



Islamabad POST

Monday, July 21, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Chess is a game of strategic depth and importance

Detailed News On Page-08

Italy, Pakistan to preserve mountains

Detailed News On Page-04



Murder of couple tragic, says Bilawal

Detailed News On Page-01



Briefs

Iran could hold nuclear talks with EU states

Principle of talks agreed upon but consultations continuing on time and place of talks, reports Tasnim

CENTRELINE REPORT

TEHRAN: Iran, Britain, France and Germany could hold talks next week on Tehran's nuclear programme, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday, following warnings by the three European countries that failure to resume negotiations would lead to international sanctions being reimposed on Iran. "The principle of talks has been agreed upon, but consultations are continuing on the time and place of the talks. The country in which the talks could be held next week has not been finalised," Tasnim reported, quoting a source informed on the matter. The report on possible talks comes a few days after the foreign ministers of the so-called E3 nations, as well as the European Union's foreign policy chief, held their first call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi since Israel and the US attacked Iranian nuclear facilities a month ago.

Japan PM faces reckoning in upper house election

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba faces a reckoning from voters on Sunday with upper house elections that could end his premiership and see a right-wing populist party make inroads. With many Japanese hurt by rising prices, especially for rice, opinion polls suggest that Ishiba's governing coalition could lose its majority in the upper house. This could be the final nail for Ishiba, having already been humiliatingly forced into a minority government after lower house elections in October. "Ishiba may need to step down," Toru Yoshida, a politics professor at Doshisha University, Japan could "step into an unknown dimension of the ruling government being a minority in both the lower house and the upper house, which Japan has never experienced since World War II," Yoshida said. - APP

Siddiqui slams PTI for disruptive Senate tactics

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Party Leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), In Senate, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, has slammed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for its disruptive tactics, asserting that opposition members in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will proceed with their oath-taking ahead of the Senate elections, despite attempts to hinder the process. Accusing PTI of "unconstitutional and undemocratic behavior" in obstructing the oath-taking process, Siddiqui drew direct parallels with the party's earlier attempts to derail the no-confidence motion that led to Imran Khan's ouster on 10 April 2022. In a post shared on his official X handle, he asserted that such tactics would once again fail. He further claimed that PTI's current conduct echoes the disruptive actions previously employed by its founder-citing the controversial roles of Qasim Suri and President Arif Alvi in subverting the parliamentary vote.

Reserved seats

Governor administers oath on court order

Speaker adjourns session over lack of quorum; PTI provincial parliamentary party meeting boycotts sitting; Election Commission writes to Court; oath today at 9 am and Senate election at 11 am

SHAMIM SHAHID /DNA

PESHAWAR: A day ahead of the Senate elections, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday administered the oath to 25 opposition's reserved seats MPAs, in compliance with the Peshawar High Court (PHC) order. The development comes hours after the opposition MPAs filed a petition in the PHC, urging the chief justice to nominate an authority to oversee the oath-taking process after KP Assembly speaker adjourned the session due to a lack of quorum. Earlier, The Peshawar High Court (PHC) Chief Justice Syed Muhammad Atique Shah appointed KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to administer the oath to reserved seats members in the provincial assembly after the speaker adjourned the session due to a lack of quorum. The development comes hours after the opposition MPAs filed a petition in the PHC, urging the chief justice to nominate an authority to oversee the oath-taking process without further delay. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session was adjourned

Continued on Page 06

Senate by-election for Punjab seat today

ABID RAZA

LAHORE, A by-election for a vacant Senate seat from Punjab will be held on Monday, July 21, 2025. The seat fell vacant following the demise of Senator Sajid Mir. According to the Provincial Election Commission on Sunday, the polling will take place at the Punjab Assembly Hall, which has been officially designated as the polling station for the election. The Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab will serve as the returning officer for the by-poll.

Continued on Page 06

Gruesome incident

CM orders probe into 'honour' killing video

CM directs law enforcement agencies to arrest all those involved in incident

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Sunday took notice of a disturbing video circulating on social media, which appears to show the brutal killing of a man and a woman. According to a statement issued by the provincial government, the chief minister has ordered an immediate investigation into the incident and directed law enforcement agencies to arrest all those involved without delay. Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind, quoting the chief minister, described the act as "barbaric" and said it would not be tolerated under any circumstances. "No one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands," Rind added, reaffirming the government's commitment to uphold justice. While many users on social media have claimed the killings were carried out in the name of honour, the authenticity of the video and the details of the incident have yet to be independently verified.

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal condemns murder of couple

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the brutal murder of a couple in Balochistan who had married by choice, expressing profound grief and outrage over the incident. A horrifying video of the crime went viral on social media the previous day, further intensifying public shock and sorrow. He said that those involved in this heinous murder are nothing less than beasts and deserve no mercy. He expressed hope that the perpetrators would be swiftly brought to justice. Highlighting the severity of the crime, he stressed that this is a clear act of gender-based terrorism and

Continued on Page 06

President, PM laud forces

9 Indian-backed terrorists killed in various operations

A joint intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces along with Police, Levies, CTD and District Administration in Malakand District, on reported presence of khwarij belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have achieved a significant success in Balochistan with a targeted operation against militants affiliated with the group known as "Fitna-e-Hindustan," according to reliable sources. The operation was conducted during the night between July 19 and 20, in the Pahrood area of Balochistan, after intelligence confirmed terrorist movement in the region. Sources report that four militants linked to Fitna-e-Hindustan were eliminated during the operation. Security personnel also recovered weapons and a flag bearing the insignia of the group from the site. The area is currently under a clearance operation to ensure no further terrorist presence, sources added. According to intelligence sources,

Continued on Page 06

7 cops abducted in Waziristan

DNA

QUETTA: Seven police personnel of two police stations were allegedly abducted in two separate incidents on Sunday while patrolling in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's South Waziristan district, police said. Upper South Waziristan DPO Arshad Khan confirmed the incident and said efforts are underway to locate the policemen who went missing during routine patrolling. "Seven police personnel were patrolling when unidentified individuals took them away," DPO Arshad told. He said three policemen - Insaf, Abid and Ismail - were on patrol in the limits of Ladha police station when they went missing.

T20 match

Bangladesh outclass Pakistan

Parvez Hossain, Towhid Hridoy remain top scorers for hosts with 56, 36 runs, respectively

SPORTS DESK

DHAKA: Bangladesh defeated Pakistan by seven wickets with Parvez Hossain Emon's half century in the first clash of the three-match T20I series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, Dhaka on Sunday. Chasing a modest target of 111, the hosts suffered early setbacks as debutant Salman Mirza struck twice in his opening spell. He removed Tanzid Hasan for just one run in the first over and followed it up with the wicket of Bangladesh skipper Litton Das - also for one - in his second over, leaving the home side struggling at 7-2 in 2.2 overs. Parvez Hossain and

Continued on Page 06

Akhtar Mengal offloaded from Dubai flight

Says he was told by Immigration staff that his name placed in Provisional National Identification List

NEWS DEK

QUETTA: Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNPM) chief Akhtar Mengal was offloaded from a Dubai-bound private airline's flight, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) said on Sunday. Taking to X, Mengal said he was offloaded from plane while travelling to Dubai from Quetta and was told by Immigration staff that his name was placed in the

Continued on Page 06



KABUL: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi received by his Afghan counterpart in Kabul. - DNA

Follow up of trilateral meet

Naqvi in Kabul for security talks


The UN special representative for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, proposed a 'prioritised' regional dialogue with Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian states to halt the disorderly return of Afghans and uphold the principle of voluntary, dignified and safe repatriation

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Federal Interior Minister Mo-hsin Naqvi held an important meeting in Kabul with his Afghan counterpart, Sirajuddin Haqqani. The two sides discussed bilateral relations, particularly focusing on counter-terrorism efforts, cross-border infiltration, and the issue of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The talks also covered effective management of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, measures to curb drug trafficking, and mechanisms to regulate cross-border movement. Additionally, discussions were held on the repatriation process of Afghan nationals residing illegally in Pakistan. On his arrival at the Kabul airport, Naqvi was received by Afghan Interim Deputy

Interior Minister Mohammad Nabi Omari. During the visit, the interior minister will meet his Afghan counterpart, Sirajuddin Haqqani, Radio Pakistan added. Earlier in the week, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan signed the Framework Agreement on the Joint Feasibility Study for the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Project in Kabul. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had made the announcement in a post on X from Kabul, where he had arrived on a day-long visit for the signing. On Wednesday, the UN special representative for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, proposed a 'prioritised' regional dialogue with Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian states to halt the disorderly return of Afghans and

Continued on Page 06










ZTBL
ZARAI TARAQATI BANK LIMITED

زرعی ترقی سے
عوامی بینکاری تک

AAA/A-1+

ماہوں سے زرعی ترقیاتی بینک لمیٹڈ (ZTBL) زرعی مایمانی خدمات کے لئے ایک قومی اتحاد نامہ رہا ہے۔ لیکن کیا آپ جانتے ہیں (ZTBL) اب آپ کارٹیل بینک بن گئی ہے، جو پاکستان بھر میں اڑواڑ کا روپاری حضرات کو خدمات فراہم کر رہا ہے۔

مگر بھریں 501 برانچوں کے مضبوط نیٹ ورک کے ساتھ ZTBL اب سب کے لئے روایتی ریشل بینک کی تمام سہولیات فراہم کر رہا ہے۔



ہماری ریشل بینک خدمات میں شامل ہیں:

- کرنٹ اکاؤنٹس
- سavings اکاؤنٹس
- سیولنگ اکاؤنٹس
- فریڈم پلان
- پروٹیکشن پلان
- پروٹیکشن پلان
- پروٹیکشن پلان

ZTBL - ہر قدم آپ کے ساتھ

UAN: 051 111 30 30 30

www.ztbl.com.pk OfficialZTBL officialztbl mediaztbl @ZTBL Company/ztbl

Ahsan for agri revival, long-term planning

During the visit, Ahsan Iqbal lauded the groundbreaking work of Engineer Javed Saleem Qureshi, who has introduced a climate-resilient cotton seed variety capable of thriving in temperatures up to 50°C

DNA

LAHORE :Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has stressed the urgent need to revitalize Pakistan's agricultural sector, pointing out that the devolution of powers under the 18th Constitutional Amendment has not been implemented in its true spirit, especially with regard to agriculture.

Talking to the media during a visit to a cotton research farm located on Defence Road Lahore on Saturday, the planning minister said that although the 18th Amendment transferred authority and resources to the provinces, agriculture has not received the attention it deserves. "After the 18th Amendment, agriculture became a provincial subject, and it was the responsibility of the provinces to uplift the sector. Unfortunately, they failed to deliver tangible progress," he said.

He was accompanied by renowned agricultural expert Engineer Javed Saleem Qureshi, who has developed a new variety of cotton seed after 25 years of extensive research and experimentation.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said, "Due to lack of focus and commitment at the pro-

vincial level, we could neither improve per-acre yield nor introduce high-quality seeds for key crops. Our research institutions also failed to play an active role."

The minister stressed the need for concrete planning to boost agricultural productivity, especially in critical crops like cotton, canola, and rice. "We must now plan for the next ten years with clear goals. Time is slipping by, and unless we act decisively, we will continue to lag behind. Competing with the world requires us to function as a united and forward-thinking nation." He said that the absence of long-term national planning for the next 10 to 20 years is a serious concern. "Pakistan must achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture. We cannot afford to rely on imports for essential crops any longer," he added. During the visit, Ahsan Iqbal lauded the groundbreaking work of Engineer Javed Saleem Qureshi, who has introduced a climate-resilient cotton seed variety capable of thriving in temperatures up to 50°C. The new seed, developed and successfully tested in Lahore while considering the impact of climate change, has the potential to boost cotton yield from the current 15 maunds per acre to an impres-

sive 40-50 maunds per acre.

"This is nothing short of an agricultural revolution," the minister remarked. "The government will fully support experts from the private sector who bring such innovations, and we will provide all possible cooperation to ensure their success."

He also pointed out the immense potential in other crops such as canola, noting that increasing domestic production of canola oil could save the country billions of dollars in foreign exchange currently spent on imports.

In response to a question regarding recent heavy rains, the minister said that the federal government has formed a committee comprising representatives from the federation and all four provinces to assess the damages. He added that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is currently collecting data to determine the scale of impact and future response strategies.

Ahsan Iqbal said the government is fully committed to supporting agricultural innovation and emphasized that agriculture must become the cornerstone of Pakistan's economic self-reliance in the coming years.



LAHORE: A double-decker tourism bus passes in front of the iconic WAPDA House.

Sultan seeks lawyers' pivotal role in advocating for Kashmiris' rights

DNA

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu Kashmir President Barister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, while emphasizing the need for the lawyers' due vibrant contribution to the Kashmir cause, said that the legal community, being a dynamic segment of society, could play a pivotal role in advocating for the rights of Kashmiris and exposing Indian atrocities in IIOJK through effective use of digital media platforms. The AJK president expressed these views while talking to the vice chairman of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council, Advocate Uqab Hashmi, who called on him at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Sunday, the AJK president's office told APP on Sunday. During the meeting, they discussed issues of mutual interest, including concerns about the legal fraternity. President Barister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry commended the legal fraternity for its vital role in maintaining the upholding of the constitution and the rule of law in Azad Jammu Kashmir. He also stressed the importance of ensuring speedy, affordable, and timely justice for the aspirants in the region, the president's office said.

