observe August 14 as ‘Day of Independence, Thanksgiving and Unity of Ummah’, to commemorate the recently signed Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye.

In a video message on Tuesday, Ashrafi said the historic agreement, signed in Makkah by Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince, Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, had generated a wave of happiness across the Muslim world and presented a practical expression of unity and solidarity among the Ummah.

He said the trilateral agreement was signed following an initiative associated with the leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and represented a significant step towards strengthening cooperation and unity among Muslim countries.

4m rare manuscripts, records digitized under NAP modernization drive

APP- ISLAMABAD: The federal government has digitized around 4 million historical records under a comprehensive modernization programme of the National Archives of Pakistan (NAP).

According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the initiative is being carried out under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) project titled “Strengthening & Modernizing National Archives of Pakistan.”

Besides the document digitization, the project has also restored 50,000 historical records to ensure their long-term protection.

The digitization of 2.7 million pages of rare books, manuscripts, newspapers, and other valuable documents has already been completed, marking significant progress in the country’s transition towards digital preservation of historical records. To further strengthen the initiative, the government is establishing a dedicated IT Wing in the National Archives. Photographs, microfilm rolls, audio and video recordings, and other archival holdings have already been digitized.

The modernization programme will enhance e-governance by making archival records more accessible to researchers, policymakers and the public, while also protecting irreplaceable historical documents from physical deterioration and natural disasters.

Digital media can help build informed, responsible society: MoS/SAPM Fahd Haroon



APP- ISLAMABAD: Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media (SAPM) Fahd Haroon said that digital media has immense potential to empower youth, promote innovation and help build a more informed, responsible and connected society.

Addressing a gathering at the first meeting of August of the Rotary Club of Islamabad Metropolitan (RCIM) in Islamabad, he said the digital revolution had created unprecedented opportunities for Pakistan’s young population, enabling them to acquire skills, access global knowledge, showcase their talent and connect with economic opportunities beyond geographical boundaries.

He said smartphones had evolved from being merely communication tools into classrooms, workplaces, marketplaces and news platforms, providing young people with access to education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

“Digital media can provide our youth

with a powerful platform to learn new skills, access global knowledge, showcase their talent, build businesses and connect with opportunities beyond geographical boundaries,” he said.

The SAPM said a young person sitting in any part of Pakistan could now learn from leading institutions and experts in Pakistan and around the world, work for companies locally or internationally, launch a startup, pursue freelancing opportunities and introduce Pakistani creativity and innovation to the global audience.

However, he stressed that the role of digital media extended beyond economic opportunities, as it could also contribute to strengthening social cohesion and promoting informed national discourse.

He urged young people to use digital platforms not only for consuming content but also for creating knowledge, promoting innovation, highlighting positive stories about Pakistan and contributing constructively to society.

Sindh motorway, highway projects get Rs49.3bn in FY27

APP- ISLAMABAD: Sindh’s motorway and highway infrastructure is set for a major boost in the current financial year, with Rs49.305 billion earmarked for key projects, including the Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway and rehabilitation of the flood-damaged N-5 corridor.

According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the Sindh component of the National Highway Authority’s Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2026-27 includes nine motorway and highway projects with a combined approved PC-I cost of Rs594.977 billion.

Cumulative expenditure on these schemes stood at Rs122.508 billion by June 2026, while their remaining throw-forward liability was recorded at Rs472.469 billion as of July 1, 2026. The FY27 allocation comprises Rs8.055 billion in local funding and Rs41.25 billion in foreign assistance. The biggest share, Rs30 billion, has been earmarked for the 306-kilometre Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway, a six-lane.



Houses and infrastructure in the ‘Dalan’ area of Naltar Valley have collapsed or sustained severe damage due to recent flash floods, while affected residents await government assistance.

MoITT, Meta, launch Small Business Growth Academy in Pakistan

APP- ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), in partnership with Meta, launched the Small Business Growth Academy in Pakistan, a landmark initiative aimed at accelerating the digital transformation of small and medium-sized businesses and enabling entrepreneurs to harness digital and AI-enabled technologies for growth, innovation and access to domestic and international markets.

The initiative is aligned with the Government’s vision of building an inclusive, digitally empowered economy in which businesses—particularly small enterprises and women-led ventures—can leverage technology to enhance productivity, expand their customer base and compete more effectively in the global digital marketplace.

The Small Business Growth



Academy will provide practical, market-oriented training on Meta’s digital platforms and AI-enabled tools.

The programme will be delivered in collaboration with Meta, implemented by AtomCamp, and supported by Ignite National Technology Fund, Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), Pakistan

Software Export Board (PSEB), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), and DialZero.

