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## Asim Munir meeting with President Trump cordial, says Shehbaz

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## Mushahid says disinformation has to be checked

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## Shehbaz speaks with Marco Rubio

# 'Field Marshal meeting with Trump cordial'

The situation in the Middle East, particularly the Iran-Israel crisis, was also discussed, where the Prime Minister emphasized on the need to find a peaceful resolution to this grave crisis, through dialogue and diplomacy

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, this evening. During their warm and cordial conversation, the Prime Minister conveyed his best wishes for President Donald Trump. He praised the President for his bold leadership and appreciated Secretary Rubio's proactive diplomacy that played a pivotal role in helping Pakistan and India to arrive at a ceasefire understanding and averting a major catastrophe between the two nuclear armed states. The Prime Minister added that President Trump's positive statements about Pakistan were most encouraging for a durable peace in South Asia, which could only be made possible by initiating meaningful dialogue between Pakistan and India. In this context, he reaffirmed Pakistan's willingness for talks with India on all outstanding issues, including Jammu & Kashmir, the Indus Water Treaty, trade and counter-terrorism. The situation in the Middle East, particularly the Iran-Israel crisis, was also discussed, where the Prime Minister emphasized on the need to

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## Trump-Munir meeting Pak backing for Iran remains firm

The Trump-Munir meeting, which concluded with generous praise from the US president for the Pakistani field marshal, sparked a wave of disappointment among certain quarters in Pakistan

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Despite intense speculation following a high-profile luncheon meeting between Field Marshal Asim Munir and US President Donald Trump at the White House on Wednesday, Pakistan's position in support of Iran amid its ongoing conflict with Israel remains "100% the same", a well-placed source told this correspondent. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the source — who is privy to what was discussed in the White House meeting — emphasised Pakistan's consistent stance. "We are the only ones who are trying to do something for them [Iran]," he asserted, in response to two questions posed by this correspondent: whether Pakistan's stance on the Iran-Israel conflict has changed after the Trump meeting with Field Marshal Munir, and whether Pakistan will continue its support for Iran like before. His response was emphatic: "100% the same." The Trump-Munir meeting, which concluded with generous praise from the US president for the Pakistani field marshal, sparked a wave of disappointment among certain quarters in Pakistan, particularly among Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters. The development has not only rattled New Delhi, but also infuriated PTI's online base,

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ISTANBUL: Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan Ishaq Dar attending conference in Türkiye. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan also seen in the picture. — DNA

## Dar meets Türkiye President Erdogan

DNA

ISTANBUL: DPM/FM Attends the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum's (ICYF), Grand Youth Award Ceremony Honoring President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Upon the invitation of Foreign Minister of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar attended the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum's (ICYF), Grand Youth Award Ceremony held in Istanbul on 20th June 2025. The ceremony honored President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for his exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication to youth empowerment. On behalf of Pakistani nation

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## Kremlin says Middle East is plunging into war

DNA

MOSCOW: Kremlin on Friday expressed deep concern over escalating tensions in the Middle East, warning that the region is descending into "an abyss of instability and war." Speaking to reporters, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said President Vladimir Putin remains willing to mediate the crisis if required. Russia has strong diplomatic relations with both Iran and Israel and maintains communication channels with the United States. Peskov emphasized the urgency of avoiding

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## 5th round held

# Pakistan, EU dialogue discusses dimensions of disarmament

*The Pakistan – EU Dialogue on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament is an integral part of the broader engagement between the European Union and Pakistan*

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The fifth round of the Pakistan-European Union Dialogue on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament was held here other day wherein two sides engaged in a comprehensive exchange of views on issues related to international and regional peace, security, and strategic stability. The discussions also focused on various dimensions of disarmament and non-proliferation, with particular reference to the agenda of the UN General Assembly's First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and various International Disarmament Conventions, including the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), according to a joint press release simultaneously issued by Pakistan and the European Union.

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## Govt signs \$4.5bn loans with local banks

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has signed term sheets with 18 commercial banks for Rs1.275 trillion (\$4.50 billion) Islamic finance facility to help pay down mounting debt in its power sector, Energy Minister Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari said on Friday. The government, which owns or controls much of the power infrastructure, is grappling with ballooning "circular debt", unpaid bills and subsidies, that has choked the sector and weighed on the economy.

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## Briefs

### Acting Governor halted to perform official duties

"Blocking the Acting Governor from performing duties and using the Governor's chair is an insult to a constitutional position," Nisar Khuhro stated

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Acting Governor of Sindh, Awaiz Qadir Shah on Friday approached the Sindh High Court and submitted an affidavit to the court. According to the petition, Kamran Tessori has been abroad since June 2, 2025 Since assuming the charge, Awaiz Shah has not been granted access to the Governor House on Friday. Preventing the Acting Governor from performing official duties at the Governor House is a violation of Article 104 of the Constitution, prayed in the petition by Advocate Uzair Nadeem has requested an urgent hearing from the court. While Muhammad Farooq Parliamentary Leader of Jamaat-e-Islami in Sindh Assembly has said that "The office of Governor and the Governor House are constitutional institutions, not personal property. I condemn this unconstitutional act." Whereas, CPAC Nisar Khuhro has said "The Sindh Assembly should move a censure motion for obstructing the Acting Governor's constitutional duties," Preventing the Acting Governor from using the Governor's office and performing duties is a violation of the Constitution.

### Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.  
— Editor

## Reserved seats case

# 'Politicians defied Supreme Court orders in past'

*The SC judge Mandokhel made these remarks during the hearing of reserved seat case wherein Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja cited the Asghar Khan case*

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail said on Friday there had been instances when politicians did not implement the top court's ruling. The SC judge made these remarks during the hearing of reserved seat case wherein Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja cited the Asghar Khan case. Raja said he was present in the same court when, on the one hand, there was former chief of army staff Mirza Aslam Beg and on the other former chief of the air force Asghar Khan. "They both testified that they interfered in the elections. [However,] it was said that it was done in the light of the national interest," the lawyer said. To which, Justice Mandokhail remarked: "We give judgments, but do politicians act on them?" He further added that "at some point, one political party or another remained the beneficiary". Raja replied that he would shed light on this mat-

ter outside of the court. The senior lawyer also maintained that the country had seen direct martial rule and sometimes under the guise of Article 58-2(b). "You are narrating old history," Justice Mandokhail replied. Counsel Raja said the larger SC bench in its verdict had declared the process of the PTI-supported candidates' joining the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) null and void. Nevertheless, he said, the Supreme Court has also said in its decisions that if no injustice has been committed, then a wrong decision cannot be reviewed. To a question asked by Justice Musarrat Hilali, if the right to vote is granted at the age of 10 years, Raja replied the law has determined the age for the right to vote. "Some rights are granted to citizens only, some rights are regulated by the law and some rights are innate," the lawyer added. On May 26, the Supreme Court's constitutional bench had observed that the SIC was not entitled to reserved seats, questioning

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# Pak, Belgium vow to cement ties in law, governance fields

Idesbald Van der Gracht, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Pakistan, met with Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Idesbald Van der Gracht, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Pakistan, met with Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar,

Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights, to reaffirm the strong and friendly ties between Belgium and Pakistan. The meeting reflected the mutual desire to strengthen cooperation in the fields of law, human rights, and governance.



During the meeting, both sides reviewed recent developments in Pakistan's human rights landscape. The Minister shared that the overall situation has shown marked improvement, with a visible decline in rights-related violations and increased institutional responsiveness. The Ministry of Human Rights, in coordination with relevant departments and stakeholders, is actively engaged in strengthening legal protections and enhancing mechanisms for redress and accountability. The Minister highlighted recent legislative reforms, including over 110 amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), aimed at improving access to justice for ordinary citizens. These reforms reflect the government's strong commitment to

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# Rs 16b allocated for Balochistan schools: Tarar

Minister Tarar appreciated the Sindh government for taking a progressive step by enacting the Child Marriage Restraint Act several years ago, which prohibits the registration of marriages below the age of 18 in the province

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar informed the Senate that four new Danish Schools worth nearly Rs 16 billion and specially designed for underprivileged children are being established in Balochistan, as part of the government's efforts to uplift the province. Responding to a question raised by Senator Jan Muhammad Buledi during the Senate's ongoing budget session, he said all Petroleum Development Levy (PDL) funds are being dedicated to its key infrastructure development under the special direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The minister said that major road projects, including the Quetta-Chaman and Quetta-Karachi (N-25) highways, are currently in progress to improve regional connectivity and support economic growth. "On behalf of the government, and especially Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, I assure this House that whenever it comes to provincial governments or provincial projects, the Prime Minister gives utmost importance to Balochistan," he said. He said that under the Prime Minister's discretionary grant, significant allocations were being made for Balochistan, in addition to the regular budget. "Please review the budget documents for allocations

regarding children's education and scholarships," he added. He stated that four Danish Schools, each costing nearly Rs 4 billion, will offer high-quality education comparable to that of Aitchison College as "The Prime Minister receives monthly progress reports on these schools," he noted. The law minister further stated that the prime minister had personally ordered the redirection of all PDL funds collected from Balochistan toward local development, especially road infrastructure. "Though the levy is collected nationwide, the PM has chosen to grant this facility exclusively to Balochistan," he added. Senator Tarar also noted that a special package had been introduced under the Prime Minister's leadership for the solarization of tube wells across Balochistan. "Balochistan holds a special place in our hearts. Despite the vast geography and development disparities, the federal government has always stepped forward for the province — and will continue to do so," he concluded. Meanwhile, responding to a query raised by Senator Danesh Kumar during the debate, Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar stated that the issue highlighted by Senator Kumar was serious and Ministry of Human Rights was actively working on it in collabora-

tion with the concerned communities. He noted that the "Commission for Rights of Minorities" bill had already been passed by both houses of Parliament. "Let me assure my minority brothers and sisters that this Commission will include quasi-judicial provisions and will be chaired by a member from the minority community, either a woman or a man," he stated. Minister Tarar explained that the chairperson of the commission would have powers to discharge semi-judicial functions, including conducting inquiries, issuing directions, and ensuring compliance. "This authority will not be symbolic; it will have real teeth," he emphasized. Minister Tarar assured that there would be no negligence from the federal government's side and added that he is in constant coordination with the relevant authorities to implement reforms. Minister Tarar appreciated the Sindh government for taking a progressive step by enacting the Child Marriage Restraint Act several years ago, which prohibits the registration of marriages below the age of 18 in the province. Minister Tarar concluded that the federal government stands ready to provide full support and play its role wherever required.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi meeting with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki. DNA

## SDPI, Air varsity to undertake joint research, knowledge exchange

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Air University (AU) Islamabad on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance collaboration in areas of mutual interest including sustainability, policy research, knowledge exchange, and institutional development. The MoU was signed by Dr. Shafqat Munir Ahmad, Deputy Executive (Policy) SDPI and Air Commodore (R) Fawad Zahir, Director ORIC AU. The SDPI delegation to the ceremony held at the Air University included Moazzam Sharif Bhatti, Director Advocacy & Campaigns; Ahad Nazir, Associate Research Fellow; and Romila Qamar, Associate Managing Editor (Research) while the AU delegation comprised Dr. Salman Hassan Khan, Director QEC; Dr. Sohail Iqbal, Chair Dept DMAE, Dr. Usama Qazi, Chair Dept GS, Lt. Col (R) Amir Toor, Deputy Director Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC), Mehreen Ishtiaq, Assistant Director QEC and Kinza Ayaz, said a press release. The ceremony began with a screening of Air University's documentary that highlighted the institution's academic and research contributions. Dr. Salman Hassan Khan emphasized the university's commitment to academic excellence and impactful collaboration. Dr. Shafqat Munir, expressed SDPI's enthusiasm in joining hands with Air University to co-create initiatives that promote evidence-based policymaking and sustainable development practices across Pakistan.—APP

## Pakistan proved as responsible nuclear state: Shazia

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party's central spokesperson Shazia Marri said that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear state and the Pakistan Army by giving a befitting reply to India in a professional manner proven to the world that it has the full capability to crush the evil intentions of the enemy. Talking to the media outside the Parliament House, she said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, along with a high-level parliamentary delegation, unveiled the truth about the Pahalgam incident to the world during his 11-day foreign tour and exposed the hideous face of India. Shazia Marri said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be given a grand welcome upon his return from a successful tour. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, along with a high-level parlia-

mentary delegation, made an 11-day tour of various countries including the United States of America. He successfully completed the mission entrusted by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the former Foreign Minister and the young leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Accomplished, the delegation held a total of 64 high-level meetings, including meetings with US members of parliament, think tanks, and diplomatic missions, and informed the entire world about the Indian false flag operation and its aggression and illegal unilateral actions to abrogate the Indus Waters Treaty. On the other hand, India also sent a delegation that was seen eating and singing with the people of its community and no think tank

listened to their voice. Shazia Marri said that they have been saying since day one that the Pahalgam incident was a false flag operation. Modi's case is just propaganda while Pakistan's case is true. Bilawal Bhutto said that we want peace, Pakistan is the only country that wants to end terrorism while India has always conspired through fabricated statements. Now the world has come to know the truth about India. Shazia Marri said that after a long time, the world is taking Pakistan seriously. Shazia Marri said that Bilawal Bhutto also had 17 meetings with the international media and Bilawal Bhutto's arrival is expected today after this successful visit, for which people are in a crowd in Karachi to welcome him. —APP