Crackdown continues against motorcyclists without helmet

MULTAN: In an ongoing nationwide crackdown, traffic authorities ticketed hundreds of motorcyclists for not wearing helmets, signaling that helmet usage is no longer a matter of personal choice but a legal and life-saving requirement.

The campaign, with a special focus on Punjab including Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan, is being implemented with zero tolerance, aiming to enforce helmet laws that are often ignored despite their critical importance in preventing fatal injuries. Senior traffic officials emphasize that the crackdown is driven by the rising number of road traffic accidents involving motorcycles, many of which result in serious or fatal head injuries. "Helmets are proven to

save lives. This campaign is about protecting families, not just issuing fines," said a traffic police spokesperson. In a recent incident in Bahawalpur, a brother and sister riding a motorcycle were struck by a van. The brother, who was wearing a helmet, escaped with minor injuries, but his sister, who was not wearing one, sustained a severe head injury and remains in critical condition. The case has become a sobering example of the importance of helmet usage. According to global data from the World Health Organization, wearing a helmet reduces the risk of death in a crash by 42% and the risk of serious head injury by nearly 70%. Pakistani traffic enforcement officials are using such statistics to stress the urgency

of compliance.

Authorities also report that motorcyclists wearing helmets have a significantly higher chance of surviving an accident than those without one. "This is not about fines. This is about saving lives. People need to understand that a helmet can mean the difference between life and death," said the official.

The government, in collaboration with local administrations and road safety organizations, is also conducting awareness campaigns to educate the public on helmet safety. Officials confirmed that the crackdown will continue in the coming weeks, with an expanded focus on rural and suburban areas where compliance remains low.—APP

PITP become model initiative for youth: Sharjeel

KARACHI: The Sindh government has announced a record budget of Rs42 billion for universities and digital training programs for youth. It has also launched the second phase of the People's IT Program, allocating Rs1.4 billion, the highest amount among all provinces in the country. He said that the People's Information Technology Program (PITP) has become a model initiative for integrating youth into the digital economy.

Memon said that under the first phase of the People's IT Program, 13,565 students have been trained in modern IT fields so far. Additionally, 300 high-performing students have been awarded Google Chromebooks and laptops through a merit-based and transparent process.

He said that the second phase of the IT Program has been launched with an allocated budget of Rs1.4 billion. Under this expanded phase, 35,000 students will receive advanced training in 12 high-demand IT sectors. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that a record Rs42 billion has been allocated for government universities in the financial year 2025-26, the highest among all provinces. He added that the Sindh government has made history in the education sector and is taking steps to equip the new generation with modern technology. He said that the new building of the Food Engineering Department at NED University has been constructed at a cost of Rs96.481 million, while the International Boys Hostel was completed at a cost of Rs67.11 million and has been opened for students.—APP

50 % reduction in port charges at Karachi Port

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry announced a major 50% reduction in port charges at Karachi Port, aiming to reduce the carbon footprint of trade logistics and foster sustainable growth. In a statement on Saturday, the minister announced the initiative as part of a broader strategy to decarbonize the maritime sector and improve energy efficiency in port operations. "By lowering operational costs and streamlining logistics, we are not only boosting trade competitiveness but also contributing to climate resilience," Junaid Chaudhry stated. The newly introduced reforms include a 50% cut in port handling, vessel, and storage charges, while scrapping the previously planned annual 5%

hike in these fees, a move expected to benefit exporters of dry bulk goods and reduce emissions through faster, less congested port activity. "This isn't just a financial measure; it's a pivot toward low-impact, future-ready maritime trade," said minister. "A more efficient port reduces idle time for vessels, lowers fuel consumption, and supports greener supply chains." The minister highlighted that these changes are part of a national strategy to modernize port infrastructure, enhance sustainability, and transition towards smart maritime practices. This announcement follows recent efforts of the maritime minister to enhance port efficiency, including forming a high-level committee to cut container dwell time by 70% and deploying advanced technologies such as AI and

drones for monitoring operations, further underlining the government's proactive stance in modernizing maritime trade logistics. Junaid Chaudhry reaffirmed his commitment to aligning the maritime sector with global environmental standards, stating: "A resilient economy goes hand-in-hand with environmental responsibility. These reforms reflect the Prime Minister's vision of a stable, green, and globally competitive Pakistan." As sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and maritime pollution intensify, the minister stated that climate adaptation is now being increasingly integrated into trade logistics, part of a broader strategy to establish the country as a sustainable maritime hub in the face of climate change.—APP

Civil servants urged to prioritize public service, transparency

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan has underscored the importance of public service, transparency, and performance as the cornerstone values for civil servants. Speaking at a ceremony organized by the Balochistan Civil Service (Executive Branch) Officers Welfare Association, Shakeel Qadir Khan reminded attendees that government privileges and salaries are sustained by the public especially the underprivileged through their taxes. "As custodians of public resources, our foremost priority must always be to serve the people," he affirmed. The event brought together newly appointed Assistant Commissioners, senior officials, provincial secretaries, and retired officers. Congratulating the new recruits, Khan emphasized that their appointments marks not an end, but a meaningful beginning in their journey of public service. He urged officers to embrace continuous learning, self-discipline, and responsiveness to public needs, adding that "Without sincerity, diligence, and integrity at every step, one risks falling behind." Expressing concern over persistent citizen dissatisfaction with government services, the Chief Secretary called on officers to re-evaluate their attitudes and conduct. He stressed the need to strengthen trust between citizens and the state: "A large portion of our population still feels underserved. Civil servants must bridge that gap." Shakeel Qadir Khan announced that the federal government has finalized a comprehensive civil service reform package, expected to be approved by the Prime Minister on July 23. The reforms aim to enhance training programs, introduce performance-based evaluations, improve compensation structures, and reorganize service classifications. Balochistan, he assured, is ready to implement the reforms gradually through the Balochistan Civil Service Academy and the Services and General Administration Department. Highlighting the evolving role of civil servants, Khan said that modern governance demands proactive involvement in areas such as education, healthcare, disaster response, anti-polio efforts, urban planning, sanitation, and infrastructure development. The Chief Secretary also commended the historic launch of the Balochistan Civil Service Academy's training program for Assistant Commissioners, which will focus on contemporary governance models, public administration theory, and best practices. Concluding his address, Khan urged the officers to make public service their mission and use their positions to inspire meaningful change: "All your privileges are tied to the state and the people. Serve them with integrity, competence, and commitment." Earlier in the ceremony, Balochistan Civil Service Officers Welfare Association President, Mujeeb ur Rehman Qambrani welcomed the new officers and introduced a ten-point reform proposal to strengthen governance and improve service delivery. The Chief Secretary personally met each officer, extending warm congratulations and encouragement for their future roles.—DNA

Peshawar's hidden legacy

The ancient world of Gandhara civilization revealed

PESHAWAR: Tucked along the historic Khyber Pass and nestled in the heart of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar stands not just as an ancient city but as a living museum echoing the voices, cultures, and conquests of more than 3000 years of South Asian history. Officially recognized as the "Oldest Living City in South Asia" by the Department of Archaeology, Peshawar continues to reveal its secrets through ongoing archaeological discoveries that highlight its unparalleled significance

in the ancient world. From its famed Qissa Khwani Bazaar to the towering Balahisar Fort, Peshawar has stood resilient through the reign of empires and the march of invaders. Yet, it is beneath its dust-laden streets particularly in the deep trenches of Gor Khatri, that the layers of history truly unfold. At the center of archaeological focus is Gor Khatri, an ancient site that has attracted international attention. Described in the British Journal of Current World Archaeol-

ogy as "the deepest and biggest excavation in the world," the site presents a stunning profile of the city's timeline through 20 meticulously excavated cultural layers. "These layers provide an unbroken sequence of human habitation, from the British colonial era down to the pre-Indo-Greek period," explained Bakhtzada Khan, Assistant Director of Archaeology and Museums. "We found evidence of nearly ten ancient civilizations having left their mark on Peshawar," he told APP. These in-

clude empires as diverse as the Achaemenid Persians, Mauryans, Greeks, Kushans, White Huns, Mughals, Sikhs, and the British. The findings affirm Peshawar's role as a geopolitical and cultural pivot point that has both endured and absorbed centuries of change. Historically, Peshawar has been more than a city. It has been a hub of commerce, cuisine, and cultural confluence. Its Qissa Khwani Bazaar, often referred to as the "Bazaar of Storytellers," once thrived as a key meeting point for international

traders from Central Asia and beyond. Merchants would pause here, sampling local delicacies like Chappli Kababs and traditional Qehwa, while exchanging tales and music before continuing their caravans deeper into the subcontinent. "The bazaar wasn't just a place of trade but it was a living archive of oral history and culture," said Bakhtzada. Among Peshawar's architectural marvels, the Mohab at Khan Mosque and the Sethi House stand out for their intricate artistry and historical weight. —APP

The Smooth Moving Connection

freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING

Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage

Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2874289 - Fax: (+92 51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

Karachi Room No. 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Kalkhah Road, Main Tariq Road, 17D Block-2, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi. Tel: (+92 21) 3403008, 34310478 Fax: (+92 21) 34031747 E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore F-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92 42) 3579881, 35791085 Fax: (+92 42) 35791420 E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-6, 2nd Floor, Zohra Plaza, Left Road, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92 91) 2822778 Fax: (+92 91) 2822898 E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House #4, Street #4, Charahi Ansari Road, Shahr-e-Naw, Kabul - Afghanistan. Tel: +93 78251 173, 93 7735958 BSR, 93 779665 BSR E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
--	---	---	--

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812



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



Enquiry	
Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals	
CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	561116
Cannt 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
MDA.....	5555864
TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3

Water Tank	
Islamabad.....	0321-5744480

Monal Group hosts lunch in honour of PM's Advisor on Tourism Sardar Yasir

DNA

MURREE: In a warm and celebratory gathering that blended gourmet cuisine with the breathtaking beauty of Murree, Chairman of the Monal Group, Luqman Ali Afzal, hosted a special lunch in honour of Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, the newly appointed Adviser to the Prime Minister on Tourism. The event, held at the newly inaugurated Monal Restaurant in Murree, was attended by a galaxy of distinguished guests, comprising leading business personalities, social figures and officials from the tourism and hospitality sectors. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, a renowned name in Pakistan's business landscape and currently the CEO of the Centaurus Group, was recently entrusted with a critical role in shaping and promoting the tourism vision of Pakistan. With his entrepreneurial acumen and deep understanding of the country's tourism and hospitality landscape, the appointment has been widely welcomed by the industry. The Monal Restaurant in Murree, an extension of the famed Monal brand known for its scenic dining locations and rich culinary offerings, provided the perfect venue for the afternoon. Surrounded by panoramic views of Murree's rolling hills and pine forests, the guests savoured a carefully curated spread of Monal's signature dishes, known for their fusion of traditional Pakistani flavours with modern presentation. In his welcome address, Luqman Ali Afzal extended heartfelt congratulations to Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan on his new role and lauded his contributions to Islamabad's economic and commercial development. "Sardar Yasir is not just a businessman; he is a visionary leader who understands the pulse of tourism and hospitality," Luqman remarked. "We are confident that under his guidance, Pakistan's tourism sector will experience a significant uplift. At Monal, we have



always strived to meet the highest standards of quality, taste, and service. Our mission has been to promote not only food excellence but also the beauty and culture of Pakistan, and we look forward to working with like-minded individuals and institutions to further that goal." Luqman also noted that the Monal Group is committed to expanding its footprint in Pakistan's scenic destina-

tions, thus offering both local and international tourists a chance to experience the country's unmatched natural and culinary offerings. He emphasized that the group's success lies in its dedication to customer satisfaction and innovation in hospitality. Taking the podium, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan thanked the Monal Group for their gracious hospitality and congratulated them on the suc-

cessful launch of their new Murree location. He praised Monal's role in uplifting the hospitality standards in Pakistan, saying, "Monal has not only set new benchmarks for quality and service in the food industry but has also played a significant role in promoting tourism through its strategically located restaurants. It is businesses like Monal that showcase the best of Pakistan's culinary

and natural charm to both local and international visitors." He went on to share his vision for Pakistan's tourism development, stating, "Our country is blessed with a vast array of tourist attractions—from the majestic mountains of the north to the historical sites in the south. What we need now is a collaborative push from the public and private sectors to unlock this potential. As aide to the Prime Minister on Tourism,

I am fully committed to implementing policies and initiatives that will create enabling environments for tourism investors and entrepreneurs." Sardar Yasir further stated that ease of access, digital promotion, international collaboration, and quality hospitality services will be among his key focus areas. "We want to ensure that tourists—domestic or foreign—have a memorable and comfortable expe-

rience in Pakistan. We will explore all opportunities to showcase the hidden gems of our country to the world." The lunch was not only a celebration of a new chapter in tourism leadership but also a reflection of how the private sector, led by pioneers like the Monal Group, can play a central role in reshaping Pakistan's global image as a premier tourist destination.

