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Achakzai as NA leader is a 'back-up' plan: PTI

Dar's Historic Dhaka Visit Opens New Chapter in Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations

Monitoring Desk:
DHAKA/ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, held a landmark meeting with Bangladesh's Chief Adviser.

Professor Muhammad Yunus, on Sunday during his two-day

official visit to Dhaka — the first by a Pakistani foreign minister in more than a decade.

The Foreign Office described the trip as a "milestone step forward" in strengthening relations between Islamabad and Dhaka.

which have seen renewed warmth following last year's political transition in Bangladesh.

The change of government in August 2024 paved the way for improved bilateral ties, with notable progress in trade, diplomacy, and regional engagement.

During his discussions with Yunus, Dar highlighted recent regional developments and emphasized the need for deeper cooperation across South Asia.

Six Agreements Signed to Boost Cooperation



Earlier, Dar met Bangladesh's Foreign Adviser Toubid Hossain, where the two sides held delegation-level talks and oversaw the signing of six agreements across diverse sectors.

Visa abolition for diplomatic and official passport holders of both countries.

Formation of a Joint Working Group on Trade to promote economic partnership.

MoU between Foreign Service Academies of Pakistan and Bangladesh to enhance diplomatic training.

MoU between the Associated Press of Pa-

kistan and Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha to strengthen media collaboration.

MoU between think tanks — the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

A Cultural Exchange Programme to promote people-to-people ties.

According to the Foreign Office, these agreements will "institutionalize cooperation and provide a framework for long-term partnership in trade, economy, media, academia, and culture."

Renewed Bilateral Momentum

The visa-free entry for official passport holders had already been agreed in principle during Interior Minister Mubashir Qazi's visit to Dhaka last month.

Sunday's agreements further cement the intention of both countries to open new avenues for collaboration. Observers note that Dar's Dhaka visit marks a significant turning point in Pakistan-Bangladesh relations, laying the foundation for stronger political, economic, and cultural engagement in the years ahead.



Field Marshal Asim Munir Visits Turbat to Review Security, Development and Civil-Military Coordination in Balochistan

FIA Balochistan Arrests Three Notorious Human Traffickers Including Land Route Agent

NEWS DESK:
The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Headquarters Islamabad announced major operations in Balochistan, resulting in the arrest of three most-wanted human traffickers, including a land route agent and proclaimed offenders.

According to the FIA spokesperson, the arrested traffickers have been identified as Qurban Ali, Abdul Aleem alias Wawa, and Ozair. The operations were carried out in Quetta and Gwadar.

The spokesperson revealed that Ozair was involved in illegally sending Pakistani citizens to Iran via sea routes. He charged victims Rs. 15,000 per person for the illegal journey.



Meanwhile, Qurban Ali had been absconding for the last 12 years and was among FIA's most-wanted human smugglers. Abdul Aleem alias Wawa has also been on the wanted list since 2022.

The FIA further stated that the accused

lured citizens with false promises of foreign employment, collected millions of rupees, and then disappeared without fulfilling their promises. Several raids had previously been conducted to arrest them, but they managed to evade capture.

All three arrested suspects have been taken into custody for interrogation, and further investigations are underway. The FIA reaffirmed its commitment to intensify the crackdown against human traffickers in Pakistan.

Balochistan's Climate Fund – A Lifeline Against Growing Disasters

Syed Ali Shah Analysis:

Balochistan has taken a historic and timely step by establishing its first-ever

Climate Fund, a move that signals the province's recognition of the existential threat posed by global warming and climate change. In his recent meeting with British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti rightly underscored the urgency of mobilizing resources to safeguard communities from natural calamities that are growing in frequency and intensity.

Floods In Bunair

The tragic flash floods in the Bunair area of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa this month, which claimed precious human lives, are a grim reminder of Pakistan's extreme vulnerability.

The province sits on a fragile ecological and seismic zone — prone not only to floods but also to recurring droughts, earthquakes, and the looming threat of desertification. Each disaster further strains an already fragile infrastruc-

ture, displaces communities, and deepens poverty.

Stop Deforestation

The Climate Fund, if implemented transparently and effectively, has the potential to become a lifeline for millions. It can provide the financial base for disaster preparedness, early warning systems, reforestation, water management, and community resilience projects. Equally important, it can build trust between the government and people by showing that saved resources — like the Rs. 14 billion curtailed from non-developmental expenditures — are being invested in protecting lives and livelihoods.

The Battle Cannot Be Fought Alone

However, climate change is not a battle that Balochistan can fight alone. Partnerships with international allies, such as the United Kingdom, are essential in bringing technical expertise, innovative solutions, and funding support. Training local institutions, particularly in areas like disaster management and environmental governance, should be a top priority.

The provincial government's commitment to reforms in governance, education, and healthcare is commendable, but the climate emergency must remain at the center of its development agenda. Without

climate resilience, all other reforms risk being washed away by the next flood or crippled by the next drought.

Balochistan has shown leadership by creating this Climate Fund. The next step is to ensure that it does not become another underutilized policy initiative. Effective monitoring, independent oversight, and community involvement will be key to making it a success. In the face of global warming, every delay carries a cost in human lives and economic stability. The Chief Minister must now take all possible steps to translate the promise of the Climate Fund into tangible protections for the people of Balochistan.



parliament.

The party plans to avail all legal options to reverse the disqualification of National Assembly member Omar Ayub and Senate opposition leader Shibli Faraz, who were disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan in light of the May 9 sentences. Against this backdrop, the PTI chief earlier this week named Mr. Achakzai, who also heads the PTI-led opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan, and Senator Swati for these coveted roles. The decision, however, upset many in the party, and a debate ensued over why an outsider was picked to lead the PTI-dominated opposition.