## Jazz reaffirms commitment to driving digital inclusion frontier

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator, proudly joins the national celebration as the country crosses the landmark of 200 million mobile subscribers. With over 73 million mobile users, 53 million 4G subscribers, and more than 100 million digital customers across its platforms, Jazz continues to lead the industry in expanding digital access and driving inclusive connectivity. To mark this milestone, PTA hosted a commemorative event in Islamabad, bringing together telecom stakeholders to recognize the sector's collective contribution. Jazz participated in the celebration and extended its congratulations to PTA for its efforts in enabling a future-ready digital ecosystem. — APP

## Italian, Pakistan Navies conduct bilateral exercise



DNA

KARACHI: The Italian Navy Ship ITS ANTONIO MARCEGLIA participated in a bilateral exercise with Pakistan Navy ship and aircraft in the North Arabian Sea. The primary objective of the exercise was to enhance operational efficiency and foster deeper cooperation between the two navies. The exercise featured a comprehensive series of advanced operational drills, covering key as-

pects of maritime warfare. These drills were designed to strengthen coordination in maritime security operations and improve the overall readiness and operational integration of both navies. ITS ANTONIO MARCEGLIA's visit follows the visit of the Italian Carrier Strike Group, which included ITS CAVOUR and ITS ALPINO to Karachi in October 2024. This visit further solidified the bond between Italian Navy and Pakistan Navy. The ongoing series of en-

gagements demonstrates the growing strategic relationship between the two countries, particularly between their navies. The joint exercise between Pakistan Navy and Italian Navy underscores the importance of naval cooperation, reaffirming both nations' commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and promoting peace and stability in the region. The exercise concluded with a shared aim to expand the scope of collaboration and explore new avenues of mutual cooperation between the navies of both countries

## Collaborative push urged to revamp fisheries industry in Sindh

KARACHI: The Marine Fisheries Department (MFD) hosted a meeting with The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Pakistan, local fish processors and exporters to advance the aquaculture sector in Sindh under the Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Development Across Rural Sindh (PAIDAR) initiative. The PAIDAR initiative is a five-year program funded by the European Union, designed to support the Government of Sindh in implementing its poverty reduction strategy across five districts in the province, a press release issued by MFD said here on Friday. These five districts include Tando Muhammad Khan, Matiari, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, and Umerkot selected for their socio-economic

challenges and need for inclusive rural development. Dr. Mansoor Ali Wassan, Director General of MFD chaired the meeting. He warmly welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to modernize and sustainably grow Sindh's fisheries industry. Dr. Wassan emphasized the importance of integrating marine ecosystem conservation into aquaculture expansion. He highlighted that sustainable aquaculture practices not only boost livelihoods but also protect Sindh's rich marine biodiversity, which is essential for maintaining healthy coastal ecosystems and ensuring long-term productivity. A significant highlight of the meeting was the discussion on financial support through the PAIDAR program, which offers up to

60 million Pakistani rupees to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in aquaculture and related sectors. In addition to financial aid, the program provides technical assistance to fish processors and exporters based in Karachi, enhancing their operational capacity and competitiveness. The UNIDO team introduced insights from aquaculture experts from Indonesia, who have conducted a comprehensive assessment of supply chain gaps in Sindh's aquaculture industry. These experts will offer technical guidance to stakeholders, aiming to improve food security and safety standards. Dr. Wassan expressed his appreciation for UNIDO Pakistan's dedication to developing Sindh's aquaculture sector, highlighting the initiative's crucial role in poverty. — APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

June 02/Italy National/ Independence Day

June 04/Finland Armed Forces Day

June 06/Sweden National Day

June 10/Portugal Portugal Day (National Day)

June 10/Jordan Arab Revolution& Army Day

June 11/United kingdom Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth

June 12/Philippines Independence Day

June 12/Russian Federation Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)

June 13/Zambia Armed Forces day

June 17/Iceland National Day

June 18/Seychells National Day

June 25/Croatia National Day

June 25/Mozambique National Day

June 26/Azerbaijan Army Day

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# NUML, Korean Tongwon varsity sign LoI for academic collaboration

The event concluded with remarks from Dr. Safeer Awan, Pro-Rector (Research and Strategic Initiatives), who expressed gratitude to the Korean delegation for their keen interest in partnering with NUML and fostering international academic relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A high-profile delegation from Tongwon University, Republic of Korea, led by Vice President Professor Dr. Choi Jongin, visited the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) to explore avenues of academic collaboration and cultural exchange. The delegation was warmly welcomed by Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M), along with senior university officials. During the meeting, both sides discussed various areas for mutual cooperation, including student exchange programs, academic excellence, research opportunities, and institutional partnerships.

Following the meeting with the Rector, the delegation interacted with faculty members and students of the Department of Korean Language, where a vibrant question-and-answer session took place. Vice President Tongwon University, Dr. Choi, in his address, appreciated the academic environment at NUML and expressed gratitude for the hospitality extended. He encouraged the students to pursue their goals with dedication



and transform their aspirations into achievements. The Director of the International Department of Tongwon University provided a comprehensive presentation on the university's academic strengths, modern facilities, and unique opportunities available for Pakistani students, particularly those from NUML. He also highlighted the Korean government's new pilot program, which enables Pakistani students to enrol in two-year diploma programs with the

added benefit of part-time employment, offering both academic and financial support. The event concluded with remarks from Dr. Safeer Awan, Pro-Rector (Research and Strategic Initiatives), who expressed gratitude to the Korean delegation for their keen interest in partnering with NUML and fostering international academic relations. A Letter of Interest (LoI) was formally signed between the two institutions by Rector NUML, Maj

Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M) (ret'd), and Vice President Dr. Choi Jongin of Tongwon University. The LoI outlines a comprehensive framework for bilateral cooperation between the two institutions, focusing on the exchange of students, faculty, researchers, and administrative staff. It also includes joint educational and research initiatives, the organization of seminars, conferences, and other academic events, as well as collabora

tion in graduate and post-graduate programs. Furthermore, the agreement emphasizes capacity-building through specialized training sessions and academic short courses aimed at enhancing institutional and individual competencies. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in NUML's efforts to strengthen its global academic partnerships and enhance international learning opportunities for its students and faculty.

# Das for swift legal remedy to safeguard minority rights

ISLAMABAD :Minister of State for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Kesoo Mal Kheal Das on Friday voiced concern in the Senate over the abduction of Hindu girls in Shahzadpur, Sanghar district, and called for immediate legal reforms to safeguard minority rights in Pakistan. Responding to concerns raised by minority members in the Upper House at the request of the Deputy Chairman of the Senate, the State Minister stated that the incident occurred on June 18, when three daughters and a cousin from the same Hindu family were abducted. He informed the House that swift action had been initiated following his communication with the Inspector General of Police (IG) Sindh, MNA Shazia Atta Marri, and the Chief Minister of Sindh. "The girls were rescued by Sindh police and were in police custody, and presented in court today. Their statements have been recorded under Section 164," he added. The minister urged the Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and the Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to take urgent steps to ensure justice. "This is not only a tragedy for the affected family but a matter of national image. Our enemies are exploiting it in international media to malign Pakistan," he added. Kheal Das emphasized that Islam and the Constitution of Pakistan categorically forbid religious coercion, and stressed that such actions contradict both Islamic teachings and state policy. The minister highlighted that in 2020, a Parliamentary Joint Committee formed under the then Prime Minister and headed by Senator Kakar had made significant progress toward minority protection. However, he regretted that external pressures had stalled key legislative initiatives, just as the Pakistan People's Party tried to make a law in Sindh, then pressure is exerted and it had to withdraw the law. "Our Constitution guarantees full religious freedom, yet these heinous incidents persist. How can a 12 or 14-year-old decide to renounce their religion or leave their parents without coercion?" he asked. He also acknowledged the efforts of Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, who brought the Minority Commission under Human Rights from religious affairs ministry. The hard work done by law minister provides us protection; Senator Ali Zafar and all the other members also supported it. He also lauded the Senator Ali Zafar, and other lawmakers for facilitating the passage of the Minority Rights Bill, which now awaits presidential assent. He proposed the immediate establishment of a Minority Commission, which he said would serve as a safeguard against such violations. "My community is protesting. I request the interior minister to immediately contact Sindh government and took quick action over this incident," he said. "I cannot face my people in Sindh if immediate action is not taken." He said the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif, have always advocated for interfaith harmony and equal protection for all citizens.—DNA

# Abbasi concerned over rising number of derailments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi Friday expressed concern over the rising number of derailments and called for a detailed analysis and proactive measures to prevent future occurrences. He said this while chairing a high-level meeting at the Ministry of Railways, focusing on train safety, administrative performance and ongoing

corruption investigations within Pakistan Railways. Senior officials presented comprehensive briefings on recent train accidents and operational issues, with particular attention to incidents reported in Sukkur, Multan, and Peshawar during June 2025. Hanif Abbasi directed that clear recommendations and an action plan be formulated and submitted to the relevant authorities. He also sought a report on the delay of the Awam Express departing from Karachi and or

dered an immediate inquiry into the recent foot overbridge incident in Khanewal. Regarding the closure of the Shahinabad Quarry, the minister instructed officials to identify those responsible and take appropriate action. The meeting also reviewed the Railway Constructions Pakistan Limited investigation, where the Inspector General of Pakistan Railways Police reported that the fact-finding inquiry was nearing completion. The inquiry recommends criminal

proceedings against implicated officials and proposes the case be handed over to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for further investigation. Reaffirming the Ministry's zero-tolerance stance on corruption, Minister Abbasi said that financial, administrative and structural reforms remain a top priority. He also said that strict disciplinary action against non-performing staff, while assuring that employees who demonstrate exceptional performance will be recognized through rewards and commendation certificates. Hanif Abbasi called on all officers and personnel to perform their duties with sincerity, transparency and accountability, emphasizing the government's commitment to restoring public confidence in the national rail system.

# Call for leveraging renewed int'l interest in Kashmir dispute

The event drew a large audience of diplomats, military leaders, journalists, policy experts, researchers, and students from various universities

Islamabad: At a discussion jointly organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), and the Policy East (PE), on 'The Pursuit of Truth: Competing Narratives in post-Pahalgam', Amb Masood Khalid, stated that the recent exchange of strikes between Pakistan and India has renewed international attention on longstanding regional disputes. He emphasized that Pakistan should capitalize on this renewed interest, especially from the US, to resolve the Kashmir dispute. He also acknowledged the media's role, stating that Pakistan's strategic communication had effectively dismantled India's narrative and exposed its weaknesses. In his opening remarks, IRS President Amb Jauhar Saleem highlighted Pakistan's effective and principled diplomatic response, which countered misleading narratives and exposed India's domestic political motivations for escalating the crisis. On narrative building, he underscored the importance of a comprehensive strategy, adding that, the narrative should not be constructed in isolation, but rather through a holistic approach, incorporating diverse perspectives and insights, drawing from strategic considerations, and societal input. He argued that by embracing this comprehensive approach, the resulting narrative would be more impactful. Air Marshal (Retd) Javid Ahmed, President Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), presented a technical assessment of the conflict's operational aspects. He cautioned against normalizing the crisis and emphasized the need to maintain and consistently follow through with the narrative. Rear Admiral (Retd) Faisal Shah highlighted India's operational miscalculations and commended Pakistan's strong response, which upheld strategic redlines: no internal interference, prevention of repeat incidents, and adherence to existing agreements. Dr. Taimur Shamil, Executive Director Policy East, highlighted the increasingly transnational nature of information conflicts and the imperative for Pakistani institutions to develop robust international partnerships with other global institutions. Journalists Umar Khalid Butt (PTV) and Haitham Naser (TRT) offered firsthand insights on narrative development and dissemination. Their critique of current institutions and advocacy for better media think-tank collaboration generated lively debate among the professors, analysts, and policy researchers present during the Q&A. The event drew a large audience of diplomats, military leaders, journalists, policy experts, researchers, and students from various universities.—DNA