National Children's Mountain Conservation Meet concludes

ISLAMABAD: The 21st National Children's Mountain Conservation Meet which was organized by Adventure Foundation Pakistan from 11th to 20th July 2025 concluded here on Sunday. One hundred children and staff members who participated in this year's camp were held in the beautiful Siran Valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On this occasion a Children Mountain Forum was held at Margala Hotel Islamabad in which young participants of the moot made presentations on the theme "Climate Change and its Impact on the Mountain Environment". Her Excellency Mariilina Armellini, Ambassador of the Italian Republic to Pakistan, was chief guest of this event. Ali Hasan Habib, President of Adventure Foundation Pakistan welcomed all the participants and guests and congratulated the young participants and staff on

successful completion of this year project. Aftab Rana, National Coordinator of NCMC Meet Project informed that this flagship programme of AFP was launched on the occasion of International Year of Mountains-2022 with a view to create awareness among young people about the mountain ecosystems and involve them in meaningful activities using mountains' environment as an open classroom. Under this programme each year around

one hundred children are selected from all parts of Pakistan to attend a 10 day environment education camp in one of the mountain areas of Pakistan. He further informed that this educational programme involves young children in an action-oriented form of learning about the natural environment and its related problems. Participation in this meet makes them conscious enough to do something practical for the conservation and preservation

of the natural environment by undertaking micro level projects in their communities and schools. The children who attend this Meet are given the title of "Eco-Guards" which gives them confidence to play an active role in their day to day life to create awareness about protection of natural environment and its important role in our daily life. Based on the first hand exposure, the young speakers in their presentations highlighted issues faced by the natural environment in mountains areas and shared their personal observations with the audience. They also made recommendations to the concerned government departments to address the environmental issues of mountain areas especially issue related with climate change. At the end of the forum a joint petition was presented by the young representative of NCMC Meet 2025.—DNA



RCCI concerned over 16% sales tax on commercial property rent

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed strong reservations over recent policy measures announced by the Punjab government, including the imposition of a 16% sales tax on commercial property rent and the introduction of arrest powers for non-compliance with the newly mandated minimum wage. RCCI President Usman Shaukat, in an official statement, criticized the Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) for imposing a 16% General Sales Tax (GST) on the rent of commercial properties. "This new tax regime will significantly raise the cost of doing business for tenants, particularly retailers, across Punjab," he said. "It will discourage investment, push le-

gitimate businesses into the informal sector, and further strain an already struggling retail and real estate market." Shaukat added that the new tax would exacerbate the ongoing slowdown in the property and retail sectors, both of which are still reeling from post-pandemic economic challenges. "Such measures are counterproductive and will undermine business confidence in the province." In addition, the RCCI president voiced strong opposition to a clause in the recently passed Punjab budget that allows for the arrest of business owners failing to implement the new minimum wage of Rs. 40,000. "This coercive approach is deeply concerning and must be withdrawn immediately," he said. "It opens the door to

potential misuse by enforcement authorities and will only lead to harassment of legitimate businesses." While acknowledging the importance of fair wages, Shaukat emphasized the need for economic policymaking to be grounded in current market realities. "With national inflation now at a historic low of 6%, the rationale behind such a steep wage hike is questionable. A more balanced and consultative approach is needed to ensure economic growth, job creation, and industrial sustainability." The RCCI called on the Punjab government to review both measures and engage in meaningful dialogue with the business community to ensure that policies promote — rather than hinder — economic.—DNA

AIOU condemns fake recruitment advertisement by 'Join OTS'

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has issued a strong clarification and disassociated itself completely from a fake recruitment advertisement recently circulating on social media. The university has warned the public that an unauthorized entity, operating under the name "Join OTS," is misleading people by issuing fraudulent advertisements in AIOU's name, said a press release here on Sunday. The university has made it explicitly clear that this organization has no affiliation with AIOU, nor has it been authorized in any capacity to represent or conduct recruitment on the university's behalf. AIOU stressed that it has not posted any job or recruitment advertisements on social media. All recruitment by the university is conducted solely through official channels, including the university's official website, credible newspapers, and formal notifications. AIOU expressed serious concerns over the misuse of its name and reputation by "Join OTS" and announced that legal action has already been initiated in this matter. The public is strongly urged to exercise caution and avoid dealing with such fraudulent entities. Individuals are advised to rely only on the university's official sources before submitting any information or applications. It is important to note that AIOU publishes all announcements regarding admissions, examinations, results, and other academic activities exclusively through its official website and verified communication channels. Unfortunately, some unauthorized individuals and organizations are exploiting students on social media for minor financial gain.—DNA

Islamabad trails Rawalpindi in food safety infrastructure, staffing

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Food Authority faces serious operational challenges in carrying out effective food safety enforcement, hampered by limited staff, minimal infrastructure, and the absence of essential testing facilities. In sharp contrast, the Rawalpindi Food Authority operates with significantly better resources, including more vehicles, trained personnel, and fully equipped labs—enabling it to enforce food safety regulations more efficiently across the district. Both the Islamabad and Rawalpindi Food Authorities are tasked with regulating an estimated 30,000 food businesses each. However, the difference in their capacity to enforce food safety standards is striking. The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) operates with just one field vehicle and 10 technical staff members. —APP

JULY 2025

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

IslamabadPOST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-8488394

MEMBER ALL PAKISTAN NEWSPAPERS SOCIETY (APNS)

CENTRELINE

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Dr. Zuhair Zaid

'Unity among Muslim world a must for an independent Palestine'

LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

100

Briefs

Pak's first modern police hospital to open by Dec

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first modern police hospital is nearing completion. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed that the construction of the 252-bed hospital be completed and made functional by December. During his visit to the under-construction National Police Hospital at the Police Headquarters, he inspected the site and issued necessary directives to concerned authorities. Mohsin Naqvi stated, "This project was initiated by Ahsan Iqbal, I will see it through to completion. All resources will be utilized to make the hospital functional." Interior Minister further directed that the finishing work of the hospital be completed swiftly. Inspector General of Islamabad Police, Ali Nasir Rizvi, gave a detailed briefing to the Interior Minister, stating that the National Police Hospital is being built at a cost of 6.4 billion rupees, with construction starting in June 2023. The grey structure of the 252-bed hospital has already been completed. He also added that an institute is being established alongside the hospital to train more than 500 nurses. DIG Security, Ali Raza, and other concerned officials were also present on the occasion.

Dar chairs meeting on Islamabad Airport outsourcing plan

ISLAMABAD, JUL 19 (DNA): Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Saturday chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions and considered G2G framework for the outsourcing of management and operations of Islamabad Airport. The committee after detailed discussions directed the Defence Division to re-submit the case for the consideration of the committee after seeking further details, DPM Office said in a press release. It also reviewed the railway project aimed at reducing congestion at KPT to facilitate movement of trade cargo. The meeting after thorough deliberations decided that the project should be financed through domestic resources.—DNA

Court Notice

In the Court of Naeem Shahbaz Senior Civil Judge (Family Division) Jhelum
suit For Dissolution of Marriage Basis of Khulah Case title: Safia Sadaqat etc vs Sadaqat Ali son of Shaukat Ali, residence of Biral, Tehsil Dina, District Jhelum, currently residing in abroad
. As there is not possible to call the defendant through Summons in the instant suit so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to the court on 24.07.2025 at 08:00 AM., otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.



ISLAMABAD: People enjoying at the greenish trail 5 as the water level in Natural Spring has risen after recent rainy spell.

China's net FDI in Pak soars 90% to \$1.22b

China and Pakistan establish deep connections

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's net foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan surged to \$1.22 billion in fiscal year 2024-25, marking an increase of 90.4% from the \$643.2 million recorded in FY 2023-24, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday quoting the data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). As per SBP's document, in June/July FY 2025, Pakistan received \$1709.8 million in inflow from China with \$485.5 million recorded in outflow bringing the net inflow to \$1224.3 million. In FY 2024-25, Pakistan received \$2457 million in FDI from all partner countries; of them 49.9% came from China, making the neighboring country one of the largest investors in Pakistan. Besides mainland China, other top investors were China's Hong Kong with \$470.1 million net FDI, U.A.E. \$ 283.1 million, Switzerland \$203.3 million, United Kingdom 201.8 million, South Korea 96.2 million, Malaysia 42.8 million, Japan \$40.1 million, United States 30.5 million and Kuwait \$30.4 million. In June 2025, which is the last month of FY 2025, Pakistan received \$88.1 million in FDI from China with \$39.1

million going in outflow bringing the net FDI to \$ 49 million. During this month, Pakistan's total FDI from all partner countries was 163.7 million, of which 30% came alone from China. Sector wise, in FY 2024-25, power sector received \$1165.7 million, which also includes \$759.4 million in hydel power. This is one of the leading sectors with which Chinese investors have invested in.

The Financial services sector has received net FDI of 702.2 million, electricity machinery sector received \$176 million, oil and gas exploration sector received \$123.5 million, electronics \$95.9 million, information technology has received \$57 million, food sector received \$42 million net FDI, petroleum refining 37.5 million and textile \$25.7 million. Meanwhile, Policymakers in China and Pakistan have established very deep connections to simplify all financial-related processes, assisting us to confidently provide comprehensive services in the current complex and changing international environment, solving financial problems, consulting problems, and of course the most important liquidity problem for enterprises. This was stated by the Chief Representative, National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) Beijing Office, Shiahk

Muhammad Shariq at Supply Chain Services Panel Discussion held during the 3rd China International Supply Chain Expo. "In the current environment, the global supply chain has been continuously upgrading digitally, that is, achieving innovative and sustainable development, which is also a major responsibility that we need to shoulder together," he added. According to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN) the Chief Representative pointed out that the key link is to provide very complete localized financial services and reduce conflicts between traders, which is crucial for both large leading enterprises and small start-ups. "The global supply chain need and must take a diversified path, not only for industrial powers like China that support the global supply chain, but also for all countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, and of course Pakistan, which is jointly developing the CPEC." When it comes to specific measures for supply chain optimization and innovation, Shariq emphasized the importance of better financing mechanisms and a unified framework. "The optimized financing mechanism will allow us to have smoother capital flow and reduce our reliance on a single path, helping us to seek better financing

strategies." The Chief Representative added that a unified framework means unifying standards within this scope, assisting different cultures, concepts, customs, and the like, to communicate more smoothly, which is the premise for all parties to build a global network. Through these measures, various countries could build a more efficient, more resilient and fairer global supply chain network. Talking specifically about the financial links between China and Pakistan, Shariq elaborated on NBP's efforts to better integrate into the financial supply chain system between the two countries and the world. "As the national bank of Pakistan, we have branches in 80 countries worldwide. In 1981, we entered the Chinese market and opened a representative office in Beijing. Since then, we have been helping Chinese companies in different fields that are interested in doing business in Pakistan, such as energy, agriculture, e-commerce, digital technology." Shariq believes that for small and medium-sized enterprises, liquidity is their backbone in the process of engaging in cross-border business, thus nothing is more important than smooth financial liquidity.

Plan to distribute Chinese-made electric bikes hailed
The meeting also discussed third-party audits to ensure transparency, strict compliance with safety standards, and a public awareness campaign

ISLAMABAD: Govt's plan to distribute Chinese-made electric bikes, loaders among youth has been hailed as a game-changer for Pakistan's urban transportation, especially in cities like Gwadar and Quetta. The government on Saturday unveiled plans to distribute over 100,000 Chinese-made electric bikes and more than 300,000 electric loaders and rickshaws among youth aimed at reducing fuel imports, protecting the environment, and boosting employment. Chairing a policy meeting here, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the program is a critical step toward economic self-reliance and environmental responsibility. "Electric vehicles will help us save billions in foreign exchange, promote local manufacturing, and offer new livelihood avenues," he said. The EV scheme, which prominently features Chinese-manufactured technology, is part of Pakistan's transition toward cleaner energy sources, an effort complementing CPEC's green infrastructure projects, Gwadar Pro reported. Key highlights of the initiative include, free e-bikes for high-performing students from all boards, including federal institutions, subsidised e-loaders and rickshaws for unemployed youth to promote self-employment, a 25% quota for women, ensuring gender inclusivity and Balochistan's allocation increased to 10%, in line with the government's commitment to equitable development and provincial empowerment. The meeting also discussed third-party audits to ensure transparency, strict compliance with safety standards, and a public awareness campaign. Officials said that four new battery manufacturing firms, including Chinese technology partners, are already setting up operations in Pakistan, promising job creation and technology transfer. The EV initiative is being hailed as a game-changer for Pakistan's urban transportation, especially in cities like Gwadar and Quetta, where China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s logistical upgrades and energy reforms are already paving the way for next-generation mobility solutions.—DNA

SECP under fire for harsh policies

SLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) is facing mounting criticism from the business sector over its rigid enforcement approach. This approach, which treats minor procedural lapses and serious regulatory breaches with equal severity, has led to instances where small businesses have been penalized as severely as large corporations for similar infractions. Prominent industry figures warn that the regulator's failure to distinguish between habitual violators and firms with unintentional or technical non-compliance is undermining investor confidence and discouraging business activity. They argue that such blanket enforcement does not strengthen the economy but rather enables a culture of fear and uncertainty. In a recent meeting with SECP officials, top business executives pressed for a more calibrated enforcement framework. They emphasized the need to distinguish between deliberate violations and compliance challenges faced by otherwise law-abiding firms. Industry leaders contend that the current approach penalizes both intent and error, creating a regulatory climate that stifles entrepreneurship. Market analysts are sounding the alarm on the detrimental effects of this enforcement style on economic growth. Many companies, they note, are diverting resources from innovation and expansion to legal and compliance expenses in anticipation of disproportionate penalties.—DNA

Digital fare system for Orange Line Train to facilitate people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab government has approved the shift to a digital fare payment system for Lahore's Orange Line Metro Train in Lahore, first electric railway transportation project completed under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It is Pakistan's first urban railway system as well as the first implemented large-scale public infrastructure project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor under "Belt & Road Initiative" that was inaugurated on October 25th, 2020, Gwadar Pro reported. The traditional token system is planned to be replaced by a barcode-based entry through card payments. Passenger will be able to pay fare using credit or debit cards, ATM cards, and mobile wallet apps.

