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Relations solidified

Pakistan indebted to Saudi support

Saudi Ambassador Meets Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Strengthen Bilateral Ties

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malkiy, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif today at the Prime Minister's Office in Islamabad. The meeting underscored the deep-rooted fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, with discussions focusing on enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields, including trade, investment, and regional peace.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended his heartfelt regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, reaffirming Pakistan's strong bond with the Kingdom. The Prime Minister fondly recalled his recent telephone conversation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on 24 June, during which both leaders reiterated their commitment to further strengthening Pak-Saudi ties. Ambassador Al-Malkiy conveyed greetings from the Saudi leadership and expressed the Kingdom's desire to expand cooperation with Pakistan in multiple sectors, including energy, infrastructure, and human resource development. He emphasized Saudi Arabia's continued support for Pakistan's economic stability and progress. The meeting highlighted the importance of accelerating ongoing projects under the Saudi-Pakistan Supreme Coordination Council (SPSCC), a high-level platform established to boost economic and strategic collaboration. Both sides reviewed progress on Saudi investments in Pakistan's energy, mining, and agriculture sectors, with the Prime Minister assuring full facilitation for Saudi investors. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded Saudi Arabia's role in promoting

Prime Minister to Attend 17th ECO Summit in Baku

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 17th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) will be held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 3-4 July 2025. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.E. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, will lead the Pakistan delegation to the Summit. The theme of the Summit is "New ECO Vision for a Sustainable and Climate Resilient Future." During the Summit, the Prime Minister will share Pakistan's perspective on key regional and global challenges, reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to the ECO Vision 2025, and advocate for enhanced intra-regional trade, transport connectivity, energy cooperation, and sustainable development. He will also hold bilateral meetings with other ECO leaders on the sidelines of the Summit to discuss matters of mutual interest.

peace and stability in the region, particularly its efforts in mediating global conflicts. He reiterated Pakistan's support for the Kingdom's Vision 2030, a transformative

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Core committee meeting

PTI never backed off negotiations

Gandapur his govt could not be removed through legal means

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) core committee meeting concluded with a firm decision to resist the government's actions, vowing to give a "tough time" to the ruling coalition. Addressing a press conference after the meeting, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur challenged the federal government to attempt overthrowing his administration, asserting that his government could not be removed through legal means. Gandapur expressed confidence in the stability of the KP government, stating that any unconstitutional move against it would be met with strong resistance. He accused the federal government of attempting to destabilize PTI-led governments but insisted that such efforts would fail.

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To combat terror Pakistan ready to forge 'phenomenal partnership' with India

"Let us resolve Kashmir [dispute] in accordance with the aspirations of its people," says PPP chairman

BILAL RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said Pakistan is ready to build a "historic and phenomenal partnership" with India to jointly combat terrorism, urging New Delhi to abandon its confrontational posture and engage in meaningful dialogue for peace. Speaking at a seminar in Islamabad titled "Pakistan:

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Saeed al Malikiy called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 2 July 2025. — DNA

Hasina Wajid gets six months prison sentence

NEWS DESK

DHAKA: Bangladesh on Wednesday convicted fugitive ex-prime minister Sheikh Hasina of contempt of court and issued a six-month prison sentence in absentia, the first verdict since she was ousted last year. Hasina, 77, fled to neighbouring India at the culmination of the student-led uprising in August 2024, and has defied orders to return to Dhaka. "She will serve the sentence the day

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Aurangzeb underscores importance of SMEs

DNA

MADRID: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, today represented Pakistan in a high-level panel discussion titled "Scaling up SME Finance" hosted at the International Business Forum, held on the sidelines of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for

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ECP implements order

Ruling coalition gets lion's share of reserved seats

Top electoral body notifies restoration of reserved seats following Supreme Court's July 27 verdict

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday issued a notification regarding the reserved seats following the July 27 verdict given by the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench.

The top court's Constitutional Bench accepted review petitions and ruled that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is not entitled to seats reserved for women and minorities in the national and provincial assemblies — providing a lion's share of the reserved seats to the ruling coalition. Following the notification, five reserved seats for women in the National Assembly from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were restored by the top electoral body. Two seats each were allotted to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and one to the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). Eleven reserved seats for women in the National Assembly from Punjab were also restored. 10 seats have been allotted to the ruling PML-N and one to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The commission restored three seats reserved for minorities in

Continued on Page 06

South African air force chief visits PAF HQs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Wiseman Simo Mbambo, Chief of the South African Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. Upon his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to Lieutenant General Wiseman Simo Mbambo. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff emphasized the shared values and aspirations that form the foundation of the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and South Africa. The Air Chief reiterated PAF's commitment to bolster aerial combat capabilities of the South African Air Force through tailored training and capacity-building initiatives.