# Senator urges global attention on Iran-Israel conflict

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Khalil Tahir said that Pakistan has always played a crucial role in combating terrorism in the region and continues to advocate for peace, prosperity, and development. Speaking to media outside the Parliament House, the senator stated that Pakistan sacrificed over 80,000 lives in the war against terrorism, in addition to suffering billions of dollars in economic losses. He emphasized that the international community must take a proactive role in addressing the Iran-Israel conflict, warning that the region cannot bear the burden of another war. "Pakistan has always stood for peace and regional stability," he said, noting that the country has consistently contributed to global efforts against terrorism. Commenting on the recent meeting between Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff and U.S. President Donald Trump, Senator Khalil expressed optimism, saying the engagement could open new avenues for trade and strengthen bilateral relations. "Pakistan holds significant importance at the international level," he added. "We were among the most reliable allies of the United States in the fight against terrorism." He reaffirmed that China remains Pakistan's strategic partner and that the friendship between the two countries is strong and enduring.—APP

# SSP reviews Muharram security plan

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad, Muhammad Shoaib Khan, held a high-level meeting on Friday to review security arrangements. An official told APP that the meeting was attended by Zonal SPs, SP Security/Operations Islamabad, organizers of Imambargahs and mourning processions, scouts, and volunteers. SSP Shoaib said that all officers have been directed to hold regular coordination meetings with organizers of Muharram processions across the city to ensure a peaceful environment, promote religious harmony, and maintain law and order. SSP Shoaib said that members of peace committees and procession organizers have been instructed to ensure that processions follow their designated routes. Adequate lighting must be arranged along the routes, and strict monitoring of procession timings will be carried out. SSP Shoaib said that participants assured their full cooperation in maintaining peace and stability throughout the month. Organizers, scouts, and volunteers pledged their complete support for ensuring the safety of citizens during the sacred days of Muharram. SSP highlighted the vital role of community engagement and reaffirmed the commitment to making Islamabad a model of peace and harmony during this holy month.—APP

# Zong recognized for exceptional Hajj connectivity services

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading digital innovation company, has received "Profound Appreciation for upholding the highest standards of services" award from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) for its outstanding support to Pakistani pilgrims during Hajj 2025. The award was presented at a ceremony in Makkah as part of a special recognition program led by the Coordinator of Makkah and his team from the Pakistan Hajj Mission, honoring key contributors to this year's successful Hajj operations.

As part of its strategic partnership with MoRA, Zong enabled seamless connectivity for over 90,000 Government Scheme Hajj through its specially designed Hajj 2025 internation-

al roaming bundle. The package included free SIMs, 240 international minutes, 60 SMS, 2GB of WhatsApp data, and 10GB of unrestricted data allowing pilgrims to stay in touch with their families throughout their spiritual journey. Zong's efforts were acknowledged specifically for its provision of international roaming services to pilgrims and its satisfactory delivery of telecom support during Hajj 2025. In addition to robust network services, Zong provided real-time in-app tracking, a dedicated helpline, and on-ground assistance via service kiosks across key locations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, ensuring that help and connectivity were always within reach. Khurram Ishaq, Head of LDI & Interna-

tional Business at Zong, shared: "Supporting Hajj pilgrims on such a meaningful journey is a responsibility we take seriously. At Zong, we see connectivity as a vital companion on this sacred journey, enabling presence, peace of mind, and connection with loved ones even across borders. Our goal was to deliver uninterrupted connectivity, ease of communication, and dependable assistance throughout. This recognition from the Ministry reflects the success of our team's commitment and the impact of our services on the ground." This recognition reinforces Zong's mission to lead with innovation and serve Pakistanis at home and abroad through advanced, reliable digital solutions.

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## Briefs

**Minister terms positive budget proposals as encouraging**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Friday termed the positive suggestions from members of both Houses regarding the federal budget as encouraging and constructive, assuring that the government would give them due consideration. Minister Tariq said that both the National Assembly and Senate sessions are currently underway along with finance committee meetings, with government representatives actively participating in all proceedings. He stated that the presence of ministers in both Houses is a reflection of the government's commitment to inclusive decision-making, and encouraged members to present positive proposals, adding: "All constructive suggestions will be taken seriously and incorporated into the budget wherever feasible." Highlighting recent developments, he shared that Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar recently acknowledged two significant recommendations during the National Assembly session: An increase in government employee salary raise from 6% to 10% following parliamentary input. A reduction in the proposed 18% tax on solar panels to 10%, aimed at balancing support for local manufacturers and affordability for the public. Tariq Chaudhry reiterated that all such recommendations are welcomed as constructive contributions and will be reflected in the final version of the budget.—APP

**Protests erupt in Abbottabad**

ABBOTTABAD: Hundreds of students and women teachers Friday staged a protest outside the Abbottabad Press Club against the abrupt closure of vocational training centers operated by the Abbottabad Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA). Similar demonstrations are being reported from across the province, as the provincial government's decision to discontinue funding for these centers has sparked widespread concern. Protesters carried placards and raised slogans demanding the immediate restoration of the vocational centers. They criticized the government for failing to allocate funds for these vital institutions in the latest provincial budget, leading to the closure of all TMA-run centers. Instructors Amreen and Rubina, who have been associated with the program for over a decade, stated that 14 vocational centers were operating in Abbottabad alone. These centers employed around 30 female teachers and provided free skill development education to hundreds of girls, many from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Over the years, thousands of girls have graduated from the centers.—APP

# Efforts to eliminate circular debt commendable: NBG

The business leader emphasized that resolving the financial challenges of the power sector is crucial to ensuring cost stability in electricity and providing affordable energy to industries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that the government's recent steps to eliminate circular debt in the power sector are laudable.

He emphasized that circular debt, a term used to describe the vicious cycle of unpaid bills and loans within the power sector, has posed a persistent threat to the economy, industry, and public for several decades.

Mian Zahid Hussain noted that circular debt not only weakens the financial capacity of power generation companies but also undermines the efficiency of the transmission and distribution system. This, in turn, discourages investment in the power sector and hampers the continuity of electricity generation.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader noted that government measures, such as borrowing from banks to settle outstanding dues, curbing electricity theft, and initiating action against defaulters, are indicators of long-overdue reforms. These measures must be sustained and implemented effectively to achieve lasting impact.

The business leader emphasized

that resolving the financial challenges of the power sector is crucial to ensuring cost stability in electricity and providing affordable energy to industries. However, he warned that making the public bear the brunt of these efforts, such as through increased electricity bills, is neither just nor practical.

Mian Zahid Hussain criticized the strategy of repeatedly increasing tariffs as a weak and short-sighted approach that negatively impacts both ordinary consumers and the business community while further inflating industrial costs. He urged the government to focus on administrative reforms instead of price hikes. He identified electricity theft, line losses, and a poorly maintained transmission

system as the root causes of circular debt. Without addressing these issues, no financial plan can succeed. If left unresolved, the reliance on bank loans will continue to increase the public's burden. This outcome is neither rational nor acceptable.

He proposed that electricity distribution companies be granted greater autonomy while ensuring rigorous performance oversight to help them meet their operational targets. Mian Zahid Hussain also highlighted the potential of increasing investment in the power sector through public-private partnerships, especially in renewable energy projects. Such investments could not only enhance power generation but also reduce dependence on im-

ported fuel, offering a promising future for the sector.

He called for transparency and accountability in all reform initiatives, emphasizing that these are crucial to prevent vested interests from sabotaging progress and to ensure the integrity of the reform process. Finally, he urged the government to reduce electricity tariffs instead of raising them and to lower the cost to nine cents per unit. This, he argued, is essential to boost Pakistan's exports; without it, eliminating the \$ 28 billion trade deficit will be impossible. A balanced, fair, and sustainable energy policy, he concluded, is the only way to end circular debt, stabilize the economy, and ensure public welfare.



ISLAMABAD: MNA Riaz ul Haq Jaji called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif . —DNA

## Peace through unity, creativity: National Peace Festival concludes

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The National Peace Festival 2025 wrapped up at the National Skills University Islamabad, spotlighting the power of unified national narratives, creative expression, and economic strategies in fostering sustainable. The event underscored the importance of unified efforts in building a more peaceful and resilient society. Addressing the ceremony, Director General of the Islamic Research Institute, Dr. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq spotlighted the Paigham-e-Pakistan initiative's pivotal role in fostering tolerance, civic responsibility, and national unity. He emphasized the importance of shared ethical values in building an inclusive society grounded in compassion and justice. Dr. Zia-ul-Haq's

call for unity and social cohesion resonated with the initiative's mission to promote peace and stability through collective efforts. Provost of UMT Lahore, Dr. Syed Asghar Zaidi highlighted the correlation between economic inequality and extremism. "Skill development, entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth are key to fostering peace in vulnerable communities", he stated.

He further said "By addressing these root causes, Pakistan can build a more stable and prosperous future, empowering youth to contribute positively to society and drive national development. Expert Dr. Surrya Choudhary said "Literature, poetry, live painting, and digital art can be potent tools to counter hate and foster empathy". She said by harnessing the power of creative platforms,

we can empower youth to express their ideas and engage with social issues, ultimately building a more compassionate and inclusive society where diverse voices are heard and valued. As Guest of Honor, Dr. Zaidi commended the pivotal role of youth and institutions in peacebuilding, calling on universities and civil society to establish Peace Societies. This initiative, he emphasized, would integrate peacebuilding into Pakistan's academic and social structures, fostering a culture of harmony and stability. The ceremony also honored winners of creative competitions, including speech, live painting, digital art, and poetry, showcasing youth-led innovation. The National Peace Festival 2025 concluded with a renewed commitment to inclusion, resilience, and non-violence, leaving behind a vibrant community of young peacebuilders.

## Tanvir granted 14-day judicial remand

RAWALPINDI: A local court has granted 14-day judicial remand to Ch Tanvir while rejecting a police request for a seven-day physical remand to investigate and recover a mobile phone for forensic analysis. During the hearing in the court of Justice Ahsin Raza on Friday, police sought extended remand of the accused, former MPA Ch Tanvir, citing the need for further investigation, but the defense argued no progress had been made, leading the court to deny the request. The court rejected the police plea. The mobile phone was transferred to police for legal proceedings, and ordered to present the accused on July 4, 2025, with a report under Section 173 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.PC). The court also directed officials to retain the remand paper and attach the accused medical record for health monitoring during custody. Defence advocates Malik Waheed Anjum, Humair Saleem Cheena appeared in the court while Advocate Shahid Ali Shahzad Bhatti, represented the applicant.—APP

## AIOU closes swift centers across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced that the "Swift Centers" established on a trial basis under various regional setups have been completely shut down as of July 2024 due to certain technical reasons. These centers were launched temporarily to facilitate students but are no longer operational, said a press release on Friday. The students are advised not to utilize the services of any swift center as such centers are unauthorized. This is entirely false and constitutes fraud. The university has no affiliation with these fake Swift Centers. Any dealings or services obtained from such entities will be at the students' own risk. The university reserves the right to take legal action against such illegal elements and any individuals or students involved in these activities. All students are strongly advised to seek guidance and information only from the university's main campus or the nearest regional office. Information about regional offices is available at: <http://aiou.edu.pk>.—DNA

## Kayani reaffirms commitment to reforms

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani on Friday stated that the government's primary objective is to maintain the economic stability achieved in recent years, provide relief to the public through accelerated growth, and carry forward the ongoing reform agenda. Speaking in the National Assembly, he stated that the government's primary objective is to maintain economic stability while finding ways to provide relief to the people despite existing challenges. As part of the five-year plan, customs and regulatory duties on raw materials will be significantly reduced, and machinery will be made more affordable to encourage industrial growth. The budget for the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has been raised from Rs 592 billion to Rs 716 billion, marking a 20% increase in funding. This enhanced allocation is intended to provide greater support to vulnerable families through increased cash assistance and improved service delivery. He expressed gratitude to the standing committees of both the National Assembly and the Senate for their thorough review of the Finance Bill 2025-26, which will ultimately be presented to both Houses in the form of a report. He noted that the finance minister and his team are actively participating in the meetings, and the suggestions of parliamentarians are being duly taken into consideration. He thanked the coalition partners for their support to the government and highlighted that the annual average inflation rate has fallen significantly from 12 percent. —DNA

## SHINGLES VACCINE, SHINGRIX

Shingles vaccine, SHINGRIX, is now available at our practices. This is an FDA approved and CDC recommended vaccine designed to help protect patients (above 50 years of age) against the risk of Shingles/ Herpes Zoster.

**This vaccine requires two doses for optimal protection.**

Most of us had chickenpox in childhood, although we may not remember it. Once you've had chickenpox, the virus remains dormant in the nerves. You may not be aware of it for most of your life, but occasionally the virus can reactivate and cause shingles, which appears as a painful rash on the skin.