NEWS DESK: Amid controversy surrounding the nomination of Mahmood Khan Achakzai — the head of the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party — and Senator Azam Swati as opposition leaders, PTI insiders have said these appointments will only proceed if former leaders Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz remain barred from



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A suspicious person or activity that can potentially lead to an act of terrorism

Anyone making suspicious claims of being an official of the government, security forces or intelligence agencies

Someone committing violence against an individual or group

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Home Department | Government of Balochistan

Field Marshal Asim Munir Visits Turbat to Review Security, Development and Civil-Military Coordination in Balochistan

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, HJ, Chief of Army Staff, visited Turbat, Balochistan.

The visit aimed to review the prevailing security situation.

COAS was given a comprehensive brief on the security dynamics including threat perspective and successful operations against Fatah al-Hindistan, ongoing development projects,



and efforts to enhance socio-economic conditions in southern Balochistan.

During interaction with CM Balochistan and representatives of the civil administration

he highlighted the need for good governance, infrastructure development, and the importance of inclusive, people-centric progress. He emphasized the significance of joint civil-

socio-economic development.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir reiterated the Pakistan Army's resolve to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Balochistan in their pursuit of peace, prosperity, and sustainable development.

During his interaction with troops, the COAS appreciated their high morale, operational readiness, and unflinching commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty.

He commended their role in ensuring peace and stability in the region under challenging circumstances. Upon his arrival, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir was received by Corps Commander Balochistan.

REKODI Q

Editor: Asim Khan

Reko Diq Copper-Gold Project: A Chance to Empower Local Talent

Editorial: The Reko Diq copper and gold project in Balochistan is more than just a mining venture—it is a national opportunity to empower local communities, boost Pakistan's economy, and ensure long-term regional development.

Company officials recently briefed the media in Quetta where they shared that production at Reko Diq is expected to begin by 2028. In the lead-up to this, around 7,500–8,000 temporary jobs will be created during the construction phase, while 4,500 permanent positions will be maintained once the mine becomes operational. In total, over 25,000 indirect job opportunities are expected to

arise through supply chains, vendors, and local contractors.

While these numbers are promising, the true success of Reko Diq depends on how deeply local talent is integrated into the project. Officials highlighted a positive initiative—Balochistan-based engineers recently received international mining training through Barrick Gold's development program.

These trained professionals have now returned to serve in the project.

This initiative must be expanded. There is a vast pool of youth in Reko Diq, Chagai, and surrounding districts with potential. With the right

technical education and training—both locally and abroad—this local workforce can be transformed into the backbone of Pakistan's mineral economy.

The government and company must jointly ensure that investment in education, healthcare, and connectivity becomes part of the project's long-term goals.

Training centers, scholarships, and technical institutes should be prioritized in Balochistan. Reko Diq is a national asset, but its real value will only be realized when the people of Balochistan are treated as equal stakeholders—not just as workers, but as partners in progress.

By Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan

Taliban: military movement or a political force?

Taliban's first conquest of Afghanistan came in 1996 when, as a military movement, Taliban stormed Kabul, the capital. The conquest resulted in the first Taliban rule of Afghanistan which lasted for almost 5 years from 1996–2001. After the US military intervention in Afghanistan in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the Taliban were removed from power. They had no political role to play in Afghanistan until their return to power in August 2021. It is in this gap of almost 20 years that the world treated the Taliban only as a militant organisation and a rogue military outfit that had no role to play in Afghan politics.

Did the world miss the opportunity to engage with the Taliban? Wouldn't the world be different if the Taliban were politically engaged during that period? Could such a world assist in transition of the Taliban from a military movement to a political force? Ultimately, the US chose to directly engage with the Taliban movement and created the circumstances for the Taliban's return to power in August 2021. The lost opportunity of dealing with the Taliban for 20 years may be considered a big mistake. After being removed from power in 2001, the Taliban were willing to surrender, yet they were deprived of this opportunity and with it the opportunity to become part of any political process in Afghanistan.

The political consequence of this mistake was that the movement returned to power in 2021, with no political experience in the last 20 years that they were left out of Afghan politics. Today, the Taliban are considered a political force, but only a force that the world is struggling to deal with, as it is considered a repressive regime that rules over 40 million Afghans in a strategically vital area of Eurasia.

No wonder Russia has recognised the Taliban government, and China is engaged with both the Taliban and Pakistan to work out a trilateral engagement.

Taliban's re-conquest of Afghanistan came at a time when Iran and Pakistan, with whom it shares a long border, were experiencing turmoil at home. Iran fought a short war of 12 days imposed by the US and its ally Israel. Pakistan, on the other hand, faced military aggression by India and fought a short war of four days.

Pakistan also faced an upsurge in terrorist attacks, deepening economic troubles, rising inflation and growing dependence on IMF loans. Yet, both Pakistan and Iran enjoyed a great degree of influence in Afghanistan, and play a vital role in providing access to a landlocked Afghanistan to the outside world. Iran is also facing financial pain as it bears the brunt of international sanctions.

Thus, both the big neighbours of Afghanistan have problems of their own. And if the big neighbours have problems then it is a challenging proposition for the Taliban to rebuild its image to be recognised not as a military movement but a political force. Add to this the apprehension of both Pakistan and Iran that Afghanistan may export unrest, refugees and military across the borders, and this makes matters of good governance by the Taliban even more challenging.

The US leads the global consensus on the diplomatic isolation of the Taliban, which raises important questions on the role of external powers in the recognition of the Taliban as a political force. Russia and China lead the external powers that are contributing to the erosion of this global consensus.