ICCI mediates between builders, CDA for smoother approvals

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is fully committed to addressing the concerns of the business community and residents on a priority basis, in line with the vision of its Chairman, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa. This assurance was given by Faisal Naeem, Director General Building Control of CDA, during an interactive session held at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) with a delegation of the Builders Association Sector H-13, led by its President, Sardar Khurshid Ahmed Khan. The session was graced by President ICCI Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, and a number of ICCI Executive Members. Addressing the participants, Faisal Naeem urged the Builders Association to submit their development plans at the earliest to facilitate their timely regularization, enabling smoother processes for the builders. He acknowledged the pivotal role played by ICCI in resolving business community issues in

coordination with CDA and appreciated the Chamber's consistent support. ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi reiterated the Chamber's firm commitment to acting as a bridge between the private sector and the government to enhance ease of doing business and promote economic development. He emphasized the importance of unity among the business community and assured that ICCI remains dedicated to protecting their interests. Builders Association President Sardar Khurshid Ahmed Khan highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by builders and thanked the CDA leadership and ICCI for their continued cooperation and proactive efforts in addressing their concerns. In his welcome remarks, ICCI Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui said that the Chamber represents the true voice of the business community and urged members to bring their issues through this platform for practical and timely solutions.—DNA

Dr. Arshad Health Associates
"caring for all health needs"

Vaccinations & Travel Health: Protect Your Journey with Us

Travel brings adventure, discovery — and exposure to unfamiliar health risks. Whether you're off on a vacation, business trip, or volunteer mission, your health should always come first. Preparing well means vaccinating in time.

Why Travel Health Matters

Each destination presents unique challenges. From food-borne illnesses to mosquito-borne diseases, getting the right vaccines and medical advice ensures a safer, stress-free trip.

At Dr. Arshad Health Associates, we offer expert-led travel health services, including all essential vaccinations available in Pakistan, such as:

- Typhoid, Hepatitis A & B
- Yellow Fever
- Tetanus & Diphtheria
- Rabies
- Malaria prevention and advice

Our experienced clinicians take the time to understand your itinerary and health background to offer customized protection — so you can focus on your journey, not worry about getting sick.

We make travel health simple and stress-free by offering:

- ✓ One to one consultations with trained travel health physicians
- ✓ A wide range of vaccines under one roof
- ✓ Timely appointments and aftercare support
- ✓ Clear guidance tailored to your travel plans

111 155 666
drarshadhealthassociates.com
hithline@comsats.net.pk

Main Clinic F-6/3 Islamabad
Clinic F-6/1 Islamabad
G-6 Markaz, Islamabad

No. 5-6, 48, Diplomatic Residencia One Diplomatic Enclave, G-5, Islamabad
Karachi Clinic

New dams vital to avert food and energy collapse

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan confronts an unprecedented dual assault on its water security: India's systematic manipulation of shared river systems and the catastrophic deterioration of domestic water infrastructure that threatens the nation's economic foundation and survival. Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch, delivered a scathing assessment Sunday, demanding immediate declaration of a national water emergency alongside radical institutional reforms and aggressive diplomatic intervention. The warning comes as Pakistan's per capita water availability plummets to a dangerous 900 cubic meters annually, below the World Bank's 1,000 cubic meter

threshold for water-scarce nations.

India's weaponization of water resources represents nothing less than economic warfare against a downstream neighbor," Dr. Mughal declared, condemning persistent violations of the Indus Waters Treaty. He urged the government to escalate the dispute through World Bank arbitration mechanisms and United Nations, warning that diplomatic inaction invites further aggression. The crisis extends far beyond external threats. Pakistan's critical water infrastructure is facing systemic collapse due to decades of neglect and underinvestment. Major reservoirs, including Tarbela and Mangla, now operate at less than 40% of their original storage capacity due to relentless sedimentation and maintenance fail-

ures, a decline that Dr. Mughal characterized as "economically suicidal." Current data reveals the scale of institutional failure. Over 30 million acre-feet of precious freshwater flow into the Arabian Sea annually due to inadequate storage infrastructure. Meanwhile, Pakistan's agriculture sector, which generates 70% of the country's agricultural output through river-fed irrigation, faces imminent collapse without immediate intervention. Strategic dam projects essential for national survival remain mired in bureaucratic paralysis. The Diamer-Bhusha, Mohmand, and Dasu mega-projects continue experiencing costly delays stemming from unresolved land disputes, governmental inertia, and chronic funding shortfalls. Each month of delay translates into lost agricultural produc-

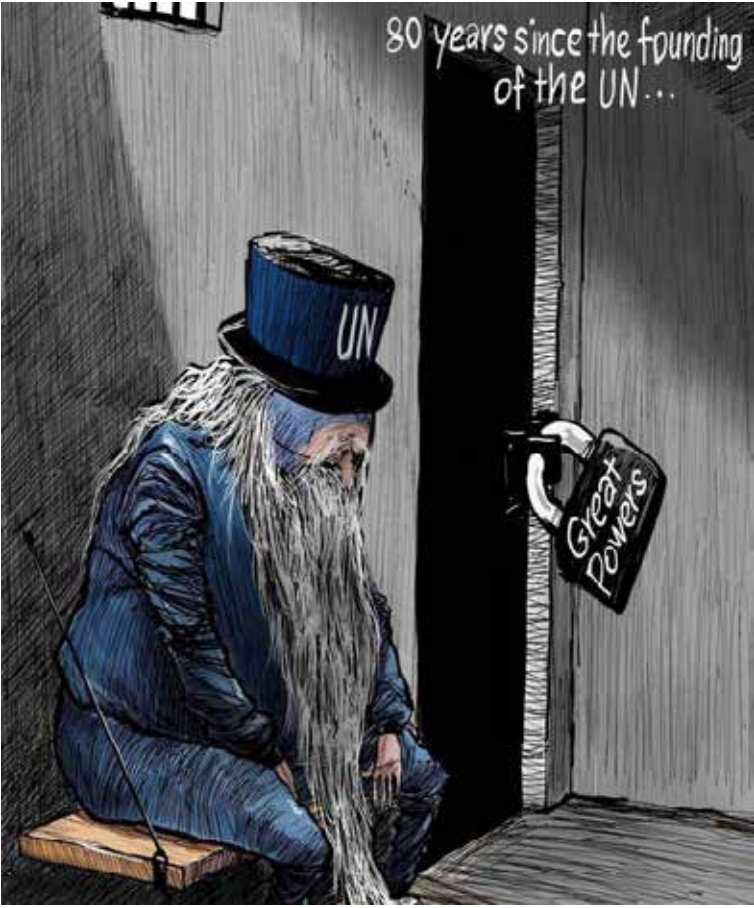
tivity and forgone clean energy generation, both of which are desperately needed at this time. Dr. Mughal proposed comprehensive institutional restructuring to address the crisis. His recommendations include establishing an independent water infrastructure authority under the Council of Common Interests to streamline planning and execution, conducting transparent audits of all existing water projects, implementing stricter controls on groundwater extraction, and launching nationwide conservation awareness campaigns. "Pakistan cannot survive as a water-dependent nation that wastes its most precious resource," he emphasized. Water security must be elevated from a provincial concern to our highest national security priority. The alternative is economic collapse and social chaos.

Encroachments threaten Islamabad’s charm

ISLAMABAD, often hailed as Pakistan’s modern capital and a symbol of planned urban development, is witnessing a growing menace that threatens to tarnish its beauty and disrupt the lives of its citizens: rampant encroachments. Footpaths once meant for pedestrians are being swallowed by sprawling car show-rooms, and roadside restaurants are mushrooming unchecked, making daily commutes a frustrating ordeal. Despite occasional crackdowns by authorities, these illegal activities resume almost immediately, revealing a persistent problem that calls for urgent and sustained action.

The capital city was designed to offer its residents a clean, green, and orderly environment—a stark contrast to the chaotic sprawl often seen in other urban centers. Yet, today’s reality is far from this vision. Pedestrians, forced off the footpaths, find themselves navigating dangerously close to fast-moving traffic, risking their safety. The widening spread of commercial encroachments not only obstructs movement but also degrades the city’s aesthetic appeal. Streets and neighborhoods that once exuded charm and order are now marred by unregulated expansions, dilapidated stalls, and haphazard constructions.

Attempts by authorities to control this issue often prove short-lived. Operations to clear encroachments are launched with great fanfare, offering hope to citizens. However, the next day sees the return of illegal vendors and businesses, often emboldened by lax enforcement or complicity. This cyclical problem underscores the urgent need for a more strategic and consistent approach, one that involves not just clearing encroachments but also preventing their re-emergence. Beyond encroachments, Islamabad is grappling with another critical issue—the deteriorating condition of its sports grounds. These facilities, vital for the physical well-being and development of the city’s youth, have been left to languish. Overgrown fields, broken equipment, and lack of maintenance mean that young people have few safe and accessible spaces to exercise and engage in sports. The neglect of these grounds is more than just an aesthetic or recreational concern; it is a missed opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles, nurture talent, and foster community spirit. In a city like Islamabad, which aspires to be a beacon of progress and modernity, the condition of its sports infrastructure sends a troubling message about priorities and governance. Rehabilitation and investment in these facilities should be a key part of the city’s development agenda, offering youth a constructive outlet and contributing to social cohesion. Fortunately, there is hope on the horizon. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman has shown himself to be a forward-looking and proactive leader. His efforts to restore Islamabad’s original charm and tackle pressing urban issues are commendable and have garnered public support. Citizens hold high expectations for his tenure, hoping for decisive actions that will not only curb encroachments but also revitalize public spaces and sports facilities. Restoring Islamabad to its intended form—a city that balances urban development with environmental stewardship and quality of life—is no small task. It requires unwavering commitment, coordinated efforts among various agencies, and active civic engagement. Success will depend on sustained enforcement of regulations, transparent governance, and inclusive planning that addresses the needs of all stakeholders.



BRICS and its role in global development

THE BRICS alliance—comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—was formed with the vision of creating a multipolar world order and offering an alternative to Western-dominated financial and political institutions. Over the years, BRICS has emerged as a powerful platform for economic co-operation, political dialogue, and South-South collaboration. Together, its member nations represent more than 40% of the world’s population and nearly a quarter of global GDP. As such, BRICS plays a pivotal role in shaping the direction of global development. In this context, recent rumors suggesting that India may be excluded from BRICS raise serious concerns. Though unconfirmed and possibly speculative, such reports have sparked significant debate about the unity, future, and geopolitical balance of the alliance. India’s potential exclusion—or even the suggestion of it—could destabilize the core purpose of BRICS and undermine the very foundations upon which it was built. India, with its large economy, youthful population, and expanding technological and industrial base, has been a cornerstone of the BRICS bloc. It brings strategic balance, especially in a grouping where China and Russia have increasingly deepened bilateral ties that sometimes run counter to Indian interests. India’s presence provides ideological diversity and a critical voice representing democratic values within the group. Removing or sidelining India would not only harm the alliance’s credibility but could also shift it dangerously toward a one-sided geopolitical alignment, particularly tilted toward Chinese and Russian influence. BRICS has made significant strides in recent years. The establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), aimed at financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in member countries and beyond, is a testament to the alliance’s potential. The group has also been advocating for reforms in global institutions like the United Nations, World Bank, and IMF, calling for greater representation of the developing world. With emerging economies facing increasing economic and geopolitical pressures, BRICS serves as a vital platform to advocate collective interests and ensure a more equitable global governance structure. The idea of excluding India—if indeed being considered—would not only weaken BRICS internally but also send a negative message to other developing nations that have been looking to the bloc as a symbol of inclusive global partnership. It could also damage regional cooperation in Asia, where India plays a central role, and undermine joint efforts on issues like climate change, counter-terrorism, and digital development. Rather than fragmentation, BRICS should focus on expansion and strengthening cooperation among existing members. New potential entrants like Argentina, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and others are showing interest in joining. This indicates global trust in the platform’s relevance and potential. The current members, particularly China and Russia, must work to preserve unity and transparency within the group. In conclusion, BRICS remains a powerful symbol of an emerging multipolar world order. Any effort to weaken this bloc—especially by sidelining a key member—would be counterproductive. The alliance must stay true to its original mission of inclusive development, mutual respect, and balanced global representation. Only through solidarity can BRICS truly become a force for good in global affairs.