**The vaccine is recommended for those over 18 with a weakened immune system and for older patients above 50 years of age.**

**Shingles can be very painful and is more likely to affect older individuals. This is often due to a weakened immune system, which can happen with age, stress, or certain medical conditions and treatments.**

For further details please call us on 03008504999/0309778999 or email [hlthline@comsats.net.pk](mailto:hlthline@comsats.net.pk)

# Senate takes up key legislative business

Later, the House resumed discussion on the motion moved by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on June 10, 2025, pertaining to the Senate's recommendations on the Finance Bill, 2025, as required under Article 73 of the Constitution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Presided over by Deputy Chairman Senate Sardar Syedal Khan, the Upper House on Friday continued its discussion on the Finance Bill 2025 and addressed key legislative matters while granting time extensions to various standing committees for the submission of reports on constitutional and legislative bills. Senator Shahadat Awan, on behalf of Senator Farooq Hamid Naek, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice, moved motions for sixty-day extensions of time concerning five bills, including The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Article 51). These were introduced by Senators Manzoor Ahmed and Danesh Kumar; The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Substitution of

Article 140A and amendment of Article 160) introduced by Senator Khalida Ateeby; The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Articles 1, 51, 59, 106, 154, 175A, 198 and 218) introduced by Senator Aon Abbas; The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Article 62) introduced by Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri; The Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2024 introduced by the same senator. Meanwhile, the Senate also granted a sixty-day extension to Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways, for presenting a report on a starred question related to the outsourcing of luggage vans by Pakistan Railways. Similarly, Syed Masroor Ahsan, on behalf of Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti, Chairman of the Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, was granted a sixty-day extension to present the report on the Islamabad Healthcare Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2025, introduced by Senator Mohsin Aziz. Senator Syed Waqar Mahdi, on behalf of Senator Sherry Rehman, secured a 60-day extension for the report on the Pakistan Trade Control of Wild Fauna and Flora (Amendment) Bill, 2024. Moreover, the House approved a sixty-day extension for the Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, chaired by Senator Bushra Anjum Butt, regarding the University of Business, Sciences and Technology Bill, 2025, introduced by Senator Abdul Shakoor Khan. Besides these motions, several reports were laid before the House. Senator Abdul Shakoor Khan, Chairman of the Functional Committee on Government Assurances,

presented two reports — one related to an assurance by the Minister for Communications regarding the condition of the Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway (M-1), and the other concerning the time scale promotion of female teachers assured by the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training. In addition, Syed Masroor Ahsan, on behalf of Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti, laid before the House a report on a point of public importance raised by Senator Hidayatullah Khan regarding alleged corruption and mismanagement in the Pakistan Nursing Council. Later, the House resumed discussion on the motion moved by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on June 10, 2025, pertaining to the Senate's recommendations on the Finance Bill, 2025, as required under Article 73 of the Constitution.

## IRSA releases 240,310 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 240,310 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 265,055 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1454.60 feet which was 52.60 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 167,500 cusecs and 149,800 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1169.10 feet, which was 119.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 27,045 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs, respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 163,066, 139,428, 85,457 and 35,180 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 20,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,019 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

## NA Secretariat contradicts social media reports

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Secretariat has issued a public alert regarding a fake recruitment advertisement that is being widely circulated on social media platforms. The misleading advertisement falsely claims to offer job opportunities within the National Assembly Secretariat. In an official statement on Friday, the Secretariat categorically denied any affiliation with the fraudulent advertisement and urged the public to exercise caution. "The National Assembly Secretariat has no connection whatsoever with the advertisement being circulated online. We strongly advise citizens to ignore such false and misleading information," the statement said. The Secretariat also urged the public to verify any employment announcements only through official and trusted sources to avoid being misled or exploited. For authentic updates and job postings, individuals are advised to visit the official website of the National Assembly of Pakistan at: [www.na.gov.pk](http://www.na.gov.pk). —APP



## Urgent need to boost exports to stabilize rupee

PAKISTAN'S economic woes continue to deepen, with one of the most pressing challenges being the widening disparity between the US dollar and the Pakistani rupee. As of recent reports, the dollar is fast approaching an alarming rate of Rs. 350, threatening further economic instability and severely impacting sectors reliant on imported goods. This exchange rate crisis has not only hit the business community hard but has also fueled inflation, making life increasingly difficult for the common man. At the heart of this crisis lies Pakistan's chronically low export base. Despite having a sizable population, abundant natural resources, and strategic geographic location, Pakistan's export performance remains dismal. For a country of over 240 million people, a consistent annual export volume hovering around \$30 billion is far from adequate. This limited inflow of foreign exchange, combined with large import bills, continues to exert pressure on the rupee. The depreciation of the rupee has a cascading effect. Businesses that rely on imported raw materials are now being forced to increase prices or shut down operations altogether. Essential goods, including pharmaceuticals, machinery, and fuel, become costlier, thus feeding into the inflation cycle. The burden eventually falls on the end consumer, who is already grappling with high food prices, unemployment, and low purchasing power. Perhaps most concerning is the government's seeming helplessness in managing the rupee's slide. Despite the tall claims of economic revival, ground realities suggest otherwise. Structural issues remain unresolved: energy shortages, political instability, inconsistent policies, and bureaucratic hurdles continue to scare away investors and stifle industrial growth. A glaring contrast can be seen in the performance of the Afghan currency. Despite Afghanistan having virtually no formal export economy and being politically isolated, its currency has performed more steadily than Pakistan's. This is largely due to strict currency controls and tight government regulation—something Pakistan has failed to enforce effectively. The comparison is a national embarrassment and should act as a wake-up call for policymakers. What Pakistan needs is an aggressive and coherent export policy. The government must move beyond short-term fixes and adopt structural reforms to boost export industries such as textiles, agriculture, IT, and pharmaceuticals. There must be focused incentives for exporters, reduced bureaucratic red tape, and guaranteed energy supply at competitive rates. Diversifying export markets and promoting value-added goods rather than raw materials is essential for long-term sustainability. Moreover, encouraging local manufacturing and import substitution can help reduce dependency on foreign goods. Effective monetary and fiscal policies, coupled with stability and investor confidence, are the only ways forward. The rupee-dollar disparity is more than just an economic figure—it is a symbol of national performance. If not addressed urgently, it threatens to unravel the economic fabric of the country. Pakistan must act now to break this cycle and chart a path toward financial sovereignty.

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## Corruption threatens TAPI's future

THE Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project was once hailed as a game-changer for regional energy co-operation and economic integration. Designed to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan's massive Galkynysh field to energy-hungry markets in South Asia, TAPI promised to reduce regional energy deficits and promote cross-border collaboration. But over a decade later, TAPI remains a vision on paper—mired in delay, dysfunction, and deepening distrust. At the heart of the project's stagnation lies a fatal flaw: widespread corruption in Turkmenistan. The opaque governance structure and lack of transparency in Turkmenistan's energy sector have made international stakeholders uneasy. Key decisions are often made behind closed doors, without third-party scrutiny or accountability. Western investors and financial institutions have steered clear of Turkmenistan due to governance concerns, further stalling project financing. With no real reform or will to combat corruption, Turkmenistan has failed to build trust with its partners. Pakistan, once a strong supporter of TAPI, is increasingly disillusioned—not just due to Turkmenistan's internal dysfunction, but also because of its insistence on keeping India in the project. While the idea of regional connectivity sounds appealing on paper, the current geopolitical climate renders cooperation with India extremely difficult. Tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi have escalated in recent years, and strategic mistrust runs deep. Pakistan views Turkmenistan's unwillingness to reconfigure the pipeline's framework—either by excluding India or pursuing bilateral alternatives—as a lack of understanding of regional sensitivities. From Pakistan's perspective, any economic or energy collaboration that includes India without addressing core bilateral disputes, particularly Kashmir, is unacceptable. On the other hand, Turkmenistan, desperate for a reliable and economically lucrative export destination, sees India as a vital end-market for its gas. This divergence in strategic priorities is a major obstacle, and neither side appears willing to compromise. Afghanistan, meanwhile, remains the weakest link. With security and political stability still fragile despite changing regimes, building and maintaining a critical piece of energy infrastructure across Afghan territory is a monumental risk. Investors are wary, insurance is nearly impossible, and logistical hurdles abound. In reality, the TAPI project is a victim of overambition, poor planning, and political contradictions. A multibillion-dollar pipeline cannot be built on hopes alone—it needs a foundation of mutual trust, robust governance, and geopolitical alignment. As long as Turkmenistan refuses to clean up its energy sector and accommodate regional concerns, particularly Pakistan's, the project is unlikely to move beyond paper. Instead of clinging to a failing four-party framework, perhaps it is time for Pakistan to explore alternative energy partnerships. Bilateral gas pipelines, LNG imports, and domestic renewable investments might prove more feasible and politically sustainable.

# Israel Controls America: Ted Cruz's revealing confession

Qamar Bashir



Carlson, himself a conservative Christian, rebuked this manipulation. “Is it the job of a U.S. senator to represent the interests of a foreign country?” he asked. The silence in response was louder than any denial. This alliance is not without consequence. The wars waged at Israel’s behest have produced millions of refugees, destabilized entire regions, and eroded U.S. credibility around the world. From Yemen to Afghanistan, the perception is no longer of America as a peace-broker, but as a military enforcer of Israeli policy

IN a political interview that will be studied for years, Senator Ted Cruz—a close confidant of President Donald J. Trump and one of the most prominent Republican voices in Congress—sat down with Tucker Carlson and offered a candid window into the uncomfortable reality of U.S.-Israel relations. His words, wrapped in rationalizations and ideological talking points, confirmed what critics have long warned: the United States is no longer a sovereign actor in the Middle East, but a subordinate executing the will of Israel through lobbying networks like American Israel Public Affair Committee (AIPAC) covert intelligence alignments, and religious manipulation. Carlson's questions were pointed. His tone was incredulous. “Do they [Israel] spy domestically in the United States?” he asked. Ted Cruz replied, without hesitation, “Oh, they probably do—and we do as well... Friends and allies spy on each other.” Rather than condemning the breach of national sovereignty, Ted leaned on ideological dogma: “One of the things about being a conservative is you're not naive... Every one of our friends spies on us.” But this was no ordinary espionage. Carlson pressed harder: “Including on the President?” Ted did not flinch. “They're going to anyway,” he said. “I'm not mad at them.” This was not a defense—it was a surrender. This tacit approval of foreign surveillance on American soil, targeting even the Commander-in-Chief, is a staggering admission. It confirms the deep entrenchment of Mosad within American political and security institutions. From the 1980s Jonathan Pollard case—where a U.S. Navy analyst passed classified secrets to Israel—to the discovery of Israeli surveillance devices near the White House in 2019, the pattern is clear. Israel not only spies on the United States—it does so with impunity, and American lawmakers, far from resisting, justify it. In Ted's worldview, this espionage is outweighed by the benefits of the alliance. “It is in America's interest to be closely allied with Israel,” he claimed, “because we get huge benefits from it.” But that rationale dissolves under scrutiny. The “benefits” come at a staggering cost. According to the Congressional Research Service, Israel has received more than \$150 billion in U.S. aid since its founding, with \$3.8 billion annually locked in under a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Obama administration. These are taxpayer dollars—used to fund Israeli military expansion, missile defense systems like Iron Dome, and intelligence capabilities that now turn inward on America itself. The results have been catastrophic. Israel championed the Iraq, Libya, Syria, Lebanon and Afghanistani Wars. These wars resulted in deaths of over

4,500 American soldiers and over \$2 trillion in U.S. spending. Israel paid nothing, sent no troops, and bore no consequences—yet emerged strategically stronger with a fractured Iraq off the map. This cost does not include billions more in indirect subsidies: loan guarantees, joint weapons research, tax-exempt contributions to Israeli causes, and cooperative agreements that flow predominantly one way. Meanwhile, American citizens shoulder the financial burden of wars launched in Israel's interest and fought under the American flag. Ted's framing of Israel and the United States as having “overlapping interests” reveals a dangerous doctrine: that America's enemies are whoever Israel designates. Under this logic, countries like Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and even critics within Europe are reflexively treated as adversaries—not based on threat assessments, but on Israeli strategic paranoia. Carlson laid bare the contradiction: U.S. intelligence says Iran is years away from weaponization, yet the Israeli-driven narrative claims it's only “days.” When Carlson asked if he would oppose Israeli spying or military manipulation, the senator replied flatly: “They're going to do it anyway.” It was a stunning concession of powerlessness. Driving this surrender is AIPAC—the American Israel Public Affairs Committee—a lobbying juggernaut that acts less like an interest group and more like a shadow foreign ministry. Ted admitted that AIPAC “raised a lot of money” for him, though he insisted it came from “individuals” not the organization itself—an evasion that fails to obscure the reality. AIPAC cannot legally donate directly, but its donor network ensures that candidates who tow the Israeli line are richly rewarded by plying back USA aid, while dissenters are crushed. In 2022 alone, pro-Israel PACs and donors spent over \$100 million in U.S. elections. The result is bipartisan paralysis—where Republicans and Democrats alike refuse to criticize Israel, even as it bombs civilian hospitals, targets nuclear scientists, or spies on the U.S. government. Layered over this political machinery is a spiritual manipulation that binds millions of American Christians to Israel through theological fantasy. According to this belief—promoted by televangelists, Zionist pastors, and AIPAC-sponsored pilgrimages—supporting Israel is a divine mandate, essential for the return of Christ and personal salvation. Ted embraced this religious overlap as a political asset, noting that American Christians see support for Israel not as a geopolitical choice, but as a spiritual obligation.