The programme aims to reach more than 1,000 small businesses across Pakistan through in-person and virtual workshops, structured learning modules and partner-led training.

Federal Minister hails new National Housing Policy 2026 as historic milestone

APP- ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada termed the new approved National Housing Policy 2026 a significant achievement and a historic milestone for the Ministry, particularly as Pakistan had been without an updated national housing policy for almost a quarter of a century.

Federal Minister and the Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Works, congratulated the Policy & Planning Wing of the Ministry for its dedicated efforts in preparing the policy document. They appreciated the team’s extensive work and emphasized that efforts had been made to take all major stakeholders on board during the policy formulation process. Federal Cabinet in its last meeting has approved the National Housing Policy 2026, marking a major milestone

for Pakistan’s housing and urban development sector. The approval comes after nearly 25 years, as the country’s previous National Housing Policy was approved in 2001. The approval of the National Housing Policy 2026 fulfills a long-standing need for a comprehensive national framework to provide clear strategic direction for the development of the housing and urban planning sectors. The policy has been formulated to address the diverse and evolving challenges of housing and urban development and to provide a coordinated, inclusive and sustainable approach for the future. The overarching vision of the policy is to promote adequate, affordable and sustainable housing for all, while ensuring improved access to housing opportunities, basic amenities and supporting infrastructure.



Vendors display national flags, badges and other Independence Day-themed items as the nation prepares to celebrate Independence Day with patriotic fervor in the provincial capital



ایف آئی آر رپورٹ

قائد اعظم کے 11 اگست کے خطاب کی روشنی میں اقلیتوں کو آئین پاکستان میں مساوی حقوق حاصل ہیں

تمام شہریوں کو بلا تفریق مذہب قدم سے قدم ملا کر ملک کو تعمیر و ترقی و خوشحالی سے ہمکنار کرنا ہے، وزیر اعظم محمد شہباز شریف

سعودی فرمانروا شاہ سلمان بن عبدالعزیز کا محمد بن سلمان، ترک
صدر اردوان اور وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف کو خراج تحسین

پاکستان کے وزیر داخلہ محسن نقوی تہران پہنچ گئے، باب المندب
کے قریب بحری جہاز پر حملے میں پاکستانی سمیت دو ہلاک

صدر مملکت آصف زرداری نے جنرل عامر رضا کو نشان امتیاز ملٹری سے نوازا دیا

جعلی میکسیکن ویز اور لوپرو فائل ایساٹلم: برازیل سے ڈیپورٹ
مسافر کے خلاف ایف آئی اے کا مقدمہ درج

وزیر اعظم محمد شہباز شریف نے قیام پاکستان سے تعمیر پاکستان تک زندگی کے ہر شعبے میں مسلمانوں کے شانہ بشانہ اقلیتوں کے کردار کو خراج تحسین پیش کرتے ہوئے کہا ہے کہ پاکستان میں بسنے والے تمام شہریوں نے بلا تفریق مذہب مل کر قدم سے قدم ملا کر ملک کو تعمیر و ترقی سے ہمکنار کرنا ہے، قائد اعظم محمد علی جناح کے فرمان کے مطابق آئین پاکستان میں تمام پاکستانیوں کو مساوی حقوق حاصل ہیں۔ وہ مشکل کو یہاں وزیر اعظم آفس میں مذہبی اقلیتوں کے قومی دن کی مناسبت سے منعقدہ تقریب سے مہمان خصوصی کی حیثیت سے خطاب کر رہے تھے۔ تقریب میں وفاقی وزراء، ارکان اسمبلی اور ملک بھر سے مختلف اقلیتی برادریوں سے تعلق رکھنے والی نمایاں شخصیات شریک تھیں۔