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Briefs

Govt cuts duties on imported goods

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has slashed regulatory duties on imported items including luxury cars, food, mobile phone SIM cards and other goods, according to a notification issued by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Wednesday. The revised tax rates came into effect on July 1. As per the notification, regulatory duty on mobile phone SIM cards has been reduced from 15% to 12%, while the duty on new cars and minivans has been cut by one-third, bringing it down to as low as 10%. For imported SUVs, the duty has been slashed by 44% to stand at 50%, read the notification. Similarly, in the food sector, regulatory duty on poultry and fish has been brought down to 5%. The duty on bird eggs has been reduced from 15% to 10% and pet food for cats and dogs now faces a 40% duty after a 5% reduction. Moreover, tobacco products have seen a major duty reduction of up to 40%. The federal government also slashed duties on figs, pineapples, avocados, guavas, and mangoes by 20%.

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AC among 5 killed in Bajaur blast

"The blast was so intense that the vehicle targeted was completely destroyed"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: At least five people, including an assistant commissioner, were killed and 11 others injured on Wednesday in a bomb explosion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district. Bajaur District Police Officer Waqas Rafique told that five people, including two policemen and a civilian, were killed in the explosion targeting a government vehicle on Nawagai Road in Siddiqabad railway attack area of Khar tehsil. "The blast was so intense that the vehicle targeted was completely destroyed," he said, adding that 11 people were injured in the blast and immediately transported to Khar Hospital for treatment. The DPO said that security was increased in the area and relief activities were underway. The deceased include Nawagai Assistant Commissioner Faisal Ismail, Tehsildar Abdul Wakil, Subedar Noor Hakim, and police constable Rashid. KP Health Adviser Ihtisham Ali strongly condemned the blast and expressed grief over the demise of the assistant commissioner and others in the incident. He contacted the district health officer and the medical superintendent of District Headquarters Hospital Khar Bajaur and enquired about the well-being of those injured in the attack. "An emergency has been imposed in Bajaur hospitals and health department staff has been alerted for first aid," he said. The health adviser assured the public that medical assistance would be provided to the injured. KP Inspector General of Police (IG) Zulfiqar Hameed sought a report on the blast from the Malakand regional police officer (RPO). He also ordered to speed up intelligence-based operations against the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Continued on Page 06

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Negligence in Swat

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday took serious notice of the recent tragedy in Swat where 17 tourists lost their lives due to alleged negligence by authorities. During a hearing on the incident, Chief Justice SM Atiq Shah and Justice Faheem Wali summoned the Commissioners of Malakand, Hazara, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan and other relevant officials to appear in person. The court expressed grave concern over the failure to rescue tourists in a timely manner when the water level in the Swat River rose suddenly.

“Seventeen lives were lost due to negligence. Why weren't tourists rescued promptly? Why were safety jackets not provided using drones?” asked Chief Justice Shah. He further inquired about the responsibilities of managing river safety and tourist sites. During the hearing, the Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa informed the court that an anti-encroachment operation has been initiated in Swat. He also noted that while an air ambulance was available, it could not be utilized due to time constraints.—APP

CM Maryam inspects Murree field hospital

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday made a surprise visit to inspect a field hospital near Murree. During the visit, which was made while CM was returning from Murree, she thoroughly reviewed the medical facilities available at the field hospital. The chief minister interacted with the doctors and medical staff of the hospital and inquired about the operational aspects of the facility. She also interacted with patients and their families, who shared their experiences regarding the medical services provided by the hospital. The chief minister specifically asked about the free provision of medical tests and medicines. During her visit, a citizen while appreciating the initiative said that the hospital was greatly benefiting the people. The field hospital is a remarkable step as it is greatly benefiting elderly women and patients”, he said. “We could never have imagined receiving treatment facilities at our doorstep without going through the hardship of traveling difficult routes to a hospital”, said another patient.—APP