When the world treats the Taliban

as a militant resistance and insurgent group with a religious ideology that has created a repressive regime, it misses a point that the Taliban today enjoy political power in Afghanistan, and they have come to power after engaging in a prolonged conflict against the US-led coalition forces. Not just as a de facto ruling authority, but a movement that enjoys a good degree of support from the people of Afghanistan. If the US could treat the Taliban as a political force, engaging it in a political process that led to the Doha Agreement in 2020, then surely consider helping the Taliban in transitioning from a militarised insurgency to a political governing body. This will help the Taliban in reshaping the internal dynamics and rebuilding Afghanistan, and may positively influence all external stakeholders to reconstruct the picture and understand the situation from a localational facts. For instance, engineers in some parts of Swat say that many tourist hotels were located dangerously close to the river.

Bracing for impact

MONSOON rains, cloudbursts, landslides and flash floods have wreaked havoc in KP, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Since mid-August, harsh weather conditions have left hundreds of people dead, while uprooting thousands from their homes. Rescuers themselves have faced losses, as when a KP government helicopter crashed during rescue operations, apparently due to bad weather, killing all on board. Properties, livelihood assets, settlements and infrastructure have all been harmed.

The federal and provincial governments are taking steps to deal with the situation by announcing rehabilitation and redevelopment works. The call of the hour is to prioritise actions according to what people need most urgently. Rescue, relief, rehabilitation and redevelopment is the usual sequence followed. Additionally, if one goes by the principles of disaster management planning, the repair of highways and other corridors of communication should be a top priority. After immediate measures for controlling flash floods, such as reinforcement of embankments, are taken, a comprehensive assessment of the losses sustained is essential.

Happening and categorising the damage are the first steps. During this stage, reconnaissance surveys are carried out by IT tools such as Geographical Information Systems, Land Information System and other cartographic aids. As earlier satellite images can easily be accessed through software, a 'before and after' comparison can give an accurate picture of the disaster scenario. Undertaking detailed analyses of the damage and its causes is necessary to reconstruct the picture and understand the situation from a localational facts. For instance, engineers in some parts of Swat say that many tourist hotels were located dangerously close to the river.

By Dr Rana Jawad Asghar

Killer bridge, public health and public

When I was a medical student, we formed a 'Health Education Society' to share preventive health strategies. One of our earliest interventions was that we printed a small pamphlet on breast cancer. It was a copy of a US printed pamphlet and had a geometric circle with arrows marking the direction for women to palpate their breasts to identify any tumours earlier. I shared a few printed copies with some of my female classmates and some later got offended. This was surprising for me as our own medical books have much more explicit pictures of the human body but probably it was not the content but who shared it. They thought that it was inappropriate for a male to give them these pamphlets. We decided not to distribute those pamphlets anymore. This was an important lesson in public health for me. No matter how well intended you may be, but you still need to consult the stakeholders. I still have those undistributed pamphlets lying with me reminding me of a costly mistake of thinking that 'I know best for the public.' Recently in Lahore, I came to know about our barber's young son who died in a traffic accident on a nearby flyover bridge (college road/ PECCO road). When I was talking to him, he told me that his son's bike fell from the bridge.

By Dr Rana Jawad Asghar

Multivariate Aspects of Climate Change in Pakistan

Climate change stands 6th in affective of climate change. The awful deadly floods of 2010, and 2011, extremely dry weather in a rainy area, and fluctuation in actual climate pattern is alarming and despairing signs among the dwellers of the town.

Climate Change and Agriculture in Pakistan In addition, Pakistan is a semi-arid country. The local and dependent source of water is from the snow-covered Himalayan and the Karakoram's north-western Areas: Indus, Jhelum,

Chenab, Ravi, and the Sutlej rivers flow through this area. Within the water calculus, the country's entire agricultural area is dependant on water flow from the Indus river.

A flash flood outbreak also poses a serious threat to the country's climate in the Karakoram range.

The sole aim was reaching and understanding the possible front advances of glaciers, which are characterized by unsteady movements and frequent retreats of glaciers. As a result, it causes natural hazards by obstructing river channels, forming ice-dammed lakes, which will ultimately cause GLOFs and pose threats downstream of the water. After meaningful analysis, it revealed that a surge generated 6 GLOFs.

Damages by Climate Change: Meanwhile, rigorous critical exploration of the Attabad Lake of Hunza Valley in Gilgit-Baltistan is the distinctive event to justify the future threats of climate change in the center of freshwater.

The lake flooding displaced more than 6,000 people from upstream villages and inundated over 19 kilometers of the Karakoram Highway. Recently, global warming and subsequent climate change

have increased the constant state of fear and the risk of massive outburst flooding in the respective mountainous region. The comprehensive field evidence, local testimonies by the natives, modern applications of remote sensing, and cross-correlation feature-tracking techniques provides the improved understanding of glacier surges and ice-dammed formation dislocated the scale future threat. Glaciers in Pakistan: It is also noted, historically, in the Karakoram Range 19 glaciers are responsible for ice-dam formation.

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New provinces?

Of late, there has been a rash of seminars, media discussions and loaded commentaries on the idea of increasing the number of provinces in Pakistan.

Some entities have proposed converting the existing 22 administrative divisions into provinces while another recommendation is to go back to the original 12 administrative divisions that existed in erstwhile West Pakistan at the time of its formation.

The sweeping conclusion of these proposals is that practically all

our governance problems will be resolved once we create more provinces. Although different political parties have been advocating for the creation of new provinces for various reasons in the past, the current proposals apparently have increasingly overtone of territorialism.

After the devolution of authority and achieve administrative efficiency, the idea of creating a fresh national debate to see if a consensus can be developed on the question, there should be no quarrel with the

intention, but the debate needs to be organic and not stoked or moulded by vested interests.

The consensus-building process should not be hurried, an important but contentious question like the creation of new provinces should be debated and scrutinised on the basis of facts and figures, both inside parliament and outside.

Since the question of carving out new provinces from existing ones is a highly emotive one, there is a risk that the debate could result in outbursts. It is, therefore,

important that the debate does not take place in a vacuum and a carefully prepared document, framing the key issues, forms the basis of the issue.