وزیر اعظم نے کہا کہ 11 اگست کو پاکستان میں بسنے والی اقلیتوں کے قومی دن کے طور پر منایا جاتا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ مسیحی، ہندو، سکھ اور پارسی کیونٹی سمیت تمام اقلیتوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے بھائیوں اور بہنوں کا ہمارے دل میں بہت احترام ہے، اقلیتوں نے تحریک پاکستان میں قائد اعظم کا ساتھ دے کر تعمیر کردار ادا کیا جو تاریخ کا حصہ ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ قائد اعظم کے 11 اگست کے خطاب کی روشنی میں اقلیتوں کو آئین پاکستان میں مساوی حقوق حاصل ہیں۔ وزیر اعظم نے کہا کہ اقلیتی برادریوں نے پاکستان کی تعمیر و ترقی کے لئے اپنا بھرپور کردار ادا کیا، تعلیم کے میدان میں کچھن کیونٹی کی خدمات کی ستائش کرتے ہوئے انسانی ہوگی۔ اس سلسلے میں وزیر اعظم نے اپنی اور اپنے بہن بھائیوں کی سستی سکولوں میں ابتدائی تعلیم کا بھی ذکر کیا اور یاد دلایا کہ تعلیمی شعبے میں ان کی نمایاں خدمات ہیں۔ وزیر اعظم نے سینیل پوری جیش اسے آرکائیو، جوگندر ناتھ منڈل، ایس ایل گہر اور ایس بی سنگھ سمیت مختلف اقلیتی برادریوں سے تعلق رکھنے والی نمایاں قومی شخصیات کا ذکر کرتے ہوئے کہا کہ ان کی خدمات سے کون واقف نہیں۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ اقلیتوں نے جنگوں اور قومی تعمیر کے ہر میدان میں بے جا خدمات سر انجام دیں، ملکی دفاع کے لئے بھی ان کی قربانیاں ناقابل فراموش اور دہشت گردی کے خلاف جنگ میں انہوں نے بھی اپنی جانوں کے نذرانے پیش کیے ہیں۔ وزیر اعظم نے کہا کہ ہم سب نے پاکستان کی ترقی و خوشحالی کے لئے مل کر کام کرنا ہے، نوجوانوں کو جدید علوم سے آراستہ کر کے پاکستان کو دنیا میں نمایاں کرنا ہے۔

ایف آئی اے کے قیام کا مقصد درج کیا گیا ہے۔ مسافر 09 اگست 2026ء کو غیر ملکی ایئر لائن کی فلائٹ (QR-632) کے ذریعے برازیل سے اسلام آباد، ایئر پورٹ پہنچا تھا، جس کی ڈیپوٹیشن کی وجہ ”لوپرو فائل ایساٹلم سیکر“ درج تھی۔ آئی بی ایم ایس ریکارڈ کی جانچ پڑتال سے معلوم ہوا کہ ملزم 17 مئی 2026ء کو لاہور ایئر پورٹ سے ورت ویز سے براہ ویشیاردانہ ہوا تھا۔ ابتدائی تفتیش کے دوران ملزم نے اکتشاف کیا کہ آئی بی ایم ایس ریکارڈ اور پھر وہاں سے سعودی عرب کا ویزا حاصل کیا۔ بعد ازاں سعودی عرب سے میکسیکو کا ویزا لے کر برازیل پہنچا، جہاں ایک روزہ ٹرانزٹ قیام کی بنیاد پر قانون شکنی پر برازیلی حکام نے اسے گرفتار کر کے امریکی تفتیش جاری ہے۔



صدر آصف علی زرداری نے 31 جولائی کو جنرل عامر رضا کو نشان امتیاز (ملٹری) دینے کی منظوری دی تھی۔ جنرل عامر رضا کو رواں سال جولائی میں وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف کے اعلان کے مطابق چار ستارہ جنرل کے عہدے پر ترقی دے کر نیشنل اسٹریٹجک کمانڈر کا مندر کر دیا گیا تھا۔ نیشنل اسٹریٹجک کمانڈر کے کمانڈر کا عہدہ گزشتہ سال 27 دسمبر آئینی ترمیم کے تحت تشکیل دیا گیا، جس کے نتیجے میں معمری کمانڈر کے نظام میں اہم تبدیلیاں کی گئیں۔ اس نئے عہدے کو چیئر مین جوائنٹ چیفس آف اسٹاف کمیٹی کے خاتمے کے بعد اسٹریٹجک اور جوہری امور سے متعلق ذمہ دار بن سنبھالنے کے لیے قائم کیا گیا۔ جنرل عامر رضا اس سے قبل بال امتیاز (ملٹری) اور ستارہ کمانڈر بھی حاصل کر چکے ہیں۔ نئی ذمہ داری سنبھالنے سے قبل جنرل عامر رضا چیف آف جرنل اسٹاف کی عہدے پر فائز تھے، جو پاک فوج کی اہم ترین آفیشل ذمہ داریوں میں شمار ہوتا ہے۔ اس حیثیت میں انہوں نے 27 دسمبر آئینی ترمیم کے نتیجے میں ہونے والی تبدیلیاں اور گزشتہ سال بھارت کے ساتھ ہونے والی کشیدگی کے بعد فوجی ڈھانچے میں کی جانے والی تنظیم نو کے عمل کی نگرانی کی۔ اسی عرصے میں آرمی راکٹ فورس کمانڈر کے تحت مقدمہ درج کیا گیا ہے۔ مسافر 09 اگست 2026ء کو غیر ملکی ایئر لائن کی فلائٹ (QR-632) کے ذریعے برازیل سے اسلام آباد، ایئر پورٹ پہنچا تھا، جس کی ڈیپوٹیشن کی وجہ ”لوپرو فائل ایساٹلم سیکر“ درج تھی۔ آئی بی ایم ایس ریکارڈ کی جانچ پڑتال سے معلوم ہوا کہ ملزم 17 مئی 2026ء کو لاہور ایئر پورٹ سے ورت ویز سے براہ ویشیاردانہ ہوا تھا۔ ابتدائی تفتیش کے دوران ملزم نے اکتشاف کیا کہ آئی بی ایم ایس ریکارڈ اور پھر وہاں سے سعودی عرب کا ویزا حاصل کیا۔ بعد ازاں سعودی عرب سے میکسیکو کا ویزا لے کر برازیل پہنچا، جہاں ایک روزہ ٹرانزٹ قیام کی بنیاد پر قانون شکنی پر برازیلی حکام نے اسے گرفتار کر کے امریکی تفتیش جاری ہے۔