Ulema united for national unity: Ashrafi

SARGODHA: Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council and President National Solidarity Council Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi reaffirmed collective commitment of religious scholars to national unity, peace, and the Paigham-e-Pakistan code of conduct during a press conference, held at a private hotel on Wednesday. Pakistan travel guide He announced that all religious leaders and spiritual figures in Sargodha unanimously endorsed the Paigham-e-Pakistan Charter. He urged clerics, preachers, religious scholars, and general public across the country to strengthen the ongoing atmosphere of unity and religious harmony. “No scholar or speaker has the right to disrespect any sect or its sacred beliefs,” he added. “All must implement and uphold the Paigham-e-Pakistan code without exception,” he stressed. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan, State and Frontier Regions Engineer Ameer Maqam, Federal Minister for Public Affairs Unit Rana Mubashar Iqbal, Advisor to the PM on Political Affairs Rana Sana Ullah, Minister of State for Power Abdul Rehman Kanju and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Talha Barki are also present.

Parental vigilance key to child protection, nation's future

About the query of help line, the DG said that the Ministry's 1099 Helpline has become a central mechanism for addressing complaints related to child abuse, early marriages, and other violations. “Complaints are received, digitally registered in our IT system, and followed up with relevant departments across the country,” said the Director General

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an exclusive interview, Director General of the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), Abdul Sattar here on Wednesday, outlined recent developments and ongoing challenges in the Ministry's efforts to uphold child rights and human rights commitments at both national and international levels. Speaking on institutional frameworks, Abdul Sattar highlighted the critical role of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) in protecting vulnerable children, especially girls. “These girls are not enjoying their rights the way they should. That's where our national commissions play a vital role,” he said. He drew attention to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2016, and the newly introduced Early Child Marriage Restraining Act, which sets the legal age

for marriage at 18. “The new legislation strengthens protections, but the real challenge is implementation, especially in remote areas,” Sattar noted. Addressing these implementation gaps, he explained that the 18th Constitutional Amendment had devolved human rights responsibilities to the provincial and district levels. “Now, human rights are a provincial subject. Each district, especially in Balochistan and Sindh, has its own department or social welfare setup. Our role at the federal level is now focused on policy, coordination, and international reporting,” he stated. Sattar also elaborated on Pakistan's international obligations: “We've ratified seven out of nine core human rights conventions and regularly submit reports under these frameworks. We're also responsible for defending Pakistan's human rights record in international forums.” About the query of help line, the DG said that the Ministry's 1099 Helpline has become a central

mechanism for addressing complaints related to child abuse, early marriages, and other violations. “Complaints are received, digitally registered in our IT system, and followed up with relevant departments across the country,” said the Director General. On child labor and begging, particularly involving Afghan refugee children, Sattar stressed the need for coordinated action. “We play an advisory role, but law enforcement and local governments are the primary implementers. In Islamabad, the Chief Commissioner's Office and Police are actively working to address child labor,” he shared. He also emphasized the work being done under Pakistan's GSP+ trade status, which is linked to the country's human rights performance. “Our compliance with international treaties and conventions is directly tied to our trade incentives. Human rights protections are not just moral obligations—they are also economic imperatives.” In

addition to legislative reforms and human rights monitoring, Director General Abdul Sattar emphasized the rising importance of cybersecurity, particularly in safeguarding children from online threats such as exploitation, cyberbullying, and harassment. “With increased internet usage, children are more vulnerable than ever to online abuse. It is crucial that parents and guardians closely monitor their children's digital activity, including social media, gaming platforms, and chat applications,” he warned. To address these concerns, the Ministry of Human Rights, in coordination with other relevant bodies, has taken proactive steps. “A special Cyber Wing has been established to respond to cases of online abuse, cyber harassment, and exploitation of children,” Abdul Sattar confirmed. “This wing works in coordination with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and other law enforcement institutions to ensure rapid action and digital protection,” he added.

The Cyber Wing not only investigates cybercrime cases but also plays an educational role. “We are raising awareness about digital literacy and safe internet practices through schools, public campaigns, and community outreach,” he added. “It's not just about punishing offenders — it's about preventing cybercrime before it happens,” further he added. He urged families to remain vigilant. “Children today have access to technology, but not always the judgment to use it safely. It is the shared responsibility of parents, teachers, and the government to create a safe digital environment for child. The Ministry is also collaborating with civil society and tech platforms to implement reporting mechanisms and content regulation. “When a child is exposed to harmful content or contacted by suspicious individuals online, we want to ensure there's a clear and safe way to report and resolve the issue immediately.