Carlson, himself a conservative Christian, rebuked this manipulation. “Is it the job of a U.S. senator to represent the interests of a foreign country?” he asked. The silence in response was louder than any denial. This alliance is not without consequence. The wars waged at Israel's behest have produced millions of refugees, destabilized entire regions, and eroded U.S. credibility around the world. From Yemen to Afghanistan, the perception is no longer of America as a peace-broker, but as a military enforcer of Israeli policy. At the United Nations, the United States routinely vetoes resolutions condemning Israel—even when global consensus is near-unanimous. This has alienated allies in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Meanwhile, countries like China, Russia, Turkey, and Brazil step into the diplomatic vacuum, offering an alternative order free from Israeli hegemony. The most tragic irony is that the costs—financial, moral, and reputational—are borne by the United States. Israel walks away stronger, more emboldened, and free of accountability. It receives billions in aid, shields itself behind American vetoes, and sends lobbyists to Washington to extract more. Meanwhile, American cities crumble, veterans are left homeless, and the middle class bears the tax burden of imperial overreach. The Iran conflict marks a tipping point. The world watches as the U.S. prepares to bleed again—militarily, diplomatically, and economically—for a war that serves no American interest. It is not just the Middle East at stake—it is the soul of American democracy. Senator Ted's confessions, though cloaked in conservative realism, unmask a deeper betrayal. America is not defending a friend—it is financing its manipulator. It is not acting in its interest—it is acting in fear of political reprisal. It is not leading—it is being led. If the United States is to reclaim its sovereignty, it must reassert control over its foreign policy, disentangle itself from theological fantasies, and end the unchecked power of foreign lobbies operating on Capitol Hill. This is not antisemitism—it is patriotism. It is the duty of a republic to defend its institutions, its people, and its future from external domination—no matter how sacredly disguised. The question now is whether America has the courage to reclaim its sovereignty, or whether it will continue to play the role of a global enforcer for a foreign master cloaked in the language of friendship. The time has come for Americans—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—to question whether the alliance with Israel is indeed serving their interests, or whether it is merely serving the interests of a foreign state cloaked in biblical prophecy, financial influence, and political manipulation.

# Tradition meets innovation in the national assembly

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Pakistan itself has a rich cultural history of intellectual cafés and tea houses that formed the backbone of its literary and political thought. The Pak Tea House in Lahore, once a haven for Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Habib Jalib, was not just a place for tea, but a crucible of resistance and refinement

IN the quiet dignity of parliamentary architecture, some ideas are born not merely in the chamber of debate but in the spaces in between—where minds meet without microphones and voices flow without formality. One such thoughtful innovation has taken root in the National Assembly of Pakistan under the visionary stewardship of the three-times elected Speaker, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. More than a seasoned parliamentarian, he has consistently demonstrated a constructive and forward-looking vision for Pakistan's legislature—not confined merely to laws and bills, but encompassing the ethos of dialogue, dignity, and inclusivity. Among his many reforms—the installation of solar energy panels on Parliament's rooftop and parking area, the creation of a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Secretariat, an infant Daycare Centre for the children of women parliamentarians and staff—the establishment of the Parliamentarians Coffee Corner within the Parliament precinct stands out as an initiative both symbolic and practical. It may appear as a modest innovation, but in truth, it carries a profound message; that ideas are not always birthed in confrontation, but often in conversation. The tradition of coffee and tea houses being fertile grounds for thought, dialogue, and even revolution is a well-recorded chapter in history. In 17th-century England, coffee houses became known as “penny universities,” where for the price of a cup of coffee, one could engage in intellectual debate with scholars, merchants, writers, and thinkers. Likewise, in France, the famed Café de Flore and Les Deux Magots in Paris bore witness to the musings of Sartre and de Beauvoir. In Vienna, the Kaffeehaus culture gave rise to the likes of Freud, Trotsky, and Wittgenstein, whose casual dialogues shaped profound revolutions in human thought. In the House of Commons of the United

Kingdom, Members often frequent the Parliamentary Tea Room—not merely to refresh themselves, but to exchange informal views across party lines. Even the United States Capitol has its cafeterias and lounges where bipartisan consensus sometimes begins—not in the glare of the floor, but over a quiet cup. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's vision of establishing a Coffee Corner in the National Assembly aligns with these traditions. In an age when politics is often marred by polarization and rancor, a place where legislators might sit face to face without cameras or scripts is not just a convenience—it is a necessity. Such a setting fosters civility, nurtures understanding, and allows the quiet diplomacy of listening to flourish. It is not hard to imagine a moment in the near future when consensus on critical national matters is born not in the roar of debate but in the murmurs shared over a warm cup. Pakistan itself has a rich cultural history of intellectual cafés and tea houses that formed the backbone of its literary and political thought. The Pak Tea House in Lahore, once a haven for Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Habib Jalib, was not just a place for tea, but a crucible of resistance and refinement. Journalists, poets, artists, and even parliamentarians frequented its wooden benches and smoke-laced air, where political ideology and poetry flowed in tandem. Shezan on The Mall, too, became a mid-20th century symbol of tasteful gathering—where refined conversation, not confrontation, defined the day. In Karachi, the famed Irani cafés once served as the democratic drawing rooms of the city. In Quetta and Peshawar, the hujras and chaikhans served similar functions—where wisdom often came without titles and where decisions, though informal, shaped local narratives. What Sardar Ayaz Sadiq seeks to do within the Parliament House is to restore a forgotten elegance to politics; the art of dialogue beyond the din. The

Coffee Corner is not merely a place to sip; it is a place to reflect. It may serve parliamentarians their espresso or chai, but more importantly, it serves the democratic spirit a reminder—that the real strength of a Parliament is not in its building but in the relationships it fosters. The other reforms introduced by the Speaker also follow this philosophy of care, progress, and inclusion. The solar energy project is not only a gesture toward environmental responsibility but a bold statement of self-reliance. The SDGs Secretariat brings Pakistan's legislative body into global alignment with developmental goals that promise to uplift the most marginalized. The infant Daycare Centre stands as a monument of dignity for women legislators and staff, affirming that motherhood is not a hindrance to public service but a complement to it. But of all these, the Coffee Corner carries an invisible thread—a thread of human connection, which, when woven well, becomes the fabric of parliamentary grace. As the world around us grows louder and more divided, spaces of quiet communion become rare and precious. In choosing to carve such a space within the heart of Parliament, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has shown that leadership is not merely about commanding attention, but also about creating environments where others may speak, think, and even differ—with respect. Ultimately, just as the poets of Pak Tea House once believed that “a conversation can change the world,” so may a conversation in the newly established Coffee Corner of the National Assembly offer the kind of thoughtful engagement that makes democracy not only functional but noble. For when parliamentarians begin to listen—not just debate—they also begin to govern better. And that, in any language, is the true aroma of progress.



## Briefs

## ‘Field Marshal meeting...’

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find a peaceful resolution to this grave crisis, through dialogue and diplomacy. He stated that Pakistan was ready to play a constructive role in any effort for peace in the current situation, which was deeply worrying, not only for the region, but for the entire world. While recalling President Trump's focus on trade, the Prime Minister stated that Pakistan and the U.S. needed to work together to advance mutually beneficial cooperation across a wide range of areas, including trade, investment, energy, mining, rare earth metals, and IT.

## Trump-Munir meeting...

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many of whom took to social media to attack both Trump and the Pakistani military leadership. A PTI leader, who has been close to the party founder and is currently absconding, was among those leading the charge to float conspiracy theories suggesting that Pakistan's policy on the Iran-Israel front may be shifting under US pressure. However, such speculations were laid to rest on Thursday when Pakistan's Foreign Office unequivocally reiterated the country's long-standing position.

## ‘Politicians defied Supreme...’

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how independents can join a political party that is not part of parliament. The observation came while Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan was leading an 11-member constitutional bench that had heard arguments on whether the SIC could claim reserved seats after the inclusion of independent candidates. The court had remarked that while independents can join a party represented in parliament, it is constitutionally unsound for them to join one that did not participate in the elections.

## Pakistan, Belgium vow to cement...

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legal modernization and inclusive governance. The Minister also informed the Ambassador about the recently enacted Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2025, which sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 for both boys and girls. This legislation represents a significant step toward aligning Pakistan's legal framework with international child rights standards, and efforts are underway to encourage similar reforms across all provinces.

## Pakistan, EU dialogue discusses...

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In addition, the Dialogue reviewed recent trends in export controls and assessed the implications of Emerging Technologies on global security. The Pakistan-EU Dialogue on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament is an integral part of the broader engagement between the European Union and Pakistan. They recognized it as a vital platform for constructive engagement on security and stability and on arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation issues.

## Kremlin says Middle...

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further escalation, urging all involved parties to seek a diplomatic solution—particularly in regard to the ongoing standoff over Tehran's nuclear programme. “The region is plunging into an abyss of instability and war,” Peskov stated, adding that each country in the region should define its own red lines rather than external powers doing so. Russia has also called on the United States to refrain from launching strikes against Iran and to instead pursue peaceful negotiations.

Nations Cup Hockey Tourney  
Pakistan Stuns France to reach Nations Cup hockey final

Wales, Malaysia Qualify for 5th-6th Position, Japan and South Africa will paly for 7th and 8th position

DNA

KUALALUMPUR: In a thrilling semifinal clash at the FIH Nations Cup, Pakistan pulled off a sensational comeback to defeat higher-ranked France in a penalty shootout after the match ended 3-3 in regulation time. France, ranked 10th in the world, dominated early, racing to a 2-0 lead. However, 15th-ranked Pakistan fought back valiantly, scoring three consecutive goals to take a 3-2 lead. Sufiyan Khan and Rana Waheed were instrumental in the turnaround, showcasing brilliant attacking play. France managed to equalize late in the game, forcing the match into a shootout. Pakistani goalkeeper Muneeb-ur-Rehman emerged as the hero, making crucial saves to secure a 4-3 victory in the penalty shootout. His outstanding performance earned widespread praise. “This win is for the nation,” said Pakistan's captain. “The boys showed great character after being two goals down. Muneeb was exceptional, and the entire team fought hard.” Pakistan will now face the winner of the other semifinal in the Nations Cup final, aiming to clinch the title and boost their world ranking. The victory has reignited hopes for a resurgence in Pakistan hockey, with fans celebrating the team's spirited performance. France, despite the loss, put up a strong fight but fell short in the shootout. Meanwhile, Pakistan's remarkable comeback has



set the stage for an exciting final showdown. Earlier, Two important classification matches were decided on Friday in the ongoing FIH Nations Cup Hockey Tournament being played in Malaysia, with Wales and host nation Malaysia registering convincing victories over their respective opponents. In the first match of the day, Wales thrashed Japan with a dominant performance, securing a victory.

The Welsh side displayed clinical attacking play, capitalizing on Japan's defensive weaknesses and maintaining control throughout the match. With this win, Wales not only ended their group stage campaign on a high note but also confirmed their place in the 5th-6th position playoff. Later in the evening, hosts Malaysia kept the home crowd cheering as they outclassed South Africa 4-2

in an entertaining contest. Malaysia showed great composure and teamwork to overcome the physically strong South African side. The Malaysians, who narrowly missed out on qualifying for the final due to goal difference, played with flair and determination to keep their hopes alive for a respectable finish. With these results, both Wales and Malaysia have now secured their spots in the 5th and 6th position match, which will be played on Saturday, June 22. The match promises to be an exciting battle between two well-matched sides aiming to finish the tournament on a high. Meanwhile, the grand final of the Nations Cup is also scheduled for Saturday, June 22, at 6:00 PM Pakistan Standard Time. Pakistan, despite losing to New Zealand in their last group match, qualified for the SEMIfinal on better goal difference. Pakistan will face France, who remained unbeaten in the group stage. The winner of the Nations Cup will earn a coveted spot in the 2025 FIH Pro League, one of the most prestigious competitions in international hockey. This has raised the stakes significantly for the finalists, with both teams looking to secure their place among the hockey elite. As the tournament reaches its climax, the Nations Cup has delivered intense and high-quality matches, showcasing the rising talent and competitive spirit of participating teams. All eyes are now set on Saturday's final showdown and classification matches, which will bring the tournament to an exciting conclusion.