پاکستانی حکومت کا پیغام لے کر تہران گئے ہیں اور یہ دورہ ایران اور امریکہ کے درمیان مذاکرات کی بحالی کی کوششوں کا حصہ ہے۔ برطانوی بحری سامتی کینی وینکارڈ نے کہا ہے کہ آبنائے باب المندب کے قریب بحری جہاز پر حملے میں کم از کم دو افراد ہلاک ہو گئے ہیں۔ وینکارڈ کینی کے مطابق ہلاک ہونے والوں میں حملے کے دو ارکان، ایک پاکستانی اور ایک انڈونیشی شری شامل ہیں۔ کینی کا کہنا ہے کہ حملے میں چار افراد زخمی بھی ہوئے ہیں، جن میں تین پاکستانی اور ایک انڈونیشی شری شامل ہے۔ کینی نے مزید کہا: ”حملے کے بعد جہاز کی مدد کے لیے نیٹو بھی بھیجی، تاہم اس پر بھی فائرنگ کی گئی، جس کے نتیجے میں ایک اور شخص ہلاک یا زخمی ہو گیا۔“ خبر رساں ادارے اسے ایف بی سی کے مطابق بحری جہاز پر حملہ ہو گیا ہے۔ ایف بی سی نے کینی کوٹ گارڈ

مذاکرات کو مزید مضبوط بنانے کے عزم کا بھی اعادہ کیا گیا۔ پاکستان کے وزیر داخلہ محسن نقوی ایرانی حکام سے ملاقاتوں کے لیے تہران پہنچ گئے ہیں، جہاں ایرانی وزیر داخلہ سکندر موسوی نے ان کا استقبال کیا۔ ایرانی سرکاری خبر رساں ادارے ارناس کے مطابق محسن نقوی کی ایرانی وزیر خارجہ عباس عراقچی سے بھی ملاقات ہوئی۔ ارناس کا کہنا ہے کہ محسن نقوی اپنے دورے کے دوران ایرانی وزیر داخلہ سکندر موسوی سے دو طرفہ تعلقات اور دونوں ممالک کی باہمی دلچسپی کے امور پر بات چیت کریں گے۔ ارناس نے ایرانی وزارت داخلہ کے حوالے سے بتایا کہ ملاقات میں پاکستان اور ایران کے درمیان تعاون سمیت مختلف مشترکہ موضوعات پر تبادلہ خیال متوقع ہے۔ دوسری جانب پاکستانی وزارت داخلہ کے ایک اہلکار نے بتایا کہ محسن نقوی

اس، ترقی اور خوشحالی کو فروغ دینے کیلئے ہے۔ انہوں نے حملے میں امن، استحکام اور ترقی کیلئے پاکستان کے عزم کا بھی اعادہ کیا۔ تقریب میں وزیر اعظم محمد شہباز شریف نے ملک کے لئے نمایاں خدمات سر انجام دینے والی اقلیتی برادری کی شخصیات کو ایوارڈز اور اعزازات سے بھی نوازا۔ سعودی فرمانروا شاہ سلمان بن عبدالعزیز نے کہ میں منعقدہ مشترکہ دفاعی سربراہی اجلاس میں کوششوں پر ولی عہد شہزادہ محمد بن سلمان، ترک صدر رجب طیب اردوان اور وزیر اعظم محمد شہباز شریف کا شکریہ ادا کیا ہے۔ شاہ سلمان نے کہا کہ مکہ مشرقی دفاعی سربراہی اجلاس نے سعودی عرب، ترک اور پاکستان کے درمیان گہرے تاریخی تعلقات اور باہمی روابط کی اہمیت کو اجاگر کیا۔ سعودی فرمانروا نے کہا کہ مکہ مشرقی دفاعی سربراہی اجلاس میں اسلامی یکجہتی کے فروغ اور تینوں ممالک کے مشترکہ ترقیاتی