Excise deptt offers 10% discount via City App

ISLAMABAD: The Excise and Taxation Department of Islamabad on Wednesday offered the residents to use the City App to pay their vehicle token tax from home, as the new financial year underway. The department is offering a 10% discount throughout July to encourage timely digital payments and help citizens avoid penalties, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration here. He said that the Excise and Taxation Department of Islamabad has introduced a convenient digital facility for residents to pay their vehicle token tax without visiting any office. The initiative is aimed at promoting contactless and hassle-free tax submission through the City App, available on both Android and iOS platforms. In this regard, Director Excise and Taxation, Bilal Azam Khan, appealed to citizens to take advantage of the City App and submit their token tax promptly to avoid any legal action. He emphasized the importance of meeting the annual deadline and urged the public to not delay tax payments. To make the process easier, the department has launched a July-only incentive. Anyone who pays their token tax through the City App during the month of July will receive a 10% discount. This offer applies to all eligible vehicle owners who make their payments through the mobile application. The City App can be downloaded using the provided link and is designed to offer a simple and accessible user experience for Android and iPhone users alike.—APP

LAC condemns killing of transgender

PESHAWAR: The Legal Aid Committee of Da Hawwa Lur has strongly condemned the brutal killing of a transgender individual in Peshawar on July 2, 2025, in yet another horrifying act of violence. In a press statement issued here on Wednesday, Shwana Shah, Program Director of Da Hawwa Lur, stated that we must move beyond condemnations to tangible safeguards. This includes establishing safe housing, creating transgender-sensitive policing units, and ensuring access to trauma-informed legal and medical services. Representative of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), Rizwan observed that transgender citizens are entitled to the same protection and dignity as all other Pakistanis. —APP

Trade corridor via rail & road needed

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to enhance trade through rail, road, and air routes. Addressing the Ministerial Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tianjin, China, he expressed Pakistan's keen interest in establishing trade corridors through China, Afghanistan and Iran, highlighting the country's strategic role in regional connectivity and trade activities, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. He emphasized that under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan has achieved major milestones in road infrastructure. “Our focus now is to expand trade beyond the borders of Afghanistan and Iran with fully functional international-standard cargo ports in Gwadar and Karachi,” he added. The minister also underscored the significance of Khunjerab in the North and the coastal gateways of Gwadar and Karachi in Pakistan's trade expansion strategy. Highlighting regional development initiatives, Abdul Aleem Khan noted that the proposed Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project would be a transformative step for the entire region. He confirmed that Pakistan supports the construction of Silk Road Stations with China's cooperation and that the Khunjerab-Sust Route will now remain operational year-round from year 2023. It is worth mentioning that 10 Member countries are participating in the ongoing SCO Ministerial Conference while India once again opted not to attend. As per details from India Anand Prakash was listed to attend this SCO who remained absent and his seat was left vacant. Talking about this, Abdul Aleem Khan remarked that such irresponsible behavior on a global forum is regrettable and shows India's unwillingness to face its regional counterparts. “Pakistan has always advocated for mutual respect and cooperation while as a nuclear power, India must adopt a responsible attitude and behave like a good neighbor,” he stated. SCO delegates from other countries also expressed surprise and disappointment over India's absence in this Ministerial Session of SCO. In his address, the Federal Minister informed the conference that Pakistan is actively pursuing the digitalization of its Transport Systems and moving rapidly toward smart transport solutions. —APP

Life skills summer camp held

PESHAWAR: The Directorate of Youth Affairs organised a three-day Life Skills Summer Camp in the scenic valleys of Ayubia. The camp brought together young participants from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly from the merged districts, offering them a unique and valuable opportunity to enhance their personal and professional capabilities in a natural and serene environment. The camp was designed to nurture the potential of youth as change-makers, featuring a series of interactive sessions and workshops. Key topics included mental health and well-being, environmental awareness, entrepreneurial skills and innovative thinking, and awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). —APP

Radio transmissions suspended due to power supply disconnection

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Radio Pakistan Peshawar Broadcasts Suspended for 15 Days – Severe Threat to National Security and State Narrative Radio Pakistan Peshawar's high-power transmitter in Chugalpura has been without electricity for the past 15 days. The alleged reason is a delay in the payment of the electricity bill. As a result of this serious situation, Radio Pakistan's broadcasts have been completely suspended—a deeply alarming development that goes against national interests. At a time when

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is facing a new wave of terrorism, the suspension of broadcasts from a national institution like Radio Pakistan not only harms public awareness but also severely affects the dissemination of the state narrative, the National Action Plan, and crucial security-related information. Radio Pakistan, particularly for remote and sensitive regions, is the only reliable source of information that keeps the public informed about the national stance, official instructions, and verified news. Its silence is creating a vacuum that can be filled by rumors, misleading propaganda,

and unverified sources. It is evident that this issue is not merely a financial dispute—it is directly linked to national security, the public's right to information, and state sovereignty. Demands: The Government of Pakistan, especially the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, must take immediate notice of this situation. Electricity supply to Radio Pakistan Peshawar should be restored immediately to resume continuous broadcasting. Disciplinary action should be taken against PESCO officials who acted without considering national security requirements.