Artificial Intelligence: A Tool, Not a Master

Qamar Bashir



When calculators were invented, they were feared as brain-killers. People thought the mind’s arithmetic capacity would erode. When computers became personal, many predicted the death of memory, of intellect, of critical thinking. Then came smartphones and the Internet—ushering in another wave of dystopian warnings. But in every case, the result wasn’t the death of human intelligence. It was the expansion of human capability. These tools allowed us to do more

IN an age defined by technological marvels, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as both a beacon of hope and a source of deep misunderstanding. Enthusiasts hail it as the dawn of a new era—one that will render human labor, creativity, and even consciousness obsolete. But those who use AI seriously—for writing, generating images, compiling data, or creating infographics—know firsthand that AI is still very much a tool, not a master. It is impressive, yes. But intelligent? Not yet. AI today requires constant correction, direction, and supervision. It can mix up names, fabricate dates, distort historical context, and produce grotesque errors in otherwise simple assignments. For those who depend on accurate output—writers, editors, researchers, policy analysts—AI is not a replacement but an instrument. A sophisticated calculator. A fast but fallible assistant. Without human oversight, its potential collapses into chaos. We’ve seen this story before. When calculators were invented, they were feared as brain-killers. People thought the mind’s arithmetic capacity would erode. When computers became personal, many predicted the death of memory, of intellect, of critical thinking. Then came smartphones and the Internet—ushering in another wave of dystopian warnings. But in every case, the result wasn’t the death of human intelligence. It was the expansion of human capability. These tools allowed us to do more, faster. AI is no different. Despite the sophisticated architecture behind GPT, DALL•E, and other AI systems, every output relies on human input. The moment the user lacks subject knowledge, the output derails. The technology is still heavily dependent on patterns—it does not “understand” content the way humans do. As of 2025, AI cannot reliably produce context-aware political analysis, deeply emotional storytelling, or error-free historical synthesis without explicit human intervention. According to a 2023 MIT study, more than 80% of professional AI users in journalism and design say they need to heavily revise AI-generated drafts. A Stanford research team found that while AI can support faster production, unmonitored use increases factual error rates by over 45%. In other words, AI doesn’t reduce the need for human intellect—it magnifies it. Another prevailing fear is that AI will trigger mass unemployment. In truth, AI and automation change the nature of work, not its existence. Consider the case of

robotic manufacturing. Yes, robots now assemble cars, but this has created demand in software engineering, robotics design, systems maintenance, AI training, cybersecurity, and interface optimization. According to the World Economic Forum (2024), while 85 million jobs may be displaced by automation by 2025, 97 million new roles are expected to emerge—many requiring higher cognitive input. When the typewriter was replaced by the computer, secretarial roles changed—but they didn’t vanish. When elevators became automated, operators lost jobs, but electrical and mechanical engineers gained them. The same logic applies to AI. It displaces repetitive work but creates a flourishing ecosystem of innovation, control, refinement, and creative oversight. Despite media portrayals and marketing hype, AI doesn’t think. It doesn’t understand love, betrayal, fear, or sacrifice. It can simulate emotion with text, generate art with prompts, and mimic dialogue, but these are shadows of reality—not reality itself. Like a shovel extends our arm, AI extends our mind. It does not replace it. Much like computers, smartphones, and the Internet before it, AI is a technological tool. It runs on algorithms, pattern recognition, neural approximations, and code. It does not dream. It does not choose. It does not rebel or reflect. Its logic is built on trillions of tokens from human data—books, conversations, art, articles—but it remains synthetic. Just as a telescope brings far-away stars into focus but doesn’t generate light itself, AI helps us process data, but not understand it in the human sense.

More profoundly, the purpose of human intelligence is not to be overtaken by machines—but to use every tool available to fulfill the divine mission set forth by Allah: to explore, understand, and eventually conquer the universe. The Qur’an in Surah Ar-Rahman [55:33] declares: “O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority (from Allah).” This command is not symbolic. It is a clear call for discovery, exploration, and transcendence. Humanity has been given the capability to think, imagine, build, and adapt. The tools we create—from bronze axes to nuclear colliders, from sailboats to spacecraft, from telescopes to AI—are steps on that ladder of cosmic responsibility. To explore the billions of galaxies,

we need sharper instruments, smarter tools, and faster processors. According to NASA, the observable universe is over 93 billion light-years wide. It contains an estimated 2 trillion galaxies. Our solar system is a speck of dust in an immeasurable ocean. Without artificial intelligence, advanced robotics, quantum computing, and nanotechnology, humanity cannot hope to bridge this vastness. In fact, brain-computer interfaces like Neuralink, real-time language translators, autonomous rovers, and AI-powered telescopes are helping us push the frontiers of what’s knowable. But again—they are tools. They don’t replace the divine role of human beings as “Ashraf al-Makhlūqat”—the noblest of creation. They serve that mission. Much has been made of the prospect of emotionally aware AI. Research into affective computing aims to teach machines how to detect human emotion and respond appropriately. Projects like OpenAI’s GPT-Next, Google’s DeepMind Gemini, and Microsoft’s “EmpathAI” have made progress in simulating empathy and tone recognition. But simulation is not sensation. The AI can mimic concern. It cannot feel it. Even if AI develops powerful language modeling with emotion tags, it will still lack free will, intuition, spiritual consciousness, and moral accountability. These are not functions that can be programmed. They are divine gifts, bestowed uniquely upon human beings. Artificial intelligence is a remarkable achievement—but it is not the end of the road. It is the beginning. Like the calculator, the typewriter, the wheel, and the telescope before it, AI is a mechanism that extends human ability. But it does not, and cannot, substitute human soul, spirit, intellect, and destiny. The rise of AI is not a threat to humanity. It is a call for maturity. A tool this powerful must not be feared—it must be guided. Shaped. Watched. Developed under ethical frameworks, divine principles, and human conscience. And ultimately, it must be used to pursue the higher mission of our existence: to understand and conquer the universe as a sign of Allah’s magnificence.

The age of AI is here—but the age of human greatness has just begun.

—The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC / Macomb, Michigan, USA

Support for Palestinian statehood gathers momentum

Yossi Mekelberg

Therefore, it was refreshing to hear French President Emmanuel Macron, during his visit to London this month for an Anglo-French summit, tell British parliamentarians: “With Gaza in ruins and the West Bank being attacked on a daily basis, the perspective of a Palestinian state has never been put at risk as it is (now), and this is why this solution of the two states and the recognition of the state of Palestine is ... the only way to build peace and stability

IN many European countries, official recognition of a Palestinian state is an excruciatingly slow process, more so than it should be. Despite mounting pressure from parliamentarians, civil society organizations and the wider public, many governments remain cautious, including British and the French authorities who have already expressed support for such a move. Their caution, even fear, before taking such a crucial decision is harming their own national interests, violates natural justice, and ignores the fact that the promise of the advancement of a peace based on a two-state solution outstrips, by far, any political risks that come with taking the plunge and recognizing Palestine as a state.

Therefore, it was refreshing to hear French President Emmanuel Macron, during his visit to London this month for an Anglo-French summit, tell British parliamentarians: “With Gaza in ruins and the West Bank being attacked on a daily basis, the perspective of a Palestinian state has never been put at risk as it is (now), and this is why this solution of the two states and the recognition of the state of Palestine is ... the only way to build peace and stability for all in the whole region.” This is a somewhat late realization of something that, had it been done years ago, might have prevented the events of the past two, horrific years. Still, Macron deserves credit for advancing this agenda now and resisting Israeli claims that in the aftermath of Oct. 7, such recognition would be a reward for Hamas and terrorism. Israel is deliberately advancing this spurious theory that recognition of Palestinian statehood is effectively caving in to terrorism, when in fact the aim of such recognition is to break the impasse in resolving the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict peacefully, and actually sideline extremism. If nothing else, recognition would be a step toward redressing the power imbalance between Israel and Palestine, which has become a hindrance to efforts at reaching a peace agreement based on a two-state solution. Macron’s remarks in London created some momentum for Palestinian statehood; immediately after his departure, perhaps inspired and encouraged by his statements, 59 MPs from Britain’s governing Labour Party signed a letter addressed to Foreign Secretary David Lammy, calling on him to recognize, “with great urgency,” the State of Palestine. Certainly, many of those who signed the letter have for a long time been outspoken proponents of such recognition. But others were new recruits to the idea, who see it not only as an end in itself but also a response to the shocking news coming out of Gaza every day, and to the constant stream

of “novel ideas” that originate from the Israeli government and inflict even more misery on the Palestinian people. Recognition would be a step toward redressing the power imbalance between Israel and Palestine. Yossi Mekelberg Deploable suggestions from both Washington and senior Israeli officials have also served as a catalyst for the letter from MPs, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s proposal of a “voluntary migration” of Palestinians from Gaza, and the announcement by Defense Minister Israel Katz of his plan to forcibly transfer hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians, if not the entire population of the territory, to a camp in the almost completely destroyed city of Rafah. The MPs called for action to prevent Katz’s sinister plan becoming reality before it is too late. Israel’s former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert this week described it as tantamount to the construction of a “concentration camp.” It is designed to make the lives of those forcibly placed there impossible, while preventing them from leaving unless their destination is outside of Mandatory Palestine. The British politicians who signed the letter to Lammy consider recognition of Palestinian statehood a priority, but in the meantime they also demanded the removal from the agenda of Katz’s draconian proposal to concentrate masses of Palestinians in such a camp, which seems to be more of a transitional facility serving as a precursor to expulsion. In addition, they urged Lammy to continue to support the work of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in providing aid to the people of Gaza, while also pressing for the “full and unhindered resumption of the humanitarian aid,” and efforts to secure the release of all hostages. This is an opportunity for the British government to adopt these recommendations — some would call them demands — and in doing so become an important player in efforts to resolve one of the most intractable conflicts in modern history. In an ideal world, recognition of the State of Palestine by European nations would come from the EU as a whole and not happen in piecemeal fashion, as has been the case so far with the much-welcomed recognition in May last year by Spain, Ireland, Slovenia, and Norway (the last of which is not a member of the EU). Nevertheless, the need for unanimity in passing such a resolution within the EU makes it almost impossible to achieve, as long as countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, and Hungary

oppose it. Therefore, if Paris and London were to announce recognition of Palestinian statehood in tandem — either before or during the upcoming summit of world leaders on the two-state solution, which was postponed by the outbreak of the war between Israel and Iran in June and is now scheduled to convene at the UN headquarters in New York in September — it would send a strong message from two major powers, which are also permanent members of the UN Security Council, in support of what is already the policy of 147 other members of the UN. The message should be clear: This is not an anti-Israeli act, and most definitely not a reward for terrorism, but instead a positive move toward the peaceful resolution of one of the longest-running disputes in contemporary international politics, stretching all the way back to the beginning of the 20th century. It reaffirms the partition plan of 1947 and many subsequent international resolutions, and follows in the footsteps of diplomatic efforts that began with the Oslo Accords in 1993 and have been negotiated in different rounds of peace talks since then. It could be a game-changer, allowing the Palestinians to negotiate with the Israelis as equals. As long as this does not happen, the asymmetry in the balance of power between the two protagonists remains a major obstacle, and it is one Israel is unfairly using during negotiations to demand concessions their Palestinian interlocutors cannot deliver, or to cause crises in the discussions. This effectively allows Israel to postpone indefinitely any agreement based on a two-state solution, while also creating a situation on the ground that is prohibitive to the establishment of a territorially contiguous independent Palestinian state. Recognition of a Palestinian state would send a clear message from the international community to those who are hell-bent on annexation of the occupied West Bank and the building of Israeli settlements there. Whatever the setbacks along the way, the only viable and long-term sustainable solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians remains a two-state solution. The letter from British MPs is, therefore, a welcome contribution to the efforts to advance this cause, and the British government must heed its recommendations.