میدان میں بے جا خدمات سر انجام دیں، ملکی دفاع کے لئے بھی ان کی قربانیاں ناقابل فراموش اور دہشت گردی کے خلاف جنگ میں انہوں نے بھی اپنی جانوں کے نذرانے پیش کیے ہیں۔ وزیر اعظم نے کہا کہ ہم سب نے پاکستان کی ترقی و خوشحالی کے لئے مل کر کام کرنا ہے، نوجوانوں کو جدید علوم سے آراستہ کر کے پاکستان کو دنیا میں نمایاں کرنا ہے۔ وزیر اعظم نے کہا کہ قیام پاکستان سے تعمیر پاکستان تک ہر شعبے میں اقلیتی برادری کا کردار قابل ستائش ہے اور ہم سب نے مل کر ملک کو تعمیر و ترقی و خوشحالی سے ہم کنار کرنا ہے۔ وزیر اعظم نے کہا کہ قیام پاکستان کے مقاصد کو ذہن میں رکھتے ہوئے آگے بڑھنا اور پاکستان کو اقوام عالم میں اس کا مقام دلانا ہے۔ وزیر اعظم نے کہا کہ سعودی عرب، پاکستان، ترکیہ کے مابین مکہ دفاعی معاہدہ کسی ملک کے خلاف نہیں، یہ

West Indies face World Cup qualifier again



SPORTS DESK, Two-time champions West Indies will have to fight their way into the 2027 ODI World Cup through the Qualifier after failing to secure automatic qualification for the third consecutive edition.

The Caribbean side, currently ranked 10th in the ICC ODI rankings, are unable to break into the automatic qualification places before the Sept. 30 cut-off, despite having two matches against India still to play.

Under the revised qualification system, the top eight teams in the ICC ODI rankings as of Sept. 30, excluding hosts South Africa and Zimbabwe, will qualify directly for the 2027 World Cup.

Afghanistan secured the final automatic qualification berth after defeating Ireland

in Belfast, joining defending champions Australia, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, England and Bangladesh in the main tournament. South Africa and Zimbabwe will qualify automatically as co-hosts.

For West Indies, however, the route to the World Cup will once again be more complicated.

Even two victories over India in their remaining ODIs would not be enough to move the Caribbean side into the top eight, leaving them with no option but to enter the World Cup Qualifier scheduled for February. The situation will bring back difficult memories for West Indies, who were forced to take the qualifying route for the 2023 World Cup as well. Their campaign in Zimbabwe ended in disappoint-

ment when they finished fifth in the Super Six stage and failed to secure a place in the tournament. It marked the first time in their history that West Indies failed to qualify for an ODI World Cup.

The decline in their 50-over fortunes also cost them a place in the 2025 Champions Trophy. Their last appearance in that tournament came in 2013.

West Indies will now have another chance to revive their World Cup hopes through the expanded qualification pathway. The winner of the 2027 World Cup Qualifier, whose host is yet to be announced, will secure direct passage to the second round of the World Cup. The teams finishing second, third and fourth will then compete in a Super Series, with the winner of the tri-series also advancing

to the second round. The revised system, however, has attracted criticism from Associate-member nations, with concerns that the pathway provides limited opportunities for emerging teams to reach the global stage. The World Cup Qualifier will feature 10 teams: the two lowest-ranked non-host Full Members as of Sept. 30, currently Ireland and West Indies; the top four teams from Cricket World Cup League 2; and the top four sides emerging from the World Cup Qualifier Playoff. The playoff itself will feature the bottom four teams from League 2 and four teams from the Challenge League, the third tier of the qualification structure. Its exact format is yet to be confirmed, but four teams will advance from the playoff to the World Cup Qualifier.

Pakistan step up England Test preparations

SPORTS DESK, Pakistan's Test squad stepped up preparations for their upcoming series against England with a training session at Kent County Cricket Club in Beckenham on Tuesday.



The players took part in batting and bowling net sessions as the team management focused on adapting to English conditions ahead of the three-Test series.

Former captain and the seasoned opening batsman Shan Masood, who has been recovering from an injury, also joined the training session and did batting under the supervision of the team's medical staff.