## Thai PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra to meet army commander to defuse political crisis

BANGKOK: Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra will on Friday visit an army commander she called an “opponent” in a leaked phone call as she battles to defuse a crisis threatening to topple her government. The 38-year-old leader, in office for less than a year, was forced to make a public apology on Thursday as anger flared over the call with former Cambodian leader Hun Sen that appeared online. Her main coalition partner, the conservative Bhumjaithai party, pulled out on Wednesday saying she had insulted the country and the army, putting her government on the point of collapse. There was better news for Paetongtarn, daughter of controversial billionaire ex-PM Thaksin Shinawatra, on Friday as another important coalition partner, the conservative Democrat Party, pledged to stay. “The Democrat Party will

remain in the government to help resolve the challenges the country is currently facing,” the party said in a statement. Another coalition party, Charthaiapatana, said late on Thursday that it would not withdraw, after urgent talks on the crisis with the Democrats and the United Thai Nation (UTN) party. With the departure of Bhumjaithai, the government led by Paetongtarn's Pheu Thai party now holds a razor-thin majority in parliament. Losing another major partner would likely see the government collapse, plunging the kingdom into fresh political instability as it grapples with a stuttering economy and US President Donald Trump's threatened trade tariffs. Paetongtarn will travel to Thailand's northeast on Friday to patch things up with Lieutenant General Boonsin Padklang, the commander of the forces in northeast

Thailand, where the border clashes took place. She referred to Boonsin as her “opponent” in the leaked call with Hun Sen, in which the two leaders discussed the ongoing border dispute. Thailand has formally protested to Cambodia about the leak, calling it a breach of diplomatic protocol that had damaged trust between the two sides. Paetongtarn was criticised as being weak and deferential in the call with Hun Sen, a veteran politician known as a wily operator, but her comments about the army commander were potentially the most damaging to her. Thailand's armed forces have long played a powerful role in the kingdom's politics and politicians are usually careful not to antagonise them. When she made her public apology for the leaked call on Thursday, Paetongtarn did so standing in front of army and police chiefs, in a show of unity.

There were small street protests on Thursday and calls from across the political spectrum for her to quit or announce an election, but her apology and backing from some of her coalition partners appear to have shored up her position for now. But with a tiny majority she remains vulnerable, not least because of the awkward nature of her coalition. Paetongtarn took office in August last year at the head of an uneasy alliance between Pheu Thai and a group of conservative, pro-military parties whose members have spent much of the past 20 years battling against her father. Thaksin, twice elected PM, was thrown out in a military coup in 2006, and the bitter tussle between the conservative, royalist establishment and the political movement he founded has dominated Thai politics throughout that time. — Agencies

## National Karate Championship begins in Abbottabad

PESHAWAR: Four-day National Karate Championship kicked off in the scenic city of Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The championship was officially inaugurated by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jehan, who cut the ribbon to mark the beginning of the event. The opening ceremony was attended by Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Captain (Retd.) Sanaulah Khan, who welcomed the provincial minister upon his arrival. Also present were Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tashfeen Haider, Chairman of Pakistan Karate Federation Muhammad Jahangir, Secretary PKF Andaleeb Sandhu, RSO Hazara Ahmad Zaman, President of KP Karate Association Khurshid Khan, Senior Vice President Khalid Noor, Secretary Asim Qureshi, Director of Sports Operations Jamshed Baloch, and Assistant Director Finance Shah Faisal. Organized by the Pakistan Karate Federation in collaboration with the Directorate General of Sports KP and the KP Karate Association, the national championship is being held at Government Postgraduate College No. 1 Abbottabad. Teams from all four provinces, as well as Islamabad, Pakistan Army, WAPDA, Police, Railways, and HEC, both male and female, are participating in the event. Addressing the opening ceremony, Minister Fakhar Jehan emphasized that sports play a vital role in engaging youth in positive activities. He said the provincial government is taking practical steps to promote sports in line with the vision of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan and KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur. He assured that talented male and female players in every sport will be provided with equal opportunities to shine at the national and international levels. He also announced that a Sports Festival would be held in Swat Valley in August, featuring regional and national competitions in various games, followed by Hazara Games. — Agencies

## New Zealand Edge South Korea in Shootout

DNA

NEW Zealand secured a dramatic victory over South Korea in the semi-final of the Nations Cup Hockey Tournament, earning a place in the final to be played on Saturday. The tightly contested match ended in a draw during regulation time, forcing the outcome to be decided through a penalty shootout. The Kiwis held their nerve in the shootout, edging past the South Koreans with precise finishing and solid goalkeeping. This win marks a significant achievement for the new Zealand side as they now prepare to face Pakistan in the tournament final. Interestingly, New Zealand had already met Pakistan in the pool stage, where they came out victorious. However, Pakistan bounced back strongly in their semi-final and will be looking for revenge in the final clash. The final promises to be an exciting encounter, with both teams showcasing strong performances throughout the tournament.

## Govt signs \$4.5bn...

FROM PAGE 01

The liquidity crunch has disrupted supply, discouraged investment and added to fiscal pressure, making it a key focus under Pakistan's \$7 billion IMF programme. Finding funds to plug the gap has been a persistent challenge, with limited fiscal space and high-cost legacy debt making resolution efforts more difficult.

## Dar meets Türkiye...

FROM PAGE 01

and the leadership, the DPM/FM, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, conveyed deep appreciation and felicitations to President Erdogan on the honour conferred by the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum.

## Can NATO keep Donald Trump on-message about Russia threat?

BRUSSELS: When leaders from NATO's 32 countries gather for a summit in The Hague next week, most want to send a clear message: Russia is the main threat to their alliance. But the loudest voice in the room likely won't be on the same page. Since coming back to office, US President Donald Trump has upended the West's approach towards Russia's war on Ukraine by undercutting Kyiv and opening the door to closer ties with Moscow. While the volatile leader has expressed some frustration with Russia's Vladimir Putin for refusing a ceasefire, he has steered clear of punishing the Kremlin. At a G7 summit this week Trump made waves by saying the group of industrialised countries should never have expelled Russia. Ahead of the Hague gathering, diplomats at NATO have been wrangling over a five-paragraph summit statement, with many countries pressing for a full-throated assertion of the menace from Moscow. That, they say, will help explain the main thrust of the meeting: an agreement for countries to ramp up defence

spending to satisfy Trump's demand for it to reach five percent of GDP. Since the Kremlin launched its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the alliance has called Russia “the most significant and direct threat to allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area”. But this time around the United States – backed up by Moscow-friendly Hungary and Slovakia – has been intent on watering that down. Diplomats have been juggling with variants such as referring to “threats, including Russia” or mentioning “the long-term threat posed by Russia to Euro-Atlantic security”. The verbal nuances may seem slight, but they mean a lot to those countries being asked to massively ramp up spending and those on NATO's eastern flank most threatened by the Kremlin. NATO has warned that Russia could be ready to attack an alliance country within five years. “If we can get Trump to sign off on calling Russia a long-term threat, then that would be a good result,” a senior European diplomat told media. — DNA

## ‘Unleashing the Atom: Civilian Nuclear Power in the 21st Century’

DNA

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a high-level national seminar titled “Unleashing the Atom: Civilian Nuclear Power in the 21st Century.” The event was widely attended by academia, students, intellectuals and domain experts. In her introductory remarks, Nidaa Shahid, Associate Director at CASS Lahore, emphasised Pakistan's achievements in civilian nuclear power and called for leveraging advanced technologies to keep Pakistan at the forefront of global nuclear innovation. Dr Ansar Parvez, Advisor Nuclear Power to the National Command Authority (NCA), delivered a compelling keynote address tracing the global evolution of nuclear energy and Pakistan's civil nuclear journey. He noted the global resurgence in nuclear power but cautioned that public apprehensions, safety concerns, and regulatory challenges continue to hinder broader acceptance. He emphasised that the future of nuclear energy depends not only on safe and efficient plant operations but also on building sustained public trust. Dr Javid Khurshid, Consultant for Science, Communication, and Diplomacy at COMSTECH, emphasised that nuclear power, now increasingly recognised as a green, safe, and sustainable energy

source, holds immense potential in addressing the challenges of climate change. He highlighted the critical importance of responsible policymaking, effective science communication, and proactive public engagement in securing nuclear energy's long-term role in enhancing climate resilience and advancing sustainable development.

Mr Amer Manzoor, DG International Affairs Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), outlined global trends and emerging opportunities for Pakistan in the civil nuclear domain. He advocated for the integration of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), as well as non-electric applications such as desalination and hydrogen production. He emphasised



PAEC's pivotal role in driving sustainable development across energy, health, and agriculture, and highlighted the need for innovation-driven policies and robust institutional capacity to harness the full potential of nuclear technology. In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS Lahore, highlighted that nuclear energy stands at the heart of Pakistan's strategy for achieving energy security, environmental sustainability, and national resilience. He emphasised that with over 3,500 MW already contributed to the national grid, Pakistan's civil nuclear programme is a proven success, but must now evolve to meet 21st century demands. This includes embracing emerging technologies like SMRs, investing in research and innovation, localising the nuclear value chain, and cultivating the next generation of nuclear professionals. He stressed that nuclear energy is more than just an electricity source; it is a strategic pillar for national development, environmental responsibility and technological progress. Therefore, a forward-looking, inclusive approach is essential to fully harness the potential of nuclear energy for sustainable development. The seminar concluded with a lively Q&A session, engaging participants in a forward-looking discussion on innovations in the civil nuclear technology and its importance for sustainable development in Pakistan.



## Briefs

PSX gains  
20.65 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Friday gaining 20.65 points, a positive change of 0.02 percent, closing at 120,023.24 points as compared to 120,002.59 points on the last trading day. A total of 421,643,224 shares were traded during the day as compared to 604,536,506 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 15.651 billion against Rs 20.442 billion on the last trading day. As many as 468 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 178 of them recorded gains and 245 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 45 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 42,791,268 shares at Rs 1.45 per share, TRG Pakistan Limited with 26,664,589 shares at Rs 56.68 per share and Pervez Ahmed Co. 25,526,681 shares at Rs 2.84 per share. Macter International Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 56.63 per share closing at Rs621.82 whereas runner-up was Hoechst Pakistan Limited with Rs47.74 rise in its share price to close at Rs3,198.50. PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 1,239.31 per share price, closing at Rs 11,153.83, whereas the runner-up Pakistan Services Limited with Rs 47.41 decline in its per share price to Rs 941.11.—APP

Rupee sheds  
06 paise  
against US  
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday depreciated by 06 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 283.70 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.64. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 283.5 and Rs 285.75 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.43 to close at Rs 326.68 against the last day's closing of Rs 325.25, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.95, whereas an increase of Rs 1.90 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 382.30 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 380.40. The exchange rates of the Emiratis Dirham increase by 02 paise to close at Rs 77.25 and the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant at closed at Rs 75.59.—APP

Private  
Sector key to  
sustainable  
eco growth:  
Nasir

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, has emphasized the critical role of the private sector in driving Pakistan's economic revival, job creation, industrial expansion, and innovation. Speaking to trade and industry leaders at the Chamber House on Friday, he called for bold structural reforms and a consistent policy environment to attract both local and foreign investment, said a press release issued here. Qureshi underscored that Pakistan's economic stability hinges on empowering the private sector and creating an enabling environment for businesses, particularly in the manufacturing sector. He welcomed the government's recently announced five-year tariff reform plan, terming it a "transformative initiative" that could boost Pakistan's exports by several billion dollars—provided it is implemented with transparency and aligned with market realities. He stressed the urgency of simplifying regulations, streamlining business licensing, and removing bureaucratic obstacles to improve the overall investment climate. "A conducive environment is essential for business growth and competitiveness," he noted. Highlighting the potential of Pakistan's youth—APP

Violence against children hit  
'unprecedented levels' in 2024

Also listed again is the Russian army for its actions in Ukraine, where the report records a 105 percent increase in serious violations between 2023 and 2024

UNITED NATIONS, United States: From Gaza to the Democratic Republic of Congo, violence against children in conflict zones reached "unprecedented levels" in 2024, a United Nations annual report said Thursday. "In 2024, violence against children in armed conflict reached unprecedented levels, with a staggering 25 percent surge in the number of grave violations in comparison with 2023," according to the report from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The report verified 41,370 grave violations against children in 2024—including 36,221 committed in 2024 and 5,149 committed previously but confirmed in 2024—the highest number since the monitoring tool was established nearly 30 years ago.