—The is a professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the MENA Program at Chatham House. X: @YMekelberg

Briefs

Governor administers oath on court order

FROM PAGE 01
shortly after it commenced due to a lack of quorum as the PTI lawmakers skipped the crucial sitting earlier. KP Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati, who started the proceedings with a delay of over two hours, adjourned the session when PTI MPA Sher Ali Afridi pointed out the lack of quorum. The chair then ordered headcount and rang the bells for a five-minute break before finally adjourning the session until July 24. The decision to skip the assembly session came after PTI KP chapter parliamentary party meeting decided to boycott the sitting. At least 21 women and four minority members were supposed to take their oath as members of the KP Assembly on reserved seats today. As the proceedings began today, opposition MPAs criticised the interruption during the Quranic recitation, saying, "You cannot point out quorum during the recitation," said a PML-N MPA. "Mr speaker, this is not the right way... we've been denied our right to take the oath for two years," she added. Leader of the Opposition in KP Assembly Dr Ibadullah Khan also expressed displeasure over the speaker's move, warning that the opposition would take legal action. "We'll go to court and request the chief justice to intervene," he said. "If the oath isn't taken now, it should at least happen later this evening."

9 Indian-backed terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01
Fitna-e-Hindustan has been responsible for a series of deadly attacks targeting innocent civilians in recent months, aiming to destabilize the region and spread chaos. Security sources stressed that all terrorists and their facilitators involved in anti-state activities will be brought to justice and made an example of. The successful operation marks another decisive step by Pakistani forces in safeguarding national security and maintaining peace in Balochistan. Meanwhile, a joint intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces along with Police, Levies, CTD and District Administration in Malakand District, on reported presence of khwarij belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij. During the conduct of operation, spread over four days, own forces skillfully surrounded & effectively engaged the khwarij location, and after intense multiple fire exchanges, nine Indian sponsored khwarij were sent to hell, while eight khwarij were apprehended.

Naqvi in Kabul for security talks

FROM PAGE 01
uphold the principle of voluntary, dignified and safe repatriation. On Friday, security forces foiled an infiltration attempt by terrorists along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and arrested five "alleged suicide bombers."

Bangladesh outclass Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01
Towhid Hridoy then steadied the innings with a crucial 73-run partnership for the third wicket, rebuilding Bangladesh's chase after the early collapse. The break was eventually stolen by Abbas Afridi, who dismissed Hridoy for 36 off 37 balls, with Bangladesh at 80-3 in 12.3 overs. Emon continued his fine form, anchoring the chase with a composed knock. He brought up his second 200 fifty and remained unbeaten on 56, guiding Bangladesh to victory in 15.3 overs.

PHF faces financial scrutiny amid payment delays to players

If hockey is witnessing a decline, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) also shares a significant portion of the responsibility. Recently, the PSB increased the fees for using hockey grounds by a staggering 300 percent. This steep hike has made it financially impossible for many local clubs and grassroots teams to access these essential facilities

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) is currently embroiled in a financial controversy following reports of delayed daily allowance payments to national hockey players. The issue has prompted swift action from the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), which has intensified its oversight of the federation's financial affairs, raising concerns about transparency and accountability within the PHF. Players of the national hockey team have reportedly faced significant delays in receiving their daily allowances, a matter that has caused unrest among athletes and stirred criticism from sports authorities. The daily allowance, a crucial support for players during training camps and tournaments, is seen as an essential part of their livelihood and motivation. In response to the growing concerns, the Pakistan Sports Board has taken decisive measures to investigate

the matter. PSB officials have demanded a comprehensive report from the PHF on the current status of daily allowance payments and have emphasized the need for immediate resolution to avoid further disruptions in the players' preparations. Moreover, the PSB has sought a full record of the federation's foreign tours, including details of officials who accompanied the team, as well as a complete account of the funding allocated for these trips. This move is aimed at scrutinizing the federation's expenditures and ensuring that public funds are used appropriately. Beyond the financial irregularities, the Sports Board has raised objections regarding the number and nature of foreign tours undertaken by PHF officials. The PSB has also questioned the operations of the PHF's camp office in Islamabad, pointing to concerns about its management and expenses. In a stern directive, the PSB has ordered the PHF to submit its bank statements for the past six

months without delay. The federation is also required to provide a detailed record of all grants received from the government and the manner in which these funds have been utilized. These demands highlight the increasing pressure on the PHF to demonstrate financial transparency and justify its expenditure, especially in light of the allegations surrounding the delayed payments to players.

PHF President Tariq Bugti has been called upon to explain the alleged irregularities in financial management. PSB officials have reportedly expressed serious dissatisfaction with what they describe as a lack of transparency in the federation's financial dealings under his leadership. Questions have been raised about where the government funds were spent if players have not been receiving their rightful allowances. The PSB's interrogation of these issues points to a broader demand for accountability within the sports administration. To ensure a thor-

ough investigation, the PSB has insisted that the PHF present a complete record of all its operational and grant accounts. This includes detailed documentation of expenditures, receipts, and audits related to both routine operations and special grants. The unfolding financial controversy within the PHF comes at a critical time for Pakistan hockey, which is striving to regain its former glory on the international stage. Financial mismanagement and administrative disputes threaten to derail efforts aimed at rebuilding the sport's infrastructure and nurturing new talent.

Athletes and fans alike have expressed frustration over the federation's inability to provide timely payments and maintain transparent governance. The situation underscores the urgent need for reforms and stronger oversight mechanisms within Pakistan's hockey administration. The Pakistan Sports Board's asser-

tion approach signals a commitment to restoring integrity and accountability within the Pakistan Hockey Federation. As investigations continue, all eyes remain on the PHF leadership to resolve the financial issues promptly and ensure that players receive their due support. The future of Pakistan hockey depends on transparent governance and effective management of resources. It is imperative that the PHF addresses these challenges head-on to safeguard the interests of the players and the sport at large. If hockey is witnessing a decline, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) also shares a significant portion of the responsibility. Recently, the PSB increased the fees for using hockey grounds by a staggering 300 percent. This steep hike has made it financially impossible for many local clubs and grassroots teams to access these essential facilities. As a result, the hockey grounds are now underutilized,

leading to deterioration and wear and tear due to neglect. Local clubs, which have historically been the backbone of nurturing young talent and sustaining the sport at the community level, are unable to afford the exorbitant fees imposed by the PSB. This situation not only stifles the growth of hockey at the grassroots but also disrupts the pipeline for developing future national players. The lack of accessible and affordable facilities further demotivates players and coaches, contributing to the overall decline of hockey standards in the country. For a sport with such a rich legacy in Pakistan, this neglect could have long-term damaging consequences.

To revive hockey, it is imperative that the PSB reconsider its policies regarding ground fees. Providing affordable access to facilities for local clubs is crucial to promoting widespread participation, improving player development, and ultimately restoring Pakistan's standing in international hockey.

Pak-India cricket veteran match cancelled after Indian players pull out of game



DNA

LONDON: A cricket match between Indian and Pakistani veteran players – part of the World Championship of Legends (WCL) – was called off after Indian players, including Shikhar Dhawan, refused to play against Pakistan, citing recent "geopolitical tensions" between the two nations, according to a statement issued by

WCL on Sunday. The WCL is an international cricket league where retired, non-contracted international players return to competitive T20 cricket, according to the league's website. The tournament commenced on July 18 and is being held in Birmingham, England. In a statement posted on X, WCL organisers announced that, "We have decided to call off the India vs Pakistan match," saying that the match between the two

countries was planned in light of recent positive development between India and Pakistan, indicating improved bilateral sporting ties. The statement cited a recent volleyball match between the rival nations and speculations around Pakistan's hockey team touring India later this year. Earlier this month, Press Trust of India (PTI) reported that Pakistan is to review the security situation in India before taking a call on send-

ing its hockey teams to the neighbouring country for the Asia Cup and Junior World Cup to be held later this year. The decision to cancel the WCL match came after Indian veteran cricketer Shikhar Dhawan refused to play against Pakistan, according to a statement posted on his X account, showing a screenshot of an email sent to notify the player's withdrawal from the match

PMYP-Qalandars complete Cricket Trials in Hyderabad, Benazirabad

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The cricket talent hunt program, jointly organized by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) and Lahore Qalandars, successfully concluded in Hyderabad and Shaheed Benazirabad. According to Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana, over 7,000 young players participated in the two-day trials, proving that the youth of Sindh possess not only a deep passion for cricket but also the potential to represent Pakistan at the highest level. "This region has always been rich in raw talent, and we take pride in providing both boys and girls from here access to professional cricket opportunities," Atif Rana said. "With support from the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, we are forming five regional teams from Sindh, and Hyderabad has contributed another talented group of players." In Hyderabad, trials were held at the Police Headquarters Ground, Cantt, where after extensive assessments, 16 boys and 15 girls were selected. The young players showcased their skills in front of coaches, selectors, and Lahore Qalandars management. Coaches Marina Iqbal and Riaz Afridi announced the selected squads after evaluating the participants over two days. Following the successful Hyderabad leg, the PMYP-Qalandars talent hunt moved to Shaheed Benazirabad, where an equally enthusiastic response was witnessed from young cricket hopefuls. The energy, determination, and passion displayed by both boys and girls were highly commendable. After competitive trials, a 17-member boys' team and a 15-member girls' team were finalized from Shaheed Benazirabad, representing the most promising talent from the region. The selected players from both cities expressed their gratitude to the PMYP and Lahore Qalandars for bringing this platform to their doorstep and vowed to perform their best in the upcoming competitions. The squads will now begin preparations for the upcoming regional tournaments as part of the broader PMYP-Lahore Qalandars talent development initiative, which aims to identify and nurture cricketing talent from all parts of Pakistan, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir.

CM orders probe into 'honour' killing video

FROM PAGE 01

In Pakistan, 'honour' killings continued to claim the lives of women throughout 2024. According to the Sustainable Social Development Organisation (SSDO) 2024 report 'Mapping Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Pakistan', 2,238 cases of domestic violence, 547 cases of honour killings and 5,339 cases of rape were reported across the country, while conviction rates stood below 2% for each of these crimes.

Bilawal condemns murder of couple

FROM PAGE 01

should serve as a test case for the Balochistan government. The PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that Islam grants women the right to marry by choice, and the Constitution of Pakistan upholds and guarantees this right. He emphasized that the Pakistan Peoples Party has a clear manifesto of zero tolerance for violence and discrimination against women. Reassuring women across the country, especially in Balochistan, he affirmed that the party of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto remains steadfast in its commitment to eliminating gender-based injustice, protecting women's rights, and advancing their welfare and empowerment.

Akhtar Mengal offloaded...

FROM PAGE 01

Provisional National Identification List (PNIL). The politician also went on to share a screenshot of the immigration data where his name was included "with the approval of the competent authority," with explicit directions to prevent him from leaving abroad. Reacting to the development, former federal minister Agha Hasan Baloch and Ghulam Nabi Mari condemned Mengal's offloading while further terming the move as unlawful and unconstitutional. "[Akhtar] Mengal is still a member of the National Assembly; his resignation has not been accepted yet," remarked Baloch.

Senate by-election for Punjab...

FROM PAGE 01

Members of the Punjab Assembly will cast their votes to elect the new Senator. All MPAs have been directed to bring their official assembly identification cards to participate in the voting process. Polling will be conducted from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM without any interruption.

NA speaker felicitates Pakistan volleyball team

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Sunday extended heartfelt congratulations to the Pakistan volleyball team for clinching the championship title, commending the players' dedication, teamwork, and exceptional performance. Speaker paid tribute to the coaches, team management, and the entire squad for their outstanding performance. He expressed best wishes for the volleyball team, recognizing their efforts in achieving national pride and sporting excellence. Speaker said the outstanding performance of Pakistani players is a source of pride for the nation. He noted that the volleyball team achieved its recent championship victory through teamwork, hard work, and passion. The Speaker also commended the continuous successes of young Pakistani athletes across various sports, calling their achievements a testament to the country's emerging talent and competitive spirit.—DNA

Barrios draws with Pacquiao to retain WBC welterweight crown

LAS VEGAS: Mario Barrios held off a battling Manny Pacquiao to retain his WBC world welterweight crown with a fight ruled a majority draw on Saturday. Barrios, 30, held onto his belt despite being dominated for several rounds by 46-year-old Filipino icon Pacquiao, returning to the ring for the first time after a four-year retirement. Barrios was awarded the fight 115-113 by one judge, with the other two cards scoring it 114-114.—APP

Pak volleyball team to receive Rs 8.2 million cash award

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's victorious under-16 men's volleyball team will each receive Rs 600,000 in cash awards following their historic win at the Asian U-16 Championship, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) announced on Sunday. Under the PSB's updated 2024 Cash Award Policy, annual continental gold medalists in team events are granted 30% of the individual award, amounting to Rs 600,000

per player. With a 12-member squad, this translates to Rs7.2 million in total for the players.