Masood's participation will be closely monitored by the medical team as Pakistan assess his fitness ahead of the series. His return to batting provides an encouraging sign for the squad as preparations gather pace.

The players also took part in physical drills and fielding exercises during the session, with the coaching staff working on fitness, sharpness and match readiness.

Pakistan will next face an England Select XI in a four-day warm-up match starting on August 12. The game will provide the squad with an opportunity to acclimatise to local conditions and allow the team management to assess players ahead of the opening Test.

Pakistan names Asian Games shooting squad

SPORTS DESK, KARACHI: Pakistan has finalised an 11-member shooting contingent, including eight shooters and three officials, for the Asian Games slated to be held in Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4.

The selected shooters are Usman Chand and Imam Haroon in skeet, Farrukh Nadeem in trap, Ghulam Mustafa Bashir, Mohammad Umar and Mohammad Shabbir in rapid-fire, and Kishmala Talat and Rabia Kabir in pistol.

Russian coach Vladimir Kovalenko will serve as head coach, while Commander Fazal-ul-Bari has been appointed manager. National Rifle Association of Pakistan (NRAP) senior official and coach Razi Ahmed Khan said an additional shooter could still be added to the final list. "Yes, we have also sent a reserve list and an addition can be made to it," Razi told The Express Tribune. The shooting squad is currently preparing in Karachi and Jhelum.

Aston Villa gear up for PSG test



SPORTS DESK, UEFA Champions League winners Paris Saint-Germain will lock horns with UEFA Europa League champions Aston Villa on Wednesday(today) in the UEFA Super Cup at StadionSalzburg in Austria.

Aston Villa manager Unai Emery says his side are entering a "new era" as they prepare to face Paris Saint-Germain in the 2026 UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday.

Villa qualified for the showpiece after winning the UEFA Europa League in May, while Paris arrive as Champions League winners, setting up a meeting between two of Europe's most successful sides from last season.

For Emery, the fixture represents another opportunity for Aston Villa to compete for major silverware after their impressive progress since his

[best] team in the world now and another team we can compare [ourselves] with."

Villa have already experienced the disappointment of facing Paris in Europe. The sides met in the Champions League quarter-finals last season, with Paris edging a closely contested tie 5-4 on aggregate. That experience, however, has given Emery confidence that his team can compete with the European champions. "In Paris, we lost 3-1, and we played a good match but we were not protagonists like in the second match," Emery said.

"In the second leg, we exploited our potential in attack, having some really good moments to come back [in the tie] and being really dominant against the best team. In the end, we didn't achieve it.

"To play against a team like PSG and feel that we could achieve the level they had, it was very important for our belief. We are going to try to use the same message in the dressing room and we're going to prepare for the game thinking that we can have our chances by competing in the best way." Villa's European resurgence has been rapid. Under Emery, they reached the Conference League semi-finals in 2024, progressed to the Champions League quarter-finals in 2025 and then won the Europa League. Now they have the chance to claim another major European honour. Villa previously won the UEFA Super Cup in 1983 against Barcelona and will be competing in the competition for only the second time. Emery, meanwhile, has previous experience of the fixture with Villarreal and Sevilla.



Pakistan Greens cricket fielders celebrate after dismissing a Pakistan Whites batter during the National Champions Cup 2026-27 match at Multan Cricket Stadium

Somali referee 'proud' to oversee Super Cup

SPORTS DESK, SALZBURG: Somali referee Omar Artan, who was denied the chance to referee at the World Cup after being refused entry to the United States, will take charge of the UEFA Super Cup between Paris Saint-Germain and Aston Villa on Wednesday.

Before the World Cup started in June, the 34-year-old referee unwittingly found himself in the media spotlight after being turned away on arrival at Miami International Airport, despite being part of the panel of referees selected by FIFA for the tournament.

"It was a very tough period," Artan said in an interview published on the



UEFA website.

"A lot of people have sympathy for me, because when someone has been working a lot of years and is supposed to do something, and then can't do it, it's very challenging."

A US State Department official told AFP that the referee was "associated

with suspected members of terrorist organizations", therefore "making the traveler ineligible for admission to the United States".

These allegations were rejected by the referee and caused outrage in Somalia, where Artan had been welcomed as a hero on his return.

"It is unfortunate what happened to the referee from Somalia," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said at the time, adding: "We don't control everything." In response, UEFA, the governing body of European football, announced that Artan would referee the UEFA Super Cup, which pits Champions League winners PSG against the Europa League winners Aston Villa.