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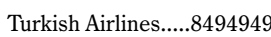
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Briefs

Sumeta urges citizens to take preventive steps

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson for the Government of Sindh Sumeta Afzal Syed Wednesday said that the provincial health department has launched a public awareness campaign to educate citizens about the risks associated with mosquito-borne diseases during the monsoon season.

In an exclusive talk with a local news channel, she called for public awareness and urged full cooperation between citizens, particularly in Karachi and civic bodies, to tackle the growing number of mosquito bite cases during the monsoon. She warned that illnesses such as malaria, dengue and chikungunya tend to see a rise during this period due to stagnant water and increased mosquito breeding. While the number of cases is climbing, she assured that the overall situation is currently under control. Sumeta Afzal Syed emphasized the importance of public cooperation in maintaining hygiene and supporting civic efforts. She urged citizens, particularly in urban areas like Karachi, to take preventive measures and work closely with local authorities to help contain the spread of these diseases. She emphasized that public awareness is the need of the hour, especially regarding standing water during the monsoon, which serves as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.—APP

Over 15 Pak firms showcased products at Guangzhou Fair

ISLAMABAD: More than 15 Pakistani medium- and small-sized companies showcased products at the 20th China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair (CISMEF) in China's south economic hub of Guangzhou. The four-day event, which ran from June 27-30, featured a Pakistani national pavilion inaugurated by Consul General Sardar Muhammad and a local official. Products on display included onyx stone carvings, bronze decorative pieces, wooden handicrafts, traditional furniture, and items from e-commerce brands, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. A specialised section for Asian brands featured Pakistani food exports such as pine nuts, biscuits, Himalayan pink salt, and Sindhri mangoes. This year's fair coincided with U.N. Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Day and attracted over 2,000 exhibitors from around the world, according to event organisers. "This platform provides an excellent opportunity to showcase Pakistan's diverse export potential beyond traditional sectors," said Cindy Chen, a regional director for Zhi-tong Batie, a China-Pakistan trade promotion company that has introduced Pakistani mangoes to the Chinese market since 2001. "The response to our organic food products demonstrates growing Chinese interest in quality Pakistani goods.—APP

Sri Lankan HC meets with dean of diplomatic corps

The High Commissioner was accompanied by Christy Ruban, Minister of the High Commission, during the meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, Fred Seneviratne, paid a courtesy call on Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassador of Turkmenistan in Islamabad, at the Embassy of Turkmenistan. The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps warmly welcomed the High Commissioner and congratulated him on his new assignment as the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan. He also briefed the High Commissioner on the activities of the diplomatic community and the annual events organized by the Office of the Dean.

In addition, he outlined the coordination role between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and the diplomatic corps. High Commissioner Seneviratne thanked the Dean for the warm welcome and the opportunity to meet. He shared insights on Sri Lanka's recent development progress and outlined key areas of future cooperation and action. The High Commissioner was accompanied by Christy Ruban, Minister of the High Commission, during the meeting.