The new high beats 2023, another record year, which itself represented a 21 percent increase over the preceding year. With more than 4,500 killed and 7,000 injured, children continue to bear "the brunt of relentless hostilities and indiscriminate attacks," the report said. There was also a marked increase in the number of child victims of multiple violations to 22,495. "The cries of 22,495 innocent children who should be learning to read or play ball—but instead have been forced to learn how to survive gunfire and bombings—should keep all of us awake at night," said Virginia Gamba, special representative of the UN secretary-general for children and armed conflict. "This must serve as a wake-up

call. We are at the point of no return." In its annual report, the UN compiles violations of the rights of children, those aged under 18, in some 20 conflict zones around the world. In its appendix, a "list of shame" calls out those responsible for these violations—a powerful coalition of Haitian gangs was added this year—which include child killings and mutilations, recruitment to violence, kidnappings, denial of humanitarian aid and sexual violence. The Israeli armed forces, which were named last year along with Palestinian militant group Hamas, remain on the list. The Palestinian territories occupy the top spot in the dismal rankings, with more than 8,500 serious violations, the vast majority attributed to Israeli forces, including

more than 4,800 in the Gaza Strip. This figure includes confirmation of 1,259 Palestinian children killed in Gaza, and the UN notes it is currently verifying information on an additional 4,470 children killed in 2024 in the war-torn territory. Violence erupted there following Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. The report also calls out Israel's military operations in Lebanon, where more than 500 children were killed or injured last year. Following the Palestinian territories, the countries where the UN recorded the most violence against children in 2024 are: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (more than 4,000 grave violations), Somalia (more than 2,500), Nigeria (nearly 2,500), and Haiti (more than 2,200).

"List of shame" inductees include Haitian gang coalition "Viv Ansanm," blamed for a 490 percent increase in violations, including child recruitment, murders and gang rapes. Another addition to the list is Colombian drug cartel Clan del Golfo, which is accused of child recruitment. Colombia in general recorded a significant increase in cases of forced recruitment, with 450 children in 2024 compared to 262 the previous year. Remaining on the list are the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which have been fighting in Sudan for more than two years. Also listed again is the Russian army for its actions in Ukraine, where the report records a 105 percent increase in serious violations between 2023 and 2024.

Japan's core  
inflation  
rises to  
2-year high

ISTANBUL: Japan's core consumer inflation jumped to a 28-month high of 3.7% year-on-year in May, led by high rice prices, according to official data. Core inflation accelerated from the previous month's figure of 3.5%. The inflation rate has remained at or above the Bank of Japan's 2% target since April 2022. The core CPI, which excludes energy and fresh food to reveal underlying pricing trends, increased 3.3% in May after rising 3% in April, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications data. Food prices, excluding fresh goods, rose 7.7%, accelerating from a 7% increase in April. A lack of rice caused prices to spike 101.7%, hitting a new record for the eighth consecutive month. Energy prices climbed 8.1% in May, slowing from a 9.3% increase in April. Prices for household durable goods climbed 3.8%, decelerating from 6.4% in April, due partly to weak demand for air conditioners. As a result of abnormally hot summer weather that reduced yields and farmers passing on higher production costs to households, prices of Japanese rice have now been growing at a record rate for each of the last eight months. While rising rice prices pushed inflation expectations higher, Japan was forced to import rice from South Korea for the first time in years. May core CPI data signaled the difficulty the Bank of Japan (BoJ) faces in balancing the rising pressure of persistent food inflation and the risks posed by US tariffs on the economy.—APP

Argentina's  
jobless rate  
rises to 4  
year high

BUENOS AIRES, June 20 (Xinhua/APP): Argentina's unemployment rate rose by 0.2 percentage points to 7.9 percent in the first quarter of 2025, the highest in almost four years, said the National Institute of Statistics and Census Thursday. The data is based on the statistics agency's Permanent Household Survey, which covers 31 urban areas with a combined population of 29.8 million. In the surveyed areas, about 1.1 million people in the economically active population were unemployed, suggesting a total of around 1.7 million across Argentina. Meanwhile, the employment rate stood at 44.4 percent in the first quarter, representing some 13.3 million people with jobs. A nationwide breakdown shows that the Greater Buenos Aires area—which includes the capital and its surrounding districts—posted an unemployment rate of 9.1 percent.—APP

Armed  
men kill 34  
soldiers,  
wound 14

DAKAR: Armed men killed 34 soldiers and wounded 14 others in western Niger near the tri-state border with Mali and Burkina Faso, the defense ministry said. The attack was carried out around 9 a.m. Thursday in Banibangou by attackers using eight vehicles and more than 200 motorbikes, the ministry said in a statement. The government said its forces killed dozens of attackers it called "terrorists," adding that search operations by land and air were being conducted to find additional assailants. Niger, along with its neighbors Burkina Faso and Mali, has for more than a decade battled an insurgency fought by jihadist groups, including some allied with Al-Qaeda and the Daesh group. Following military coups in the three nations in recent years, the ruling juntas have expelled French forces and turned to Russia's mercenary units for security assistance. The three countries have vowed to strengthen their cooperation by establishing a new security alliance, the Alliance of Sahel States. But the security situation in the Sahel, a vast region on the fringes of the Sahara Desert, has significantly worsened since the juntas took power, analysts say, with a record number of attacks and civilians killed by Islamic militants and government forces.—APP

Thematic meeting of Budapest process to  
promote legal migration pathways

Minister Ch. Salik Hussain emphasized the importance of expanding safe, orderly, and regular avenues for migration, highlighting Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the dignity, development, and well-being of its people



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis, Chaudhary Salik, participated as a chief guest in 'Budapest Process Thematic Meeting on Legal Pathways for Migration'.DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development hosted the Thematic Meeting of the Budapest Process, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's engagement with this international platform. While addressing the event as the chief guest, Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhary Salik Hussain stated, "It is a pleasure to host this thematic Meeting of the Budapest Process and to mark the meaningful occasion of bringing the Dialogue to Pakistan for the first time in over a decade." Minister Ch. Salik Hussain emphasized the importance of expanding safe, orderly, and regular avenues for migration, highlighting Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the dignity, development, and well-being of its people. "Today's thematic focus on legal pathways for migration, a topic of high relevance and priority for our government,

is both timely and relevant," he stated. "As global mobility increases and the demand for labour across various sectors rises, it becomes ever more important to expand safe, orderly, and regular avenues for migration." The Minister expressed his appreciation for the partner-

ship with the Budapest Process, which brings together countries of origin, transit, and destination in a spirit of shared responsibility. "Pakistan has remained a steadfast partner of the Budapest Process for over two decades, and we value this unique platform," Minister

Ch. Salik Hussain said. "I would like to commend the Budapest Process Secretariat and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) for their continued commitment to building consensus on migration governance through constructive dia-

logue and cooperation." Minister Ch. Salik Hussain highlighted the significance of labor mobility for Pakistan's economy and the well-being of its people. "Over 11 million Pakistanis abroad contribute not only to their host economies but also to our national growth through remittances and knowledge exchange," he stated. "Our overseas Pakistanis continue to be a vital pillar of national resilience, and we are committed to ensuring that their migration journeys are safe, well-governed, and mutually beneficial." The Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening cooperation with destination countries and partners. "To this end, Pakistan has developed a robust legal migration framework that facilitates the deployment of our workforce abroad through structured, transparent, and rights-based processes," Minister Ch. Salik Hussain said.—DNA

Belgium  
announces  
border checks  
in migration  
clampdown

BRUSSELS: Belgium will introduce border checks on people coming into the country to clamp down on illegal migration, the government said, in another limit on free movement across Europe's Schengen zone. The restrictions in the country that borders the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg and Germany will start this summer, a spokesperson for the junior minister for migration, Anneleen Van Bossuyt, said on Friday. "Time for entry controls. Belgium must not be a magnet for those stopped elsewhere. Our message is clear: Belgium will no longer tolerate illegal migration and asylum shopping," Van Bossuyt wrote on X. The announcement follows similar moves by the Netherlands and Germany, part of a broader crackdown on migration across the continent, even as numbers of arrivals on many major routes have shown signs of falling.—APP

ISSI, NIDM sign LOA  
establishing collaborative  
partnership

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), a think-tank operating as part of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The LOA represents the commencement of a long-term, meaningful partnership between the two institutions, with a shared commitment to advancing academic research and policy dialogue on issues of high national importance including disaster management, climate change, emerging response, and regional collaboration. On behalf of ISSI, the LOA was signed by Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director Administration/China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC), while Mr. Tanveer Paracha, Executive Director, signed on behalf of NIDM. The LOA signing was witnessed by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General, ISSI and Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, Chairman, NDMA. Senior members of staff from NDMA and ISSI were present. Speaking on the occasion, Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik emphasized the importance of establishing clear benchmarks and deliverables to ensure meaningful progress under the new partnership. —APP

CDWP approves 5 uplift  
projects worth Rs 55.164b

ISLAMABAD: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Friday approved five development projects worth Rs. 55.164 billion for sustainable economic development in the country. The Central Development Working Party (CDWP), in a meeting chaired by the Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Ahsan Iqbal, approved 5 different development projects, said a release issued here. Out of these, two projects with substituted cost of Rs. 7.725 billion were approved at the CDWP level. And three projects, amounting to Rs. 47.439 billion, were recommended to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for approval. The meeting was attended by Awaiz Manzoor Sumra, Secretary Planning, along with Chief Economist, VC PIDE, other members of the Planning Commission, Federal Secretaries, heads of Provincial Planning and Development (P&D) boards/ departments, and senior representatives from relevant Federal Ministries and Provincial Governments. The agenda focused on development projects across key sectors, including Environment, Food and Agriculture, Health and Physical Planning and Housing. A project related to Environment sector presented in the meeting namely "Installation of Weather Surveillance Radar at Sukkur in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan – Revised" worth Rs. 5725.013 million approved by CDWP forum. The chair noticed inordinate delay in implementation of the project with Japanese grant and directed for installation on priority basis. A project related to Food and Agriculture sector presented in the meeting namely "Balochistan Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship Project" recommended to ECNEC at a revised cost of Rs. 12461.661 million, the project source of financing is through World Bank and International Development Association (IDA) and MDTF. The main objective of the project is to promote employment opportunities for rural communities and ensure the sustainability of enterprises in eight districts of Balochistan including Chagai, Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah, Mastung, Nushki, Pishin, Sherani, and Zhob. The project aims to benefit rural households by supporting livelihoods through enterprise development and job creation. —APP

Chaudhary Waseem Ahmed: A community  
champion who chose service over status

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a political climate often dominated by personal ambition and the pursuit of prestige, Chaudhary Waseem Ahmed represents a refreshing and rare example of what it means to lead with integrity, humility, and purpose. Rather than chase headlines or higher office, he has devoted his life to the people and progress of Central Valley, California—proving that real leadership begins and endures at the local level. **Choosing Impact Over Elevation** While many in public service view local government as a stepping stone to broader influence, Mr. Ahmed has consistently chosen a different path—one grounded in service, accountability, and community impact. Despite receiving multiple opportunities to run for state and federal office, he made a conscious decision to remain rooted where he could do the most good—at home, among the people who know him best. "I never set out to be a politician," Mr. Ahmed reflects. "My goal has always been to be a trusted neighbor, a responsive leader, and someone who truly listens. That's where I believe the real work is." **A Legacy of Local Leadership** Mr. Ahmed's public service journey spans decades and is marked by a record of integrity, vision, and results. Long before his election to the City Council in 2014, he served his community with distinction in multiple capacities, including: • Chairman, Planning Commission • President and Board Member, Chamber of Commerce • Commissioner, Parks and Recreation Department • Chairman, Transportation Commission • Executive Board Member, Economic Development Commission • Chairman, Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) • Appointee, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control Citizens Advisory Board



- Member, Workforce Investment Board
- Policy Committee Member, League of California Cities – Revenue & Taxation
- Active Member, League of California Cities and API Caucus
- Member, International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)

In every role, Mr. Ahmed has championed the belief that government exists not to dictate, but to empower—to bring people together to achieve what no individual can accomplish alone. **Global Perspective, Local Heart** Born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Mr. Ahmed's early ed-

ucation took place at Muslim High School before immigrating to the United States. Raised in Concord, California, he earned his associate degree in political science, followed by a degree in Business Administration from San Francisco State University. He later completed his master's degree in finance, with a concentration in public and private sector leadership, at Sacramento State University. This rich blend of cultural heritage and academic grounding has shaped Mr. Ahmed's inclusive, people-centered approach to governance. It is through this lens—one of empathy, diversity, and unity—that he continues to lead and serve. **A Champion for Collaborative Leadership** Since joining the Council, Mr. Ahmed has served as Councilmember, Mayor Pro Tem, and Mayor. His tenure is marked by consensus-building, transparency, and accessibility. Whether facilitating a town hall or resolving complex policy issues, his approach remains the same: listen first, then lead with purpose. "Leadership is not about titles," he says. "It's about creating space for the community to be heard—and then acting decisively to meet those needs." **Public Service with Purpose** For Mr. Ahmed, holding local office is not a means to an end—it is the mission itself. His measure of success isn't in political titles, but in the lives he's impacted, the neighborhoods he's helped improve, and the trust he's earned through consistent, compassionate service. "Anyone can chase power," he says. "But building trust—that takes time, commitment, and care. That's the legacy I'm working to leave." **A Steady Hand in Uncertain Times** As the Central Valley, California confronts growth, economic challenges, and shifting demographics, Chaudhary Waseem Ahmed's principled, people-first leadership offers a powerful model for the future. In an age when public confidence in politics is at a crossroads, he stands as a reminder that true leadership is not about rising above the people—it's about rising with them.