The timing of the debate is questionable. As we deal with the resurgence of terrorism and ailing economy, which is just about showing signs of improvement and an explosive capitalist situation, one wonders if the creation of new provinces should really be on our agenda.

By Ahmed Bilal Mehboub

A big test ahead

SINO-Pak relations initially evolved within a geo-economic framework after the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

However, over time, security considerations have increasingly overshadowed economics, leaving the relationship struggling between the two domains. On the other hand, Pakistan-US

relations have historically been strategic and security-centric, but to date, they also face the challenge of balancing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with geo-economic priorities.

Ultimately, the real test lies with Pakistan's establishment to decide whether it chooses to prioritise geo-economics or maintain deeper, security-centred strategic ties with both global powers.

Nevertheless, these operations will inevitably be tested with conditions attached.

Apparently, China's foremost concern remains security. At the same time, the US emphasises the economic dimension, framing its engagement as both an opportunity for financial advantage and a means to elevate Pakistan's political profile.

file, particularly in the context of the changing politics of South and West Asia. Pakistan's geography is undoubtedly a strategic asset complemented by its aspiration to project itself at a level comparable, if not equal, to India's military, strategic and political stature.

Muhammad Amir Rana

Big, bad rain

It happened again. The heavens opened, the clouds burst upon the house of cards that is Karachi's crumbling infrastructure, and it all fell apart. For those unlucky enough to have been far from home on Aug 19, it was a nightmare.

The lack of adequate warning meant people abandoned their cars and trying to reach home safely on foot. Yet as the torrents descended, they found what they were forced to do. Those stuck on Sherea Faisal walked through waist-deep water to get to service roads and buildings on the side.

This path was made by the fact that when it starts to pour in Karachi, many people uncover manholes outside their homes and offices to 'facilitate' drainage. Of

course, the problem is that these uncovered manholes represent the greatest danger during extreme rainfall, as people wading through the water to safety can fall into them and not be able to extricate themselves. Naturally, this weighs on those trying to decide whether to attempt to reach higher ground. Without doubt, Karachi residents rose to the occasion in coming to the aid of those who were stranded. Within hours, many ad-connections were made through WhatsApp or other social media platforms. This, however, is not what a city of 16 million should have to resort to when it comes to extreme precipitation — episodes of which.

Without doubt, Karachiites rose to the occasion in coming to the aid of those who were stranded. Within hours, many ad-connections were made through WhatsApp or other social media platforms. This, however, is not what a city of 16 million should have to resort to when it comes to extreme precipitation — episodes of which.

By Rafia Zakaria

Famine in killing fields of Gaza

THE UN says there is a famine in Gaza.

Yes, the killing fields of Gaza are seeing another weapon — starvation — being deployed, because the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), under orders from Netanyahu's government, are not content with killing 60,000 people — a figure which its own data says has included in the first phase of the war, 83 per cent unarmed civilians. If the first phase set a trend that continues, then some 50,000 innocent civilians have been killed so far.

The blockade imposed by IOF (Israeli Defence Forces), has turned a famine, a high kill rate of 60pc of militants. The report also says of those killed, 60pc were women and children.

It seems that starva-

tion and killings are not enough to achieve the goal of total and expeditious ethnic-cleansing of Gaza. So, Nobel Peace Prize aspirant US President Donald J. Trump has greented Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to appoint a new Gaza cabinet for which a 60,000-strong IOF force has been assembled.

Reservists in occupation of that number are being recalled to duty. There can be no doubt that the apartheid state enjoys unparalleled impunity to kill, maim and forcefully displace Palestinians.

Now many Israeli paedophiles have been arrested by joint FBI Police and Homeland Security taskforces and then bailed out and allowed to return home.

While continuing to supply the apartheid state with advanced weaponry, vital parts and other defence equipment. There can be no doubt that the apartheid state enjoys unparalleled impunity to kill, maim and forcefully displace Palestinians.

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By Abbas Nasir

Nigeria says killed over 35 jihadists near Cameroon border

CAIRO (INP): Nigeria's air force said it had killed more than 35 jihadists in raids Saturday on militant fighters that had gathered near the Nigeria-Cameroon border following an attempted attack on ground troops.

The air strike was the latest by the Nigerian military, which is battling a resurgence of attacks in the country's embattled northeast.

The region faces frequent attacks from the jihadist fighters of Boko Haram and its rival splinter group, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). "Acting on multiple intelligence from several sources, the Air Command executed precision strikes in successive passes, engaging the terrorists and neutralising more than 35 fighters at four identified assembly areas," said a Nigerian Air Force

(NAF) statement. They had re-established communication with the ground troops that had been threatened and they confirmed that the "situation around their location had been stabilised", the statement added.

Both ISWAP and Boko Haram have recently ramped up their assaults on the military in northeast Nigeria where they have also overrun military bases, killing soldiers and seizing weapons.

The strike had "intensified efforts to dominate the battle field and 'deny terrorists freedom of action'," said the statement.

While Nigeria's 16-year-old insurgency has slowed since violence peaked around 2015, attacks have picked up since the beginning of the year.

The airforce said the latest operation demon-

strated the force's commitment to providing close air support to ground forces, "while also disrupting terrorist logistics and movement corridors along the north east border regions".

The northeast region which neighbours Cameroon, Chad and Niger, has been the site of frequent attacks from the jihadist fighters of Boko Haram and ISWAP. A claim this week by the military in neighbouring Niger that it had killed Boko Haram leader in a targeted airstrike in the Lake Chad basin, was on Friday dismissed by a close aide to the head of jihadist group.

The US State Department's own annual rights report on Nigeria released the same week it approved the weapons sale, warned of air strikes killing civilians and torture of detainees.