Additionally, PSB's policy allocates 50% of the team award to the coaching staff, bringing the coach's share to Rs1,000,000. Together, the total approved payout for the squad and coaching staff is Rs 8.2 million. Pakistan claimed the continental trophy in Thailand by defeating Iran 3-2 in

a dramatic final, remaining unbeaten throughout the tournament. Khuram Shahzad, a PSB spokesperson said the awards would be disbursed within days, aligning with the board's initiative to "recognise and financially support sporting excellence across age groups." The payments will go directly to players and coaches named on the official tournament roster after fulfilling the required documentation.—APP

Erasmus has mixed views after nine-try Springboks beat Georgia

"When we were good, we were matching them. We hit them back on the gainline lots of times. We need to get fitter and understand the game better and then we can do that again"

MBOMBELA, South Africa, :South Africa head coach Rassie Erasmus said on Saturday that he had mixed feelings after a nine-try 55-10 victory over Georgia in a one-off Test in Mbombela. "I saw some good things and some poor things, both in terms of the team and individuals," he told a press conference after the Springboks completed a four-match build-up before the Rugby Championship. In earlier matches, South Africa beat the Barbarians 54-7 in a non-cap exhibition

match and Italy 42-24 and 45-0 in a two-Test series. The record four-time Rugby World Cup title-holders launch their southern hemisphere championship defence on August 16 against Australia in Johannesburg. "A positive is that we have won all our games and scored around 50 points every time, while the defence has not been too bad, all while using 46 players. "Tonight was a bit stop-start, but we have created enough depth for the next six Tests which will be

tough," added Erasmus, referring to two matches each against Australia, New Zealand and Argentina. When South Africa introduced their eight replacements – all World Cup winners – in the second half they produced some excellent rugby and added five tries to the four scored in the opening half. Captain and flanker Siya Kolisi, making his first appearance of the season after recovering from a stiff neck and an Achilles tendon "niggle" echoed Eras-

mus when assessing the performance. "We could have had a better start. Later, we started to get the intensity we wanted, started to put some things together. "We had to really step it up in the second half after Georgia came at us in the first half and matched us physically most of the time. "There was a lot of stop-start stuff, but hopefully we can fix that. The coach is building squad depth while we are winning."

Georgia coach and former England hooker Richard Cockerill said the match had been an excellent learning experience for the Lelos, who are ranked 11th in the world. "I think we competed very well and the scoreline was slightly flattering for the Springboks. They are a very good side, but we took them on in the scrums, the lineouts and mauls. "We knew once their bench came on and the game became unstructured that it would be difficult for us because they

have amazing talent. "But we have things to build on and we leave South Africa with some pride. We need to play this quality of opposition as often as possible. "We will learn from this experience – now we know what it feels like to play at that pace and intensity for 80 minutes.

"When we were good, we were matching them. We hit them back on the gainline lots of times. We need to get fitter and understand the game better and then we can do that again."

Briefs

Rawal Dam spillways closed after six hours

ISLAMABAD: The district administration on Sunday opened the spillways of Rawal Dam after continuous rains raised the reservoir's water level to 1,748 feet. According to the spokesman of ICT administration, this was only four feet below the dam's maximum storage capacity of 1,752 feet, prompting the need to release water to prevent overflow risks. Officials confirmed that after discharging water for around six and a half hours, the water level in the dam dropped to 1,746 feet. The spillways were then closed as the situation stabilized. The decision to open the spillways was taken in coordination with various departments, including the district administration, Rescue 1122, and the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA). These teams were deployed at key locations, including bridges, streams, and vulnerable points downstream, to manage the flow of released water and ensure public safety. Assistant Commissioner of Nilore monitored the entire water release process, supervising operations at the dam and overseeing the safety measures on the ground. Magistrates, Rescue 1122 teams, ambulances, and union council staff remained stationed on different bridges and near the banks of streams throughout the water discharge period. The administration also remained in contact with the Pakistan Meteorological Department to track rainfall patterns and assess further risks. According to officials, the dam's spillways are only opened when the reservoir nears its storage limit to manage water pressure and avoid possible damage to the dam structure. Authorities assured that despite the heavy rains, no major flooding or emergency was reported downstream due to timely coordination and monitoring. However, residents living near water channels were advised to stay alert for any updates from the district administration in case of further rain. The Rawal Dam not only supplies water to Islamabad and Rawalpindi but also plays a critical role in managing seasonal rains. The management of the dam, along with weather monitoring, is part of the broader effort to mitigate risks of urban flooding in the twin cities during the monsoon season.—DNA

Ready-made garments worth \$4.128b exported

ISLAMABAD: The exports of the ready-made garments from the country during last fiscal year (2024-25) grew by 15.85 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year, according to the trade data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics here Saturday. During the period from July-June, 2024-25, over 80, 147 thousand dozens of ready-made garments valued at \$4.128 billion were exported as compared to the exports 75,754 thousand dozens worth of \$3.563 billion of the same period of the last year, it added. Meanwhile, the exports of the art, silk and synthetic textile grew by 8.80 percent as 83,918 metric tons of above mentioned commodity worth of \$399.515 million as against the exports of 82,876 metric tons valued at \$367.199 million of the same period of the last year. During the period under review textile exports witnessed an increase of 7.39 percent as compared to the exports of the same period of the last year (2023-24), as the textile exports from the country were recorded at \$ 17,887.038 million during the fiscal year 2024-25 against the exports of \$ 16,655.899 million during the last year, the data revealed. The textile commodities that contributed in trade growth included knitwear, the export of which increased by 13.68 percent to \$ 5,010.467 million from \$ 4,407.573 million while the export of bed wear surged by 11.07 percent to \$ 3,112.848 million from \$ 2,802.670 million, it added. The other commodities that witnessed growth in trade included towels, the export of which rose by 2.61 percent to \$1,082.611 million from \$ 1,055.108 million, tents, canvas, and tarpaulin by 6.21 percent to \$ 124.870 million from \$117.564 million.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: A view of the spillways of Rawal Dam being opened as a precautionary measure following a rise in water levels due to recent heavy rains.

Israeli attacks kill 67 waiting for aid in northern Gaza

Pope Leo XIV slammed the “barbarity” of the war in Gaza on Sunday and urged against the “indiscriminate use of force,” just days after a deadly strike by Israel’s military on a Catholic church

GAZA STRIP: Israeli attacks have killed 67 Palestinians waiting for UN aid trucks in northern Gaza, health officials in the enclave have said, after more bodies were brought into hospitals from the scene. Earlier, health officials at Al-Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza said dozens of Palestinians were killed and wounded by Israeli fire as crowds gathered to await the entry of UN aid trucks. The increased death toll comes as the Israeli military issued new evacuation warnings for parts of central Gaza. The evacuation warnings were made in one of the few areas the military has rarely operated with ground troops. The evacuation cuts access between the city of Deir al-Balah and the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Younis in the narrow enclave. The military evacuation demand, which

could signal an imminent attack on neighbourhoods in Deir al-Balah, alarmed the families of Israeli hostages, who fear their relatives are being held there. The Israeli military dropped leaflets from the sky ordering people to leave their homes and head further south. The announcement comes as Israel and Hamas have been holding ceasefire talks in Qatar, but international mediators say there have been no breakthroughs. The area of Gaza under the evacuation order is also where many international organisations attempting to distribute aid are located. Military spokesman Avichay Adraee warned the military will attack “with intensity”. He called for residents, including those sheltering in tents, to head to the Muwasi area, a desolate tent camp on Gaza’s southern shore that the Israeli military has designated a humanitari-

an zone. Israeli sources have said the reason the army has so far stayed out is because they suspect Hamas might be holding hostages there. At least 20 of the remaining 50 hostages in captivity in Gaza are believed to still be alive. Hostage families demanded an explanation from the army. The warnings and continued attacks came as Pope Leo called for an end to the “barbarity of war” as he spoke of his profound pain over an Israeli strike on the sole Catholic church in Gaza. Three people died and several were injured, including the parish priest, in the strike on the Holy Family Church compound in Gaza City on Thursday. Photos show its roof has been hit close to the main cross, scorching the stone facade, and shattering windows. Speaking after his Angelus prayer, Leo read out the names of those killed in the incident. “I appeal to the

international community to observe humanitarian law and respect the obligation to protect civilians as well as the prohibition of collective punishment, of indiscriminate use of force and forced displacement of the population,” he said. Residents said it was becoming impossible to find essential food such as flour. The Gaza health ministry said at least 71 children had died of malnutrition during the war, and 60,000 others were suffering from symptoms of malnutrition. Food prices have increased well beyond what most of the population of more than two million can afford. Several people who spoke to Reuters via chat apps said they either had one meal or no meal in the past 24 hours. “As a father, I wake up in the early morning to look for food, for even a loaf of bread for my five children, but all in vain,” said Ziad, a nurse. “People

who didn’t die of bombs will die of hunger. We want an end to this war now, a truce, even for two months,” he said. Others said they felt dizzy walking in the streets and that many fainted as they walked. Fathers leave tents to avoid questions by their children about what to eat. UNRWA, the UN refugee agency dedicated to Palestinians, demanded Israel allow more aid trucks into Gaza, saying it had enough food for the entire population for over three months, which was not allowed in. “The Israeli Authorities are starving civilians in Gaza. Among them are 1 million children. Lift the siege: allow UNRWA to bring in food and medicines,” it wrote on X. Yesterday, at least 39 people were killed by Israeli fire while they were on their way to an aid distribution site in Gaza according to health officials and Nass-

er Hospital in Khan Younis. The two incidents occurred near hubs operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. Most of the deaths occurred as Palestinians massed in the Teina area, around two miles from a GHF aid distribution centre east of the city of Khan Younis. The Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis said it received 25 bodies, along with dozens of wounded. Seven other people, including one woman, were killed in the Shakoush area, hundreds of yards north of another GHF hub in Gaza’s southernmost city of Rafah, the hospital said. Gaza’s population of more than two million Palestinians are in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Israeli attacks have killed more than 58,000 Palestinians since the current stage of the conflict began on 7 October 2023.—Agencies

Nasir for alternate energy to tackle climate challenges

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi on Sunday underlined the critical importance of shifting towards alternate energy solutions to meet Pakistan’s energy needs and strengthen climate resilience. Addressing the PAEA National Conference on Alternate Energy and Climate Resilience, he emphasized that the adoption of green and renewable energy sources was essential not only for reducing reliance on fossil fuels but also for ensuring long-term economic and environmental sustainability. He noted that alternate energy offers an efficient and viable pathway to power Pakistan’s growth while mitigating the devastating impacts of climate change. Highlighting recent climate-related disasters, including floods and extreme heat, the ICCI President stressed the need for urgent national efforts to address climate vulnerability. “Pakistan must move decisively towards cleaner energy solutions to safeguard its future and build a climate-resilient economy,” he remarked. He reiterated that the Chamber is fully committed to working with industrial sectors, policy forums and development partners to promote green energy, drive innovation and combat the multifaceted challenges facing the economy. “ICCI will continue to play its role in fostering a sustainable energy transition and in positioning Pakistan as a responsible, forward-looking green economy,” Qureshi concluded.—APP

NPO launches productivity enhancement initiative

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) on Saturday launched a significant productivity enhancement initiative for the gloves manufacturing sector in Sialkot. Titled “Enhancing Operational Efficiency Through Lean Manufacturing Techniques,” the project aims to strengthen Pakistan’s industrial competitiveness and support key export-oriented sectors, said a news release. The initiative is being implemented in collaboration with the Pakistan Gloves Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PGMEA) and with technical support from the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Japan. As part of this project, an international productivity expert, George Wong from Singapore, has arrived in Sialkot to conduct on-site assessments and tailored consultancy sessions for selected beneficiary companies recommended by PGMEA. The project adopts a phased approach, comprising face-to-face site visits, customized workshops, and follow-up technical sessions to ensure sustained improvements in operational efficiency. The NPO official highlighted that this intervention is specifically designed to introduce advanced Lean Manufacturing concepts to the local industry, aiming to reduce waste, optimize processes, and bolster global competitiveness.—APP

Young agricultural graduates embark on transformational training

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark initiative aimed at revolutionizing Pakistan’s agriculture sector through international collaboration and knowledge exchange, a group of 100 young agricultural professionals on Sunday set to depart for China Southwest University of Science and Technology. This initiative is part of the Prime Minister’s Special Capacity-Building Program, envisions training 1,000 Pakistani agriculture graduates in leading Chinese institutions to learn from China’s modern, climate-smart, and technology-driven farming practices. A special pre-departure event was organized by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) to bid farewell to the departing cohort of 100 trainees, says a press release. Delivering the keynote address, Secretary Ministry of Nation Food Security and Research Amir Muhyuddin, appreciated the enthusiasm and potential of the departing trainees. “You are the ambassadors of Pakistan’s agricultural future,” he remarked. “This is not just a learning journey—it is a transformational opportunity. I hope you will return equipped with advanced technical knowledge, innovative ideas, and practical skills to uplift Pakistan’s farming landscape,” he added. The secretary emphasized that this initiative reflects the Prime Minister’s vision to strengthen Pakistan’s agriculture sector through technology adoption and international exposure. He encouraged the graduates to make the most of their training, maintain discipline, and act as a bridge of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and China. During the session, Additional Secretary Alam Zaib, Deputy Secretary Shafqat Abbas, and other senior officials also briefed the students on the training schedule, modules, and expected outcomes. They shared their experience in coordinating the initiative and assured full support throughout the training period. The Prime Minister’s Capacity-Building Program, launched following his visit to Yangling Agricultural Technology Demonstration Base, Shaanxi, in June 2024, is a flagship initiative designed to build technical capacity and enhance agricultural productivity in Pakistan. As per the PM’s directives issued on 9th and 12th November 2024, the MNFSR—alongside HEC, MOFA, MoIT, NITB, and Pakistan’s Embassy in Beijing—was tasked with implementing the program in three batches. MNFSR developed fair and inclusive selection criteria, including 10 percent additional quota for Balochistan, and advertised the program nationally. A Steering Committee and Technical Committee were established to oversee implementation and selection. To facilitate the process, NITB developed a state-of-the-art digital portal for registration, screening, communication and report submission. This platform will also be used for biweekly progress reports and post-training evaluations.—DNA