Drones deployed to enforce road laws on major highways

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has introduced drone surveillance on the capital's busiest highways to curb traffic violations and ease congestion. The initiative aims to enhance enforcement of traffic laws and ensure rapid response to incidents using modern technology, Chief Traffic Officer Captain (R) Zeeshan Haider said on Wednesday. Talking to media, he said drones will initially monitor the Expressway and Srinagar Highway, two of Islamabad's most congested and high-risk roads. These aerial devices will capture real-time footage of traffic flow and identify violations, leading to immediate electronic issuance of challans (traffic tickets). "Through drone technology, we can monitor traffic more efficiently, pinpoint violations quickly, and dispatch enforcement teams immediately where needed," said Captain (R) Zeeshan Haider. "This step marks a technological leap in managing urban traffic and ensuring commuter safety." The use of drones will not only help enforce lane discipline and prevent dangerous driving but also assist in identifying traffic hotspots and bottlenecks. Authorities plan to expand the program in phases, eventually covering all major sectors and roads across the capital. The decision comes in response to growing public concern over traffic congestion and violations in the federal territory, especially during peak hours. By offering a bird's-eye view of traffic flow, drones are expected to help police take preemptive measures and improve overall traffic management. ITP officials confirmed that once a violation is detected, the evidence recorded by the drones will be processed immediately, and violators will receive automated fines. This system minimizes the need for physical checkpoints and reduces human error or discretion. The Islamabad Traffic Police have previously relied on CCTV surveillance and patrol units to enforce traffic laws, but the growing volume of vehicles has made it increasingly difficult to monitor all areas effectively. The new drone-assisted enforcement mechanism is designed to close that gap. "This technology will not only improve law enforcement but also help us respond to emergencies faster by identifying congested or blocked routes in real-time," added Haider. The success of the pilot program on Expressway and Srinagar Highway will determine how quickly the system is rolled out citywide. Authorities are also working on integrating drone data with traffic control centers for real-time updates and public advisories. With Islamabad aiming to modernize its urban infrastructure, the introduction of drone surveillance marks a crucial step toward safer and smarter mobility in the capital.—DNA

COMSTECH brings together global experts

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark step towards improving academic quality and international competitiveness in the Muslim world, the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) hosted an International Workshop on Quality Assurance and University Rankings in Islamabad. The high-level event attracted over 500 participants from 27 countries and more than 300 institutions, including renowned education experts, vice chancellors, and directors of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs). The workshop aimed to spotlight the vital role of quality assurance (QA) in enhancing institutional credibility, global rankings, and sus-

tainable academic growth. In his inaugural remarks, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH, emphasized the strategic importance of quality assurance as a foundational element for achieving excellence in higher education. "This gathering reflects a collective commitment to enhancing the quality, relevance, and global standing of higher education in the OIC region," he said. "Quality assurance is not merely a procedural requirement—it is the foundation of sustainable academic excellence and a key enabler for achieving SDG-4 on quality education." The hybrid workshop included thematic sessions led by distinguished experts such as

Dr. Syeda Zia Batool and Dr. Jennifer Cole-Wright, who shared best practices, global experiences, and case studies like the University of Leicester's QA model. The discussions focused on aligning Question Answer systems with international standards, promoting transparency and accountability, and strengthening institutional capacity in monitoring, evaluation, research productivity, and employability. The event served as a vital platform for fostering cross-border collaboration and dialogue among higher education institutions across the OIC region, paving the way for a more integrated and competitive academic landscape.—APP

Muqam urges PTI to adopt responsible attitude for dialogue

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions (SA-FRON), Engineer Amir Muqam, Wednesday said the government remains open to dialogue in the greater interest of the country and within the bounds of democratic norms, noting that responsible political conduct is essential in the current climate.

In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, Muqam said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) must demonstrate political maturity and adopt a more constructive approach if it genuinely seeks meaningful talks, adding that the government has always supported dialogue but will not compromise on democratic principles. He mentioned that the government had been willing to engage in dialogue even back in 2018, during its time in opposition, demonstrating a consistent commitment to political engagement.—APP

Chairman PMYP engages youth in democracy-building efforts

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to foster democratic values and civic responsibility among Pakistani youth, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP), Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan on Wednesday hosted an interactive session with selected candidates of the prestigious Parliamentary Internship Program at Parliament House. The session, themed "Engaging Youth for Responsible Democracy," aimed to empower young Pakistanis with the knowledge and skills necessary to become active contributors to the country's democratic and developmental journey. During the session, Chairman Rana Mashood emphasized the critical role of youth in upholding democratic values, highlighting the PMYP's commitment to integrating these values through its initiatives. He elaborated on the program's comprehensive support systems for youth empowerment and reaffirmed its commitment to building a responsible, youth-led Pakistan. The Parliamentary Internship Program received an overwhelming response, with over 16,000 applications submitted from students across the country. Only 200 exceptional students were selected for the four-week program, including 25 students from Sukkur IBA University and 30 from Aitchison College. In a separate development, Chairman Rana Mashood announced that 10,000 young individuals were participating in the Prime Minister's Cricket Talent Hunt trials in Quetta. The trials, now partnered with Lahore Qalandars, aim to identify and nurture young cricketers in the country. The Chairman also introduced key flagship initiatives under the PMYP, including 'Perfect Pitch', a national innovation platform connecting young entrepreneurs with investors through prime-time television. He urged the interns to register on the Digital Youth Hub, a transformative platform offering education, employment, engagement, and empowerment opportunities. The session concluded with a question-and-answer session, allowing the selected interns to engage directly with the Chairman and gain guidance on becoming active contributors to Pakistan's democratic and developmental journey.—DNA