Last week the US



QUETTA: Residents of Qilla Abdullah DR Mustafa Khan Kakar addressing a press conference at QFC.

Afghanistan bring in Ghazanfar to strengthen spin department for Asia Cup

DUBAI (INP): Rashid Khan will lead a strong-looking Afghanistan side at the upcoming men's T20 Asia Cup in the UAE, with

Noor Ahmad, Mubeer Ur Rahman, AM Ghazanfar and Mohammad Nabi completing a formidable spin-bowling attack along with their captain. Afghanistan, the second-best side from Asia at the last men's T20 World Cup behind champions India, have not played a single T20 since the start of 2025 and no international cricket since the Champions Trophy in February. They have, in fact, played just three T20s in the last 12 months, against Zimbabwe in Harare in December 2024, in a series they won 2-1. They will play a triangular T20 series in Sharjah against hosts UAE and Pakistan from Friday ahead of the Asia Cup. From the squad that made the Zimbabwe tour, top-order dasher Hazratullah Zai and

batting allrounder Zubair Akbari have been dropped, while left-arm spinner Nangeyalika Khartee has been moved to the reserves. Coming in are top-order batter Ibrahim Zadran, allrounder Sharafuddin Ashraf and Ghazanfar, the mystery spinner who hasn't made his T20 debut in his short career so far. Ghazanfar has so far played 42 T20s since his debut in the format in April 2023. His ODI career—now 11 matches old—has been quite spectacular, though. At just 19, he has two five-wicket hauls already—the 6 for 26 against Bangladesh in Sharjah in November last year his best—and has been doing the rounds of the franchise T20 circuit, including at the IPL, the CPL, and the ILT20. He couldn't make his IPL debut earlier this year though, as he picked up a back injury late last year on the tour of Zimbabwe, after being picked by Mumbai Indians for INR 4.80 crore

Haq, with Omarzai and Gulbadin Naib the fast-bowling allrounders. Ibrahim's return gives the team a strong look too, with Rahmatullah Gurbaz and Sediqullah Atal the other major top-order options. Darwish Rasooli and batting allrounder Karim Janat are the other top-order contenders. At Asia Cup, Afghanistan are with Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka in Group B, while India, Oman, Pakistan and UAE are in Group A. Afghanistan's campaign begins against Hong Kong in the opening match of the tournament, in Abu Dhabi on September 9. Rashid Khan (capt), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ibrahim Zadran, Darwish Rasooli, Sediqullah Atal, Armatullah Omarzai, Karim Janat, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Mohammad Ishaq, Mubeer Ur Rahman, AM Ghazanfar, Noor Ahmad, Ferooz Ahmad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi.

PML-N, PPP agree to contest upcoming by-elections jointly

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) have agreed to contest the upcoming by-elections jointly, senior leaders of both parties confirmed on Saturday. The announcement was made by PML-N leader and Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi and PPP's Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, the former National Assembly

Speaker. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said that finalised their strategy for the by-elections on the seats that fell vacant after the disqualifications of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's law-makers. "All matters related to the by-elections have been settled. We will contest under a mutually agreed formula," he added. Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi explained the same sentiments,

saying that the two parties will fully support each other's candidates in the upcoming by-elections.

"Where the PML-N was the runner-up previously, PPP will not field a candidate, and PML-N will not field a candidate in areas where PPP previously finished second," Hanif Abbasi explained.

The minister said that both parties have

devised a 'comprehensive' plan and are confident of a strong victory in the by-elections. It is to be noted here that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had announced the schedule for by-elections on vacant seats, including one Senate seat, following the disqualification of PTI-backed lawmakers in May 9 cases and the death of MNA Mian Muhammad Azhar.

Standing alongside FIFA chief Gianni Infantino at the White House, Trump described the tournament as "probably the biggest event in sports" and even joked about wanting to keep the golden trophy for himself. The announcement confirmed that the Kennedy Center in the US capital will host the ceremony on December 5. The draw for the 48-team football championship will be held at the

Kennedy Center in the US capital, where Trump recently installed himself as president, and then called a war on "woke" culture. "It's the biggest, probably the biggest event in sports," Trump thanked by FIFA chief Gianni Infantino, said as he made the announcement in the Oval Office of the White House.

The 2026 World Cup is being hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico next year, and Trump has made a big deal about it happening during his presidency.

Infantino, who has fostered close ties with the billionaire US president, brought the World Cup with him for the an-

nouncement and even let Trump get his hands on it. "Only the FIFA president, presidents of countries, and then those who win can touch it, because it's for winners only. And since you are a winner, of course you can as well touch it," Infantino said.

"Can I keep it?" replied Trump, who won a second term in the White House last year, as he lifted the trophy with both hands. "That's a beautiful piece of gold."

There was a brief moment of nerves as Trump appeared to fumble the World Cup before placing it on his desk — as Infantino

reached out a hand to steady it. Infantino later presented the US leader with a giant ticket — Row 1 Seat 1 — for the World Cup final on July 19 at the MetLife stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, just outside New York. Trump also suggested that Russian President Vladimir Putin may attend the World Cup.

Holding up a photo that he said Putin had sent him after their summit in Alaska last week, Trump said the Kremlin chief "wants to be there very badly," but that he "may be coming and he may not" depending on the outcome of Ukraine peace efforts.



DHAKA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, met with a delegation from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by its Secretary General, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Aleema Khan denounces govt pressure tactics

LAHORE (INP): The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore has approved physical remands for Shahrez Khan and Shershah Khan, nephews of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, in connection with the May 9, 2023, riots.

Shahrez, arrested on August 21, was sent on an eight-day physical remand, while his younger brother Shershah, detained the following day, was remanded for five days. The arrests, linked to the violent protests that erupted after Imran Khan's arrest, have sparked controversy, with PTI alleging political victimization.