## Briefs

Ex-RAW chief  
congratulates  
Field Marshal

## NEWS DESK

LONDON: Amarjit Singh Dulat, the former head of India's primary intelligence agency – the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) – has said that Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's luncheon meeting with US President Donald Trump is of huge significance and Pakistan deserves congratulations over this. The former RAW chief was speaking to Geo News in an exclusive interview at the King's College where he discussed his recently published book The Chief Minister and the Spy. Dulat said: "I congratulate Field Marshal Asim Munir. Congratulations to the people of Pakistan. He should now come and meet Modi Ji in Hyderabad House and then may visit Amritsar. I believe that headlines can be softened. In 2015, Modi visited Pakistan to attend the wedding of Nawaz Sharif's granddaughter. Things can and should improve. Someone needs to bowl first. Imran Khan is in jail. The Field Marshal [Munir] or Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif can do that." The former chief Indian spy agreed that relations are frozen between India and Pakistan, especially after the recent conflict but he was hopeful of a change. "Look at the field marshal's lunch in the US. Whoever arranged it, sent him to Delhi too. If it can happen in Washington, why not in Delhi."

Karachi  
welcomes  
first seasonal  
shower

## DNA

KARACHI: Light drizzle was reported in various parts of Karachi on Friday, bringing hope of some relief to residents after days of scorching heat. Areas including Gulshan-e-Maymar, Sohrah Goth, Scheme 33, Federal B Area, Liaquatabad, University Road, Stadium Road, and PECHS experienced brief showers. The city had been reeling under high temperatures, with mercury levels soaring above 40 degrees Celsius in recent days. The light rain brought a noticeable drop in feels-like temperature and raised hopes for more showers in the coming days. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Karachi is likely to experience cloudy and pleasant weather over the next three days, with chances of light drizzle during the early morning and late night hours. Daytime temperatures are expected to remain between 33°C and 35°C, with a slight increase to 35°C-37°C forecast for Monday. In its pre-monsoon advisory, the Met Office stated that moist currents from the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are beginning to enter the country, setting the stage for the upcoming monsoon season. From 22 to 24 June, strong winds and thunderstorm-related rainfall are expected in Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, and Jacobabad.

Malaysia  
drops money  
laundering  
charges  
against ex-PM

## DNA

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's High Court has discharged but not acquitted jailed former Prime Minister Najib Razak of money laundering charges in a long-running case involving a former unit of scandal-tainted state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), his lawyer said on Friday. Najib has been in prison since August 2022 after being found guilty of corruption and money laundering over funds misappropriated from SRC International, a former subsidiary of 1MDB, from which Malaysian and US authorities say about \$4.5 billion was stolen in a complex, globe-spanning scheme.

Field Marshal interacts  
with US intelligentsia

The COAS emphasized that Pakistan has been on the front lines of the global war against terrorism, having rendered immense sacrifices—both human and economic—in pursuit of a safer and more secure world

## CENTRELINE REPORT

RAWALPINDI: During his official visit to the United States, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, held a comprehensive and candid exchange with senior scholars, analysts, policy experts, and representatives of leading international media outlets in Washington D.C. The interaction with prominent U.S. think tanks and representatives of the strategic affairs institutions, provided an opportunity to articulate Pakistan's principled stance on key regional and global issues, and to deepen understanding of Pakistan's strategic outlook. In his remarks, the Chief of Army Staff highlighted Pakistan's unwavering commitment to regional peace and stability, and its constructive role in fostering a rules-based international order. The Field Marshal alluded to the details and analysis of the Maark e Haq, Operation Bunyanum Marsoos and elaborated on Pakistan's perspective on terrorism, noting the malign influence of certain regional actors in sponsoring and perpetuating terrorism as a tool of hybrid warfare. The COAS



emphasized that Pakistan has been on the front lines of the global war against terrorism, having rendered immense sacrifices—both human and economic—in pursuit of a safer and more secure world. Field Marshal Asim Munir shed light on Pakistan's remarkable untapped potential, particularly in the domains of information technology, agriculture, and its

vast and underexploited reserves in the mining and mineral sectors. He invited international partners to explore collaborative opportunities in these sectors to unlock shared prosperity. The Army Chief also provided a detailed exposition of Pakistan's balanced approach to regional and global conflicts, advocating for dialogue, diplomacy, and

adherence to international law. He reaffirmed that Pakistan continues to play a responsible and proactive role in mitigating regional tensions and promoting cooperative security frameworks. The discussion further included an evaluation of the long-standing Pakistan-U.S. partnership. The COAS underlined the historical convergences between the two nations, particularly in areas such as counter-terrorism, regional security, and economic development. He underscored the immense potential for a broader, multidimensional relationship built upon mutual respect, shared strategic interests, and economic interdependence. Participants noted the openness and clarity of the COAS's perspectives and appreciated Pakistan's consistent and principled policies. The interaction was marked by a spirit of mutual understanding and was widely regarded as a positive step toward enhancing strategic dialogue between Pakistan and the United States. This engagement reflects Pakistan's commitment to transparent diplomacy, international engagement, and the pursuit of peaceful coexistence through principled and proactive dialogue.

British FM says 'window now  
exists' for diplomacy with Iran

"The situation in the Middle East remains perilous. We are determined that Iran must never have a nuclear weapon," Lammy said in a statement released by the UK embassy in Washington

WASHINGTON: Britain's Foreign Secretary David Lammy said Thursday after talks at the White House with Secretary of State Marco Rubio that there is still time to reach a diplomatic solution with Iran over its nuclear program, to avert a wider conflict. Lammy met with Rubio and US special envoy Steve Witkoff in Washington one day before he was due in Geneva for talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi alongside his French, German and EU counterparts. The meetings come as European countries call for de-escalation in the face of Israel's bombing campaign against Iran's nuclear program – and as US President Donald Trump

weighs up whether or not to join the strikes against Tehran. "The situation in the Middle East remains perilous. We are determined that Iran must never have a nuclear weapon," Lammy said in a statement released by the UK embassy in Washington. "We discussed how Iran must make a deal to avoid a deepening conflict. A window now exists within the next two weeks to achieve a diplomatic solution," Lammy said. "Tomorrow, I will be heading to Geneva to meet with the Iranian foreign minister alongside my French, German and EU counterparts. Now is the time to put a stop to the grave scenes in the Middle East and prevent a regional escalation that would benefit no one." – APP

Pak, China, BD pledge trilateral  
co-op based on win-win principles

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, Bangladeshi Acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique and Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Imran Ahmed Siddiqui attended the meeting

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a show of strengthened regional ties, Pakistan, China and Bangladesh have agreed to pursue trilateral cooperation grounded in the principles of openness, inclusiveness, good neighbourliness, mutual respect, and trust. This agreement, aimed at fostering win-win outcomes through closer coordination and shared goals, was reached during the inaugural Bangladesh-China-Pakistan Vice Foreign Minister/Foreign Secretary meeting, held on Thursday in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, according to a press release issued by the Foreign Office spokesperson on Friday. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, Bangladeshi Acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique and Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Imran Ahmed Siddiqui attended the meeting. Paki-

stani Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch participated in the first phase of the meeting via video link. In her remarks, the Foreign Secretary Ambassador Anna commended the Chinese side for convening the inaugural meeting of the trilateral mechanism. Noting the common aspirations of the three sides for people-centric development, the Foreign Secretary expressed Pakistan's desire for a deeper engagement between China and South Asian countries. Expressing satisfaction at the upward trajectory of bilateral ties, the foreign secretary conveyed Pakistan's readiness to work with China and Bangladesh to enhance ties in trade and investment, agriculture, digital economy, environment protection, marine sciences, green infrastructure, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges. The three sides also agreed to establish a joint working group to implement the understandings reached during the meeting.

Pak-China Dialogue: Soft Power' key to  
counter disinformation, says Mushahid

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leaders, diplomats, parliamentarians, students and scholars gathered at the Pakistan-China Dialogue hosted by Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) under "Friends of Silk Road" auspices, focused on "Strengthening Mutual Understanding Between Pakistan and China and Building a Community with a Shared Future for Neighbouring Countries." Speakers celebrated the enduring "Iron Brothers" partnership, championed a multipolar order based on the UN Charter, and highlighted President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a catalyst for peace, prosperity and regional connectivity. The Dialogue was organized by Pakistan-China Institute together with a visiting high-level 5-man delegation from the Communist Party of China's International Department (IDCPC) led by IDCPC Spokesperson & Chief of Information, Ambassador Hu Zhaoxing. Mustafa Hyder Sayed, PCI Executive Director and Dialogue Moderator, opened the proceedings by noting that the his-

toric Silk Road friendship between Pakistan and China "has never been transactional or tactical; rather, it is rooted in shared history, trust and a common commitment to uplift the wider neighborhood." He framed the Dialogue as part of PCI's broader effort to amplify voices from Asia and the Global South, given the changing global scenario. Pointing to escalating Cold War rhetoric, he condemned the newly created US Congress's "Countering PRC Influence Fund," which authorizes US \$325 million per year from 2023 to 2027 to "counter the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party and the Government of the People's Republic of China" worldwide. Mustafa called the measure "a Cold-War-era throwback that diverts resources from development and dialogue, precisely the opposite of what our region needs." Delivering the Keynote Address, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman of PCI, observed that the "global balance of economic and political power is shifting from West to East, heralding the Asian Century." He lauded China's "peaceful rise as a source of strength for developing nations across Asia, Africa and Latin America".

Pak: Peace  
efforts to  
remain 'short-  
lived' sans  
addressing  
injustices

## DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan called for addressing injustices that perpetuate conflict – unresolved & long-running situations of foreign occupation, systemic discrimination and the denial of self-determination rights – as the UN Security Council debated the implications of poverty, underdevelopment and conflict on Thursday. "Poverty, exclusion, inequality, and the denial of fundamental rights are not just development concerns – they are among the deep-rooted structural causes of conflict," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member Council. "Without addressing these underlying drivers, peace efforts will remain incomplete, fragile and short-lived," he emphasized. "A principled and consistent application of international law, the UN Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions is essential to peace, justice and stability."

Pakistan  
showcases  
it's growing  
IT potential  
in US

WASHINGTON: The Pakistani embassy Thursday hosted the final sequel of the "Pakistan-U.S. Tech Investment Conference 2025," with IT firms, tech executives, business leaders and entrepreneurs attending, after a series of earlier sessions in Dallas and New York City that highlighted the country's growing potential in information technology sector capable of attracting foreign investment. The conference was a collaborative effort by the embassy, the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) under the MoITT, the Ministry of Commerce (through its trade officers), P@SHA (Pakistan's sole trade association for IT and IT-enabled services), and The Organization of Pakistani Entrepreneurs (OPEN) Global. In his opening remarks, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, welcomed participants, underscoring the conference as a testament to Pakistan's IT potential and its ambitious future. – Agencies

Veteran actor  
Ayesha Khan  
found dead

Time and place of her funeral  
prayers will be announced later

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: In a tragic incident, renowned actress Ayesha Khan was found dead in her flat in Karachi's Gulshan-e-Iqbal area. Confirming the report, police said that the body seemed to be around a week old, adding that the actress was living alone in the apartment.



The incident came to light when Ayesha's neighbours informed her family about a foul smell emitting from her apartment. After being informed, police rushed to the scene and shifted her body to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for medico-legal formalities. Later, her body was shifted from JPMC to Edhi Foundation's mortuary at Sohrah Goth. The police said that the post-mortem examination of Ayesha would be conducted at the request of her family. The time and place of her funeral prayers will be announced later. It is pertinent to mention here that Ayesha played memorable characters in some of the most iconic Pakistan Television plays like Afshan, Uroosa, Aanch, Bandhan and Shaam Se Pehle.

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