Traffic plan chalked out for Muharram

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) have announced special traffic arrangements for the 6th Muharram procession scheduled. An official told on Wednesday that the procession will start from street number 22 before concluding at Imambargah Jafriya in I-9/1. He said that during the procession, the service road adjacent to I-9/1 will remain closed for all types of traffic to ensure the safety of participants. He said commuters may use alternative routes including IJP Road and Warsak Road near the I-9 Markaz to avoid inconvenience. He further stated that Street 18 and the service road near Imambargah I-9/1 will also be closed for vehicular movement during the event. He advised citizens to use the alternative routes, including Mangal Bazaar I-9 and the IJP Principal Road, for smooth travel during the procession. "Citizens are requested to avoid illegal parking around the procession route," said CTO Captain (R) Zeeshan Haider, adding that all vehicles should be parked in designated areas. He urged the public to cooperate with traffic police officials and follow instructions to maintain order and safety throughout the procession.

HEC holds sorkshop for Balochistan faculty

DNA

ISLAMABAD : National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) organised a two-hour online training workshop on the "Understanding of Quran Course" (Fehm-ul-Quran), specially designed for faculty members of Balochistan universities. This initiative, launched by Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan is part of the orientation programme for a two-credit hour course being implemented at the undergraduate and graduate levels across Pakistan from Fall 2025. It is highlighted that for this HEC initiative, NAHE is conducting a series of orientation workshops and this was the second workshop of the series exclusively organized for the public and private sector universities of Balochistan. Addressing the opening session, Managing Director NAHE Dr. Noor Anna Malik provided an overview of the programme and highlighted its significance in fostering a deeper understanding of the Quran. She emphasised that HEC is committed to extending training opportunities across all regions of Pakistan through this initiative. She underlined that some workshops will be conducted online, others will be held in person to ensure greater.—APP

WECON policy recommendations report proposes reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move toward gender-inclusive economic transformation, changemakers from government, industry, and innovation spaces came together for the launch of WECON Policy Recommendations Report; a comprehensive analysis of the systemic barriers that continue to exclude women from entrepreneurship and a roadmap for structural change. Developed through extensive consultations with women entrepreneurs, ecosystem builders, and financial experts, the WECON 2025 Policy Recommendations Report (2025) builds on alarming data that highlights the deep-rooted gender gaps in Pakistan's entrepreneurial landscape: 91% of women have never applied

for a business loan, and women-led enterprises received only 3.2% of total SME financing in 2022. Despite comprising nearly half of the population, women account for less than 1% of formally

recognized entrepreneurs; a reflection not just of inequality, but of a system never built with women in mind.

At the launch event, held on June 27th, 2025 at the National Incubation Center, Islamabad

and attended by Senior representatives and experts from the public and private sector stakeholders including Ignite National Technology Fund, NAVTTC, World Bank, P@sha, TDAP, SIFC, PSW, RCCI,

IWCCI, GIZ Pakistan, Hashoo Foundation, British Council, Mobilink Microfinance Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, VISA, NUST, Set Pakistan, Mashreq Bank, NUST, S&P global, Cybervision International; attendees reviewed findings and engaged in dialogue on actionable next steps. The discussion emphasized the urgency of moving from recognition to reform. "It's time for Pakistan to move beyond promises and start designing equitable policies that truly include women in the country's economic future," said Sayeed Ahmad Masud, Director, Change Mechanics Pvt. Ltd., the organization behind WECON.

The report outlines multiple key areas for reform including but not limited to: inclusive financial access through collateral-free loans; digital equity via subsidized internet, devices,



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Trump-Netanyahu meeting – Will it bring peace to Gaza?

THE recent meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has once again brought the Gaza conflict into the global spotlight. Trump, known for his unpredictable diplomacy, claimed that a Gaza peace accord could be reached “within two weeks” and urged Hamas to accept the deal. However, given the history of Trump’s foreign policy maneuvers—marked by grand promises followed by erratic actions—skepticism remains over whether this will translate into real peace or just another fleeting statement. Trump’s sudden optimism about a Gaza deal raises eyebrows, especially considering his long-standing, unconditional support for Israel’s hardline policies. During his presidency, he emboldened Netanyahu’s government by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, cutting aid to Palestinians, and endorsing illegal settlements. Now, as he positions himself for a potential return to the White House, his rhetoric appears more about political posturing than genuine conflict resolution.