Aleema Khan, Imran Khan's sister and a close PTI associate, condemned the arrests as an attempt to intimidate her family and the

party. Speaking to the media, she stated, "If they think that they will pressure us by kidnapping children, then it is their mistake."

The only crime of Shahrez and Shershah is that they are Imran Khan's nephews. We will not be pressured," She further claimed that her elder son, Shahrez, was taken from their Lahore residence by armed men in plainclothes, who assaulted staff and harassed her daughter-in-law in front of her grand children. Shershah was detained while returning from a court hearing related to his brother's case. Aleema Khan also addressed rumors of her own impending arrest, noting that warrants had already been issued against her. "If they arrest me, they will pressure themselves. Cracks are forming between them,"

she asserted, suggesting internal discord among the authorities. She vowed to continue delivering Imran Khan's message, stating, "In every FIR, it is written that I bring Imran Khan's message. We will absolutely be his voice."

The arrests follow the Supreme Court's decision on August 21 to grant bail to Imran Khan in eight cases related to the May 9 riots, during which PTI supporters vandalized military installations, including the Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander's residence).

Lahore police claim Shahrez and Shershah were involved in the Jinnah House attack, with Shahrez named in supplementary statements filed in September 2023. The police

sought a 30-day remand for Shahrez to recover evidence, but ATC Judge Manzoor Ali Gul approved only eight days. Shershah's five-day remand was granted on similar grounds.

PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, who represented Shahrez in court, argued that Shahrez was in Chitral, not Lahore, during the May 9 riots and had no political involvement with PTI. "This is a message to the nation that there is no law in this country," Raja told reporters, calling the arrests a "well-thought-out conspiracy" in response to Imran Khan's recent bail victories.

In contrast, Minister of State for Interior Tal Chaudhry defended the arrests, stating, "You can say the police arrested them late, but you cannot say their cases were fake."

National highways in flood-affected areas of KP, G-B fully restored: Attaullah Tarar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Information and Broad-casting Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that national highways in flood affected areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan had been fully restored whereas out of 60 affected feeders, 52 were now fully functioning now.

In a media talk over flood situation, he said that under the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was working to overcome the crisis in calamity-hit areas.

He said that the NDMA was in contact with provincial governments and provincial disaster management authorities and district management.

Tarar said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Buner along with Field Marshal Asim Munir where a briefing was given on relief efforts.

He said that Minister for Power, Sardar Awaiz Leghari was in the KP and supervising power restoration projects.

He said out of 60 feeders affected in Swat, Shangla, Buner and Swabi, 52 have been restored and work on restoration of remaining 8 is continued.

He said that Swat-I division has been fully restored, Pir Baba and

Malikpur 90 per cent restored. He said that Karakoram Highway and Buner-Khwazakhsa Highway were open for traffic.

Similarly, Astore bridge on Jaglot-Shardu Road was operational now, he told.

The minister said that NDMA, FWO and Pakistan Army were helping provincial governments in opening provincial roads now.

He said on the instructions of the Prime Minister, Federal Minister for Communications and Pakistan Army were all taking steps for safety of the flood affected people.

He said that in Punjab at Ganda Singhwala on river Satluj, the PDMA was active to control the situation work in calamity-hit areas of KP and GB.



HYDERABAD: Families of Fatima Jinnah Colony, Latifabad unit No.11 are being shifted to safer places through makeshift arrangements as knee deep water was accumulated in the colony after rainfall.

Washington to host 2026 FIFA World Cup draw: President Trump

WASHINGTON, Aug 23 (INP): US President Donald Trump has revealed that the draw for the 2026 World Cup will take place in Washington this December.

Standing alongside FIFA chief Gianni Infantino at the White House, Trump described the tournament as "probably the biggest event in sports" and even joked about wanting to keep the golden trophy for himself. The announcement confirmed that the Kennedy Center in the US capital will host the ceremony on December 5. The draw for the 48-team football championship will be held at the

Kennedy Center in the US capital, where Trump recently installed himself as president, and then called a war on "woke" culture. "It's the biggest, probably the biggest event in sports," Trump thanked by FIFA chief Gianni Infantino, said as he made the announcement in the Oval Office of the White House.

The 2026 World Cup is being hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico next year, and Trump has made a big deal about it happening during his presidency.

Infantino, who has fostered close ties with the billionaire US president, brought the World Cup with him for the an-

nouncement and even let Trump get his hands on it. "Only the FIFA president, presidents of countries, and then those who win can touch it, because it's for winners only. And since you are a winner, of course you can as well touch it," Infantino said.

"Can I keep it?" replied Trump, who won a second term in the White House last year, as he lifted the trophy with both hands. "That's a beautiful piece of gold."

There was a brief moment of nerves as Trump appeared to fumble the World Cup before placing it on his desk — as Infantino



QUETTA: A view of coal mines worker busy in work at local coal mines.

RAW network 'busted' in Karachi as CTD arrests six suspects

KARACHI (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) today announced the arrest of six suspects linked to India's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), claiming to have uncovered a major terrorist network and safe houses operating in Karachi.

CTD said the operation was carried out jointly with federal intelligence agencies. It added that an entire network working for RAW had been exposed.

The CTD Additional Inspector General, Azad Khan addressing a press conference in Karachi said that the men were arrested on July 8 in connection with the killing of a 45-year-old man in Badin on May 18, 2025.

During interrogation, investigators unearthed a wide network allegedly run by RAW handler Sanjay, based abroad, who remained in contact with the sus-

pects and orchestrated the plot.

According to Azad Khan, the suspects conducted reconnaissance for five days in Matti, Badin, before carrying out the killing. The CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts also identified three of the arrested men at the crime scene. He said that Indian media had celebrated the murder, which further underscored the hand of RAW.

Azad Khan said the Indian handler was identified as Sanjay Sanjeev Kumar, based in a Gulf state, who had recruited two Pakistanis for the operation.