Diana Shnaider of Russia returns the ball during the women's singles quarterfinal match between Diana Shnaider of Russia and Iga Swiatek of Poland at the 2026 National Bank Open tennis tournament in Toronto, Canada,

S Africa name squad for Namibia tour

SPORTS DESK, JOHANNESBURG: South Africa named spinner Bjorn Fortuin as captain of their Twenty20 side to take on neighbours Namibia and Zimbabwe in a tri-series in Windhoek this month, and a three-game one-day international series.

The same squad will play the T20 series from August 28 to September 6 at the Namibia Cricket Ground and three ODIs against Namibia.

All-rounders Duan Jansen, the twin brother of test bowler Marco Jansen, and Eathan Bosch, whose elder brother Corbin has played in all three formats for South Africa, both received a first call-up.

"The idea is to give some of the younger players some international experience," coach Shukri Conrad told a virtual press conference on Tuesday, pointing at a busy schedule with tours from Australia, Bangladesh and England later in the year as a reason to rest some of the more experienced players. Batters Connor Esterhuizen and Jordan Hermann, along with seamer Nqobani Mokoena, got their first ODI call-ups. "We've selected one squad for both series as we feel we have all departments well covered and it provides a great opportunity for players to build on their international caps," Conrad added. Squad: Bjorn Fortuin



(captain, Lions), Eathan Bosch, Dewald Breviss (both Titans), Tony de Zorzi (Western Province), Connor Esterhuizen (Lions), Jordan Hermann (Warriors), Rubin Hermann (North West Dragons), Duan Jansen (Titans), Kwena Maphaka (Lions), Nqobani Mokoena (Dolphins), Nqaba Peter (Lions), Lhuan-dré Pretorius (Titans).



Pakistan and United States Renew Landmark Fulbright-HEC Partnership to advance Higher Education and Human Capital Development

Chinese Delegation Visits CPEC Secretariat for Industrial Cooperation

APP- ISLAMABAD: A high-level Chinese delegation led by Sun Dongsheng, Senior Advisor, Economic Affairs Press, visited the CPEC Secretariat here on Tuesday for consultations on expanding business-to-business (B2B) and industrial cooperation under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0).

The delegation held detailed consultations with Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, senior policymakers and development experts on advancing practical economic cooperation and strengthening the implementation of CPEC 2.0, a news release said.

The visit marked an important engagement aimed at translating CPEC 2.0 from a predominantly infrastructure-focused framework into a platform for industrial-



zation, productivity, innovation and deeper enterprise-to-enterprise partnerships. During the consultations, Ahsan Iqbal apprised the Chinese delegation of Pakistan's national economic transformation agenda under URAAN Pakistan and

proposed active collaboration with Chinese counterparts of the National Center of New Manufacturing to benefit from China's experience in innovation, automation and robotics for Industrial Revolution 4.0 and 5.0. The minister said

Pakistan's biggest economic challenge was its narrow export base, which had caused several economic take-offs to lose momentum. He said the government's top priority was to transform Pakistan's productive sectors into engines of exports, adding that China had helped Pakistan overcome its energy deficit under CPEC Phase I and Pakistan now looked towards CPEC 2.0 to help overcome its export deficit. The minister emphasized the need to facilitate greater Pakistani exports to China, which imports nearly \$2.6 trillion annually, while Pakistan's share remained around \$3 billion. He said CPEC 2.0 was geared towards B2B cooperation and noted that Pakistani and Chinese enterprises had recently entered into regional agreements in industrial, agricultural and mining sectors.

Muslim countries need flexible strategic framework to enhance collective security: Brig. (R) Abdul Rahman



APP- ISLAMABAD: A book, 'Muslim NATO' written by Brig. (ret'd) Abdul Rahman Bilal (Sj) was unveiled at Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) here on Tuesday.

The timely compilation calls for developing a flexible and multi-layered strategic framework among Muslim-majority countries to enhance collective security, interoperability and regional stability, saying the changing global order has created strategic space for middle powers to play a greater role.

Speaking at the launch of his book, Brig. (ret'd) Abdul Rahman Bilal (Sj) said the international system was moving from a unipolar order towards multipolarity, while the rise of middle powers was creating new strategic opportunities.

Muslim countries need flexible strategic framework to enhance collective security: Brig. (R) Abdul

Rahman

He said Muslim countries had so far not been able to optimally mobilize their collective potential, warranting a comprehensive assessment of the global strategic environment, geography, strategic chokepoints and socio-economic factors.

The author said the book examined the global and regional environment, various forms of strategic alignment and the concept of a possible Islamic alliance.

He noted that strategic partnerships were no longer limited to a binary choice between formal alliances and non-alignment, as states could adopt multiple forms of cooperation depending on their strategic requirements and the level of commitment involved.