Tearful relatives await news from Vietnam wreck rescue

HALONG BAY, Vietnam: Relatives anxiously sat beside ambulances on the wharf of one of Vietnam’s most popular tourist sites on Sunday, waiting for news of loved ones who were on a tourist boat that capsized killing dozens. Fruits and flowers were laid on the coast for the at least 37 killed in the wreckage on Saturday in what some called Ha Long Bay’s worst-ever disaster. As rescuers worked into Sunday morning to salvage the sunken boat, a handful of people were still missing. The tourist vessel called “Wonder Sea” had been carrying 53 people, including more than 20 children, around the UNESCO World Heritage Site, according to state media. Hoang Quang rushed from Hanoi to Quang Ninh province at 2:00 am on Sunday for news of his cousin and her family who were

on the boat when it capsized. The couple – a housewife and fruit seller married to a bus driver – had “tried their best” to afford the trip around the world-famous bay. “They found the body of (the husband), not my cousin yet,” Hoang said. He was “so shocked” when he heard news of the incident and immediately went to the wharf with other worried family members. “Suddenly the victims were my relatives – anyone would be scared. We didn’t know what to do, except to keep waiting,” he said. “We think that as we are all here, she knew and she would show up. We are all so anxious... We just wish and pray for her to come back here to us.” At Ha Long city’s main funeral home, AFP journalists saw bodies wrapped in red cloth being carried in on stretchers, as friends

and relatives cried in front of more than a dozen coffins. A 68-year-old man, who asked not to be named, rushed to the scene at 3:00 am, only to discover that his relatives – a young family of four, including two boys – had died in the capsizing. “We were all so shocked,” he said tearfully. “This was a very sudden accident. They were just taking the kids out to the bay for summer holidays and it ended up terrible.” The bodies of the mother and children had been recovered, but he was awaiting news of the father to be able to cremate them together. “We know there is no hope,” he said. The friend of another victim, a firefighter who had taken the trip with colleagues, said they had known each other since university. “He was still single. We

brought his body back to (his hometown) for burial early this morning,” the friend said. He praised the rescue efforts and said provincial authorities had given families 25 million dong (\$955) for each victim. By early Sunday, the wreckage had been towed into the wharf and 11 people had been taken to a nearby hospital, where one more died later in the day. Security guard Nguyen Tuan Anh spent the night on the wharf where ambulances were waiting to carry the bodies away – a scene he described as “painful.” “I don’t think I have experienced this scene before. This maybe the worst accident ever in Ha Long Bay,” he said, adding it had been “unpredictable and also I think unpreparable.” “The whirlwind came so sudden

and so big. The wind blew off the framework of a big stage for a grand music show nearby,” he said. Ha Long Bay is one of Vietnam’s most popular tourist destinations, with millions of people visiting its blue-green waters and rainforest-topped limestone islands each year. Several hundred rescuers including professional divers, soldiers, and firefighters joined the search for survivors through the night and heavy rain, state media said. “The whirlwind came just so sudden,” a rescue worker, who asked not to be named, said on Saturday. “As the boat turned upside down, several people were stuck inside the cabin. Me and other rescuers pulled up two bodies and rescued one,” he said. “The accident was so devastating.—APP

S Punjab business, industry defer July 19 strike call

MULTAN: Business, and industry representatives from south Punjab announced here Friday to call off the strike they had earlier announced for July 19 in the light of high level negotiations between the government and business leaders over tax reforms. The Multan Trade Bodie Alliance has announced the postponement of its planned strike scheduled for July 19, says an official release issued by Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) late on Friday night. The decision came after a meeting chaired by Haroon Akhtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Revenue, where representatives from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and regional chambers voiced serious concerns over enforcement provisions in the recent tax legislation.—APP

Briefs

Pakistan,
Azerbaijan
to establish
JWGs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Saturday have agreed to establish joint working groups (JWGs) aimed at strengthening bilateral connectivity and elevating their relationship into a strategic economic partnership focused on rail and trade infrastructure.

The announcement followed a high-level meeting held Saturday at the Ministry of Railways, with Minister of State for Railways and Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani in the Chair. The session brought together key stakeholders to explore avenues for strengthening cross-border linkages and advancing mutual economic interests.

The State Minister reiterated Pakistan's firm commitment to enhancing rail-based trade connectivity with Azerbaijan. He noted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is actively pursuing a comprehensive strategy for the development and modernization of Pakistan Railways. Secretary Railway Board, , gave a detailed briefing on Pakistan's railway network, highlighting its existing capacity and outlining prospects for future expansion to accommodate regional freight and logistics operations. During the meeting, both sides also discussed the rail agreement inked between Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan, underscoring its significance in advancing regional connectivity. Key officials from various Pakistani ministries and departments participated in a high-level meeting aimed at advancing bilateral connectivity between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Nine killed after
multiple buses
overturn

DNA

THATTA, KHAIRPUR. At least nine people have died in multiple accidents in Sindh after two buses overturned in Thatta and Khairpur, injuring more than 40 passengers. The first incident occurred at Darsgah Muhammad Ali on the National Highway, where a bus carrying picnicers from Karachi to Keenjhar Lake, overturned due to speeding as per the rescue officials. Six people were killed and more than 20 others were injured in the incident. With the bus being pulled out of the crane, the bodies of the victims are being transported to Karachi. With the victims and the injured hailing from Orangi Town, an Edhi spokesperson has said that the bodies were being transferred from Thatta to the morgue located in Orangi Town. Separately, a passenger bus travelling from Karachi to Mansehra overturned on the National Highway in Khairpur near Tando Masti area, killing three people and wounding over 25 others. The police have said that injured people and bodies have been shifted to the Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) Hospital.

Consumers
continue to
bear burden
of low demand
through capacity
payments, says
expert

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Power generation remained largely flat in the fiscal year 2024-25, as rising solar adoption and reduced industrial activity continued to suppress on-grid electricity demand. Official data shows total power generation reached 127,160 GWh during FY25, almost unchanged from the 127,165 GWh recorded in the previous fiscal year. In June, power generation increased by 2% compared to the same month last year and rose by 8% on a month-on-month basis. The average fuel cost of power generation fell by 2% over the year. In June alone, it declined by 9% year-on-year (YoY) but was marginally higher — by 1% — compared to May.

Chess a medium of strategic
engagement, says Amb. Silva

Portugal Embassy and Serena Hotels host Chess tournament in Islamabad



ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a unique blend of sportsmanship and diplomacy, the Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad, in collaboration with Serena Hotels and the Chess Federation of Pakistan, organized the first-ever Portugal-Pakistan Chess Tournament. Held at Kehkashan Hall I of Serena Hotel. The tournament brought together a diverse group of players and guests, creating an intellectually stimulating environment and deepening cultural connections between the two nations. The event was part of the concluding celebrations of Portugal's National Day in Pakistan and coincided with the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Pakistan—a milestone that underlines the long-standing friendship between the two countries. The tournament kicked off at 10:30 AM and saw participation from around 40 chess players, including seasoned professionals, young enthusiasts, and hobbyists, ranging in age and background. Among the notable attendees were ambassadors from Morocco, Yemen, and Turkmenistan, who also joined the chess matches, adding a distinct diplomatic flair to the occasion. In his opening remarks, H.E.

Frederico Silva, Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, expressed his gratitude to Serena Hotels for co-organizing the event and extended appreciation to the Chess Federation of Pakistan for their support in facilitating the matches. Ambassador Silva highlighted the symbolic importance of the event, noting that chess is more than a game—it is a medium of strategic engagement, intellectual development, and cross-cultural understanding. "This tournament is a reflection of our belief in building bridges between people through cultural and intellectual exchange," said Ambassador Silva. "As we mark 75 years of Portugal-Pakistan relations, it is important to celebrate not just political and economic cooperation but also our shared human values—something that chess uniquely embodies." Adding to the diplomatic atmosphere, many members of Islamabad's civil society, diplomatic corps, and official entities attended the event, turning it into a vibrant celebration of community, culture, and camaraderie. The event was open to families and the general public, making it accessible to a broad audience and creating a festive, welcoming ambiance. Serena Hotels, known for its commitment to promoting sports diplomacy, played a central role in bringing the event to life. Syed Fahim Inam, Chief Marketing Officer Group of Serena Hotels, emphasized the organization's dedication to fostering such cultural and sporting events.

"We are proud to partner with the Embassy of Portugal in promoting chess, a game that enhances critical thinking and brings people together," said Inam. "Under our sports diplomacy initiative, Serena Hotels is committed to supporting similar events in the future that contribute to peace, development, and international friendship." The venue was thoughtfully arranged to reflect the prestige of the event. Tables adorned with chessboards were spaced throughout the hall, allowing participants to engage in games surrounded by an atmosphere of concentration and mutual respect. Spectators moved quietly among the tables, watching matches unfold and appreciating the strategic brilliance of the players. While the primary goal of the tournament was not competition but rather connection, the games were played with serious intent and spirit. Both new and experienced players demonstrated a high level of skill and sportsmanship, highlighting the strong potential for chess to flourish further in Pakistan with institutional support. The tournament also showcased the growing role of Islamabad as a hub for international cultural engagement. By hosting such a multifaceted event, the city reinforced its image as an inclusive, vibrant, and intellectually dynamic capital that welcomes diverse initiatives from around the globe. Chess, with its universal appeal and emphasis on mental discipline, proved to be an ideal medium for such an endeavor. It transcended linguistic and cultural barriers, allowing players and spectators alike to engage in meaningful, non-verbal communication and strategic exchange. In doing so, the Portugal-Pakistan Chess Tournament fulfilled its broader purpose—of using sports as a vehicle for diplomacy, development, and dialogue. As the final matches concluded and participants gathered for group photographs and informal conversation, there was a shared sense that this was not merely an event but the beginning of a tradition. With Portugal and Pakistan reaffirming their strong diplomatic ties, and with institutions like Serena Hotels committed to fostering more such exchanges, the tournament marked a hopeful and inspiring chapter in bilateral relations. This event demonstrated how cultural diplomacy, when blended with timeless games like chess, can become a powerful tool to bring communities and nations closer. The success of the first Portugal-Pakistan Chess Tournament sets a promising precedent for future collaborations rooted in respect, intellect, and mutual goodwill.

Afghan Vision:
friendship over hostility

ABDUL WAHEED

PESHAWAR: I often find myself questioning whether the world, ever truly intended to eliminate terrorism in our region. Because if that had been the real goal, they would have long ago addressed the root causes: poverty, deprivation, unemployment, illiteracy, and injustice. They should have invested in dignity instead of bombings, and protected civilians instead of killing them. But the consistent failure to do so, then and now, suggests a deep-

er truth that perhaps terrorism was never meant to be eradicated, but intended to be only managed, manipulated, and moved around to serve shifting strategic interests. If so, we're not facing a security failure, but a moral one. Afghanistan has long suffered under foreign bombs, from the Soviets in the 1980s to America's "war on terror." Villages, weddings, and funerals were struck in the name of fighting militants. But what was truly destroyed were lives, trust, and any belief that violence brings peace. Terrorism wasn't eliminated;

hatred and trauma were multiplied. Now Pakistan repeats the same mistake. Its recent bombings inside Afghan territory are not acts of defense, they are acts of aggression. They inflame anger, and help terrorists recruit. They don't secure Pakistan; they destabilize the region and deepen Afghan resentment. Bombing has never brought peace to this land, but only more resistance. We acknowledge Pakistan's security concerns and affirm that they need serious and responsible engagement. However, we

firmly oppose the approach currently being pursued. The use of force, particularly airstrikes, is not a legitimate or effective means of addressing such concerns. It undermines regional stability, violates Afghan sovereignty, and risks further escalation at a time when dialogue and cooperation are most needed. My criticism is not of a nation, but of policies that prolong suffering. Real friendship demands honesty even when it's uncomfortable. If we want peace, we must stop returning to the fire.



LISBON: Ambassador Dr. Muhammad Khalid Ejaz had a meeting with the Team of the Prime Minister Youth Programme lead by the team lead Sabahat Rahim Baig. The Ambassador provided them with valuable contacts for potential collaboration with the Portuguese society and guided them on various opportunities for Pakistani students in Portugal. — DNA

MURREE SPARKLETT'S
Bottled Drinking Water

WATER TASTES BEST IN GLASS!!

CARBONATED WATER ALSO AVAILABLE IN GLASS BOTTLE

330ml **750ml**

Murree Sparkletts
Himalayan Dew

For Sales & Supply Contact:

Adeel Butt 03334131756	Qaiser Waheed 03325808422	Riaz Muhammad 0335 5111043
---------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------------