The network included a gang formed by a suspect named Salman, comprising Umar, Sajad, Obaid and Shakeel.

He revealed that RAW had spent a huge sum on the operation, transferring funds through bank channels and other sources, Sanjay, also known as "Fouji",

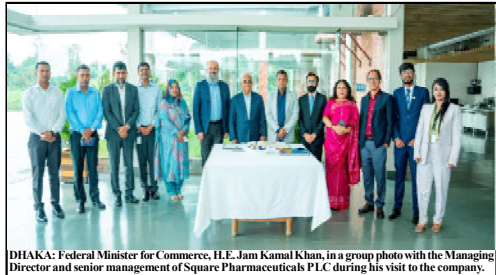
sent money from Gulf states to his associate, Salman, who later met the arrested suspects in Hyderabad. The suspects stayed in a local hotel for five days before travelling to Matti to execute the plot.

After the attack, Salman fled to Nepal. Investigators confirmed that the money transferred through bank accounts for the operation provided proof of terror financing. Following these findings, a case of terrorism financing was also registered.

The arrested individuals were identified as Amir Asghar, Sajad, Obaid, Shakeel, Arslan and Talha Umar.

The CTD official said the arrests were made on technical grounds during the investigation.

From their possession, authorities recovered a 9mm pistol, a 30-bore pistol, mobile phones, and a motorcycle, he added.



DHAKA: Federal Minister for Commerce, H.E. Jam Kamal Khan, in a group photo with the Managing Director and senior management of Square Pharmaceuticals PLC during his visit to the company.

PDMA issues flood alert after Indian warning on River Tawi

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a flood alert following a warning from the Indian High Commission about a high-level flood in River Tawi.

According to a PDMA spokesperson, a potential flood situation is developing in River Chenab at Marala, which may affect the adjoining districts of Gujrat and Sialkot. The authority has also cautioned about possible flooding in River Chenab and its connected streams.

PDMA Punjab has directed the deputy commissioners of the concerned districts to remain on high alert and ensure all precautionary measures to protect lives and property.

A low-level flood has been reported in the Sutlej River at Lodhran, with a water flow of 40,000 cusecs. Authorities fear floodwaters may enter residential areas. Rescue teams have been placed on alert at eight locations across the district.

Pakistan - At Pakpattan, the river has risen to a medium-level flood, submerging thousands of acres of farmland. Crops have been destroyed, and fodder for livestock has become scarce. Rescue teams have set up 13 relief camps and evacuated over 1,100 people from

affected areas. Churian - At Kotli Fateh Muhammad, water levels surged to 22 feet, with a flow of 127,000 cusecs. Local farmers reported heavy crop losses, while residents were forced to evacuate. Rescue 1122 teams are using boats to transport stranded livestock.

Karor Pacca - In Vehgah Mul Khoh Parana, river erosion intensified as water levels rose further. Breaches in protective embankments caused severe flooding in several areas, leaving residents to build makeshift barriers on their own. Locals criticized authorities for failing to take effective measures.

Bahawalnagar - Fresh water inflows from India have raised water levels in the Sutlej once again. Hundreds of acres of cultivated land have been washed away, while floodwaters entered nearby villages including Chak Bhattian, Mari Mian Sahib, and others.

Atrifwala - Authorities warned of a major flood wave expected in the coming hours, with flows ranging between 60,000 to 70,000 cusecs. Rescue teams have begun evacuating riverside residents to safer places, while announcements were made in villages urging immediate evacuation.

Kasur - At Ganda Singh Wala, the water level has surged above 20 feet with an outflow of 118,000 cusecs. Dozens of low-lying villages have been submerged, destroying crops worth millions of rupees. The district administration said food and essential supplies are being provided to affected families.

Burewala - Rising water has disrupted electricity and communication systems. Villages including Gaji Shah, Bhattian, and Farooqabad are inundated. Crops on hundreds of acres have been destroyed as residents begin migrating to safer areas. Rescue teams are using boats to evacuate stranded people. Chishtian - Strong water currents flooded dozens of riverside settlements, cutting off road access. Locals were forced to relocate as water entered their homes.

According to PDMA, heavy monsoon rains are likely to trigger medium to high-level flooding in Punjab rivers, including the Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab, and Jhelum, until August 27. Authorities have advised residents to avoid unnecessary movement near rivers and streams and urged those in floodplains to immediately shift to safer locations.

Interior Minister approves series of major development initiatives for Capital

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has approved a series of major development initiatives for the federal capital.

He was chairing a high-level meeting at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Headquarters in Islamabad on Saturday. The projects, ranging from new traffic infrastructure to housing sector upgrades and hospitality ventures, are aimed at easing urban challenges and improving civic facilities for residents.

One of the headline decisions was the launch of a flyover at T-Chowk and an underpass at Shaheen Chowk, with groundbreaking scheduled for early September.

The minister also ordered a city-wide operation against en-

croachments, stressing that there would be "no leniency" in removing illegal structures. He set September 30 as the deadline for clearing affected sectors, assigning the responsibility to senior officials including the SSP Operations, ADCG and Director DMA.

Housing societies were warned to strictly follow regulations or face disciplinary action.

The meeting also marked the green light for Phase One of the Diplomatic Enclave Upgradation Project, covering improvements to the main entry from Constitution Avenue, adjoining roads, a boundary wall, a cycling track, and a park.

Other projects reviewed included remodeling Daman-e-Koh for visitors, accelerating work on

under-construction sectors C-14, C-15, and C-16, and expediting long-delayed development in sectors E-12 and E-13 so possession can finally be handed to allottees.

Naqvi directed CDA to prepare a comprehensive development plan for new sectors C-13, D-13, E-13, and F-13. He also set a December 31 deadline for completing groundwork on two new five-star hotels in Islamabad.