Brigadier (R) Bilal cited NATO as an example of a formal defence alliance, highlighting Article 5 as its core principle, along with extensive

standardization and interoperability mechanisms.

He proposed that Muslim countries explore different forms of strategic cooperation, ranging from formal defence arrangements and supportive interventions to economic and diplomatic instruments and de-escalation mechanisms such as ceasefire arrangements and crisis-management channels.

The author stressed that any proposed Islamic alliance should avoid rigid or exclusionary thinking and instead adopt a flexible framework with multiple avenues for participation based on varying degrees of operational cooperation.

He also proposed establishing hotlines with other countries and international organizations to help prevent crises and facilitate timely communication during periods of tension.

Brigadier Bilal identified five pathways for translating the concept of a strategic alliance into practical reality: development of alliances, human resource development, infrastructure and connectivity development, joint military-industrial complex development, and enhanced interoperability through intelligence sharing and logistics cooperation.

He said human resource development could create a common talent pool, while infrastructure development should focus on interconnected defence and military universities, border infrastructure and regional connectivity.



Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi presents the Kamal-e-Fun Award to renowned poet Iftikhar Arif during the third "Nasl-e-Nau Adabi Mela" at the Pakistan Academy of Letters

Pakistan and US renew landmark Fulbright-HEC partnership to advance higher education and human capital development

APP- ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan and the United States have renewed their longstanding partnership in higher education through a new five-year agreement between the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), reaffirming their shared commitment to academic excellence, human capital development, and international educational cooperation.

The Ministry of Education and Professional Training welcomes the renewed agreement, which will cover the period from Financial Year 2026-27 through Financial Year 2031-32 and encompass the Fulbright Master's and PhD programmes, Visiting Scholar Programme for post-doctoral scholars, Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Programme, and Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Programme.

Under the agreement, the programme has set a target of supporting 66 PhD scholars over the five-year period, in addition to opportunities provided through the other programme streams.

The initiative will continue to offer Pakistani scholars and academics opportunities to pursue advanced



education, undertake research, strengthen professional expertise, and contribute to Pakistan's socio-economic development upon their return. As part of the financial commitment, HEC will provide at least USD 4.54 million annually, with the total funding commitment capped at PKR 6.48 billion over the five-year period.

IGP Rizvi inspects Safe City expansion, pushes smarter tech-driven security monitoring

APP- ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Tuesday visited Safe City Islamabad to review ongoing construction work and operations of its various sections, directing officers to further strengthen security monitoring through the effective use of modern technology.

An ICT Police spokesperson told APP that the IGP Rizvi conducted a detailed inspection of the construction work underway at the Safe City facility and reviewed the functioning of different sections.

During the visit, Rizvi examined the technological infrastructure and security monitoring mechanisms

European Parliament's member meets Law Minister Azam Tarar

APP- ISLAMABAD: Member of the European Parliament (MEP), Ondrej Dostál on Tuesday called on Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar at the Ministry of Law,



Justice and Human Rights.

During the meeting, held here in a cordial atmosphere, the two sides discussed Pakistan-EU relations, matters of mutual interest, promotion of democratic values, parliamentary engagement, and issues relating to law, justice and human rights said a news release.

Islootees wait for a political voice of their own

APP- ISLAMABAD: Islamabad residents are anxiously waiting for a government of their own, like people in many developed capitals, where local issues are handled under a single elected and accountable political system. For decades, residents of the federal capital have been looking for a platform that can address their civic, political and administrative issues under one roof. In June 2026, a government committee led by Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal presented Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with the ICT Governance Model, proposing a 27-member elected assembly for Islamabad. The proposed body would have 21 directly elected members, five reserved seats for women and one for minorities. It would then choose its own Chief Minister or Mayor, a political leader who would finally be answerable to the people of the capital. Right now, Islamabad is run by three separate federal bodies, none of which answers directly to the public. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) builds and manages the city. The ICT Administration, headed by an unelected Chief Commissioner, handles law and order, revenue and the surrounding rural areas. The Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (MC) is supposed to be the municipal body, but has not held fresh elections since 2015. Since none of these institutions is elected by Islamabad's residents, even a local tax cannot be approved here. It has to go to the National Assembly because the capital has no legislature of its own. Ahsan Iqbal himself highlighted this gap while addressing residents at Fatima Jinnah Park, noting that Islamabad's population has crossed 2.4 million.



Advisor to the Finance Minister, Khurram Shehzad meeting with Pakistan Business Council (PBC) leadership at the Finance Division to discuss investment, privatization and economic reforms