According to briefings, the first phase of the Model Jail project is progressing and will be completed soon, while a site has been allocated for the establishment of a Capital House.

The meeting was attended by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa, CDA members, SSP Operations, ADCG and other senior officials.



LAHORE: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), through its Technology for People Initiative (TPI-LUMS), to strengthen digital governance and innovation in Pakistan.



GILGIT-BALTISTAN: Chief Minister's Secretariat entered its sixth day on Saturday, as bar councils demanded immediate appointments of judges to the region's top and lower courts.

Lawyers' sit-in enters sixth day over vacant judges' posts

NEWS DESK: A lawyers' sit-in outside the Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister's Secretariat entered its sixth day on Saturday, as bar councils demanded immediate appointments of judges to the region's top and lower courts.

The protest, spearheaded by the G-B Bar Council, comes amid a growing backlog of thousands of cases and prolonged incarceration of under-trial prisoners. Lawyers say the judicial paralysis has persisted for over five years, denying citizens their basic right to justice.

At the heart of the crisis is the Supreme Appellate Court of G-B, the region's highest judicial forum, which is meant to have three judges but has been functioning with just one for nearly half a decade. "This is nothing short of a collapse of the justice system," said Advocate Zafar Iqbal, President of

the G-B Bar Council, while addressing reporters at the protest camp.

The lawyers' anger deepened after reports surfaced that the government was considering appointing a retired judge to the vacant post. The bar council rejected the proposal, insisting that appointments be made from within the lawyers' fraternity.

Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan, however, defended his government, saying directives had already been issued to accept certain demands. He blamed the previous government for the prolonged delay in judicial appointments.

Adding weight to the protest, former chief minister Hafizur Rehman also visited the camp and castigated both past and present governments. "In civilised nations, judges even remain available on

weekends just to ensure justice," he said. "Here, years pass without judges. Those waiting in jails for justice — what will they do?"

The lawyers, backed by the Supreme Court Bar Association of G-B, have been boycotting court proceedings for months. Their charter of demands includes enforcement of the Lawyers Protection Act, establishment of family and consumer courts, and separation of judicial magistrates from civil judge roles. They also accuse the government of backtracking on a 2011 promise to allot land for lawyers.

Civil society groups have thrown their support behind the protest, warning that the vacuum in the judiciary risks deepening public disillusionment with the system.

The bar council has vowed to continue its sit-in until all demands are met.

No country can progress without developing strong industrial foundations: Iftikhar Malik

LAHORE (INP): Former president of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik has stressed that in today's globalized world no country can progress without develop-

ing strong industrial foundations. Speaking at a ceremony in Islamabad, the finance minister said that 10 to 15 percent of the country's population is already benefiting from digital businesses, and the trend toward digital is expected to grow further in the future. He emphasized that facilitating traders and investors is the government's top priority, and all efforts are being made to ease the investment process.

The minister highlighted that the process of economic reforms is ongoing, and the national economy is moving towards recovery, and it is essential to adapt economic priorities according to modern demands. Aurangzeb pointed out that digital investment is cost-effective, fast, and transparent, which makes it crucial to ensure transparency and improve regulations in this sector.

He said such measures would not only help Pakistan meet global climate commitments but also make its products more acceptable in environmentally conscious markets while reducing reliance on imported fuel. Highlighting the economic benefits of prioritizing exports, he noted that this approach could earn valuable foreign exchange, cut trade deficits, and generate millions of jobs. A long-term sustainable industrial policy, he added, must ensure self-reliance, resilience, and inclusive economic growth, positioning Pakistan as a strong global competitor. He suggested that special economic zones, tax incentives, and ease of doing business reforms could attract local and foreign investors to establish export-driven industries. He further emphasized the need to facilitate small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to integrate into global supply chains, thereby increasing export volumes and reducing dependency on imports.



PISHIN: Deputy Commissioner Mansoor Ahmed Qazi is being briefed by Axcin Irrigation Hassanullah Khan Kakar during his inspection of the dam under construction in Murgha Zakariya.

Four wanted culprits arrested in Tank, narcotics during search operations Seized

TANK (INP): On the special directives of Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Ismail Khan, Syed Ashfaq Anwar, District Police Officer (DPO) Tank Shabbir Hussain Shah led a series of search and strike operations across the district to maintain law and order and ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders.

According to police sources, the operations were carried out under the supervision of DSP City Pervaiz Shah and SHO City Police Station Sher Afzal Kundi in Mohallah Maidan, Mohallah Qutab Colony, Civil Line, Basti Phool Shah and Mohallah Sabirabad.

During the operations, police raided suspected hideouts

of criminals, searched houses of proclaimed offenders, set up checkpoints on key routes, and conducted strict monitoring of hotels and inns, carry out thorough checking of vehicles and suspicious persons.

As a result, police arrested Muhammad Imran son of Gul Rokhan, a proclaimed offender wanted in a six-year-old murder case, from Basti Phool Shah. Similarly, proclaimed offenders Hazrat Shah son of Mastan Jan, a resident of Civil Line, and Tariq son of Haji Muhammad Ishaq from Mohallah Dr Rabnawaz Colony were also apprehended.

In another case, Inamullah son of Raheem Baksh Bhatti, wanted in an electricity theft case, was arrested from Mohallah Sabirabad. Meanwhile, in a separate action, police arrested accused Hussain Ahmad son of Almar Gul Bhatti, a resident of Garah Budha, and recovered 1015 grams of hashish and 70 grams of crystal meth (ice) from his possession.

In Jandola, DSP Shah Wali Khan along with SHO Sheikh Zaman also conducted search operations in various areas. Checkpoints were established at entry and exit points, several vehicles were searched, and multiple suspects were interrogated. Police also conducted surprise inspections in residential areas to trace criminal elements.