Worse still, Trump remained conspicuously silent as Israeli forces slaughtered thousands of Gazans in relentless bombardments. His indifference to Palestinian suffering underscores a troubling pattern: allowing aggressors to inflict maximum damage before stepping in as a self-proclaimed peacemaker. This was evident in the Iran-Israel tensions, where Trump let hostilities escalate before offering mediation. Such an approach is not statesmanship—it is cynical opportunism that costs innocent lives. Trump’s insistence that Hamas must accept the deal and leave Gaza is a non-starter. Hamas, despite its controversial stance, remains a key political and military force in Gaza, and its complete removal is an unrealistic demand that only prolongs the conflict. True peace requires inclusive dialogue, not unilateral ultimatums. Past agreements have failed precisely because they excluded critical stakeholders—lessons that Trump seems unwilling to learn.

Moreover, his two-week timeline for a deal appears more like a campaign soundbite than a serious diplomatic effort. Gaza’s crisis is deeply rooted in decades of occupation, blockade, and failed negotiations. A lasting solution requires sustained engagement, not impulsive declarations. Trump’s transactional and erratic style of diplomacy is ill-suited for resolving complex conflicts like Gaza. His strategy of allowing violence to peak before intervening only deepens distrust and suffering. The international community must reject this dangerous approach and instead push for consistent, impartial mediation that holds all parties accountable. If Trump truly wants to broker peace, he must pressure Israel to halt its brutal offensive, ensure humanitarian aid reaches Gaza, and support a credible two-state solution. Otherwise, his promises will remain empty, and Gaza’s agony will continue. The world must not be fooled by theatrics—real peace demands justice, not just convenient ceasefires.

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The tragic decline of Hockey in Pakistan – Who is to blame?

PAKISTAN’S national sport, hockey, once a source of immense pride, is now on life support—not due to a lack of talent or passion, but because of criminal negligence by those in power. The recent decision by the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) to increase the fee of Naseer Bunda Hockey Ground in Islamabad by 300 times is the latest blow to the dying sport. The move has rendered the ground deserted, as local clubs and players cannot afford the exorbitant charges. Meanwhile, the national team’s participation in the Pro League hangs in the balance due to a funding crisis. The question is: Why is the government, including the Prime Minister—who is the Patron-in-Chief of hockey—allowing this disgraceful downfall?

The PSB’s decision to hike the ground fee from an affordable amount to an unaffordable rate is nothing short of sabotage. Hockey clubs in Islamabad, which once thrived with daily practice sessions and local tournaments, are now struggling to even access the field. This move has effectively killed hockey activities in the capital, with no valid explanation or justification from PSB officials. When the media highlighted the issue, the authorities remained unmoved, exposing their sheer apathy toward the sport.

If the PSB’s role is to promote sports, why is it actively strangling hockey? Instead of facilitating players, the board has chosen to impose financial barriers, making it impossible for budding athletes to train. This is not just incompetence—it is a deliberate betrayal of Pakistan’s sporting heritage.


While local hockey suffers, the national team’s situation is equally dire. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has demanded Rs. 75 crore for the team’s Pro League participation—an unrealistic sum that even the government cannot justify. While funding is necessary, the PHF must present a rational, transparent budget instead of arbitrary figures. Both the PSB and PHF seem more interested in blame games than finding solutions.

Pakistan, a four-time world champion in hockey, now struggles to compete internationally. The government’s lack of interest is evident—despite the Prime Minister being the Patron-in-Chief, there is no clear policy to revive the sport. Other nations invest heavily in hockey infrastructure, training, and leagues, while Pakistan’s players face neglect and humiliation.

The PSB must immediately withdraw the unjustified fee increase and ensure free or subsidized access for players. The PHF must present a realistic budget to the government, ensuring funds are used efficiently. The Prime Minister, as Patron-in-Chief, must take personal interest in hockey’s revival, directing the PSB and PHF to work together. Schools, colleges, and local clubs must be supported to rebuild the hockey pipeline.

Trump’s Dual Triumph at Home and Abroad

Qamar Bashir



European allies have begun distancing themselves from Israel, and public opinion within the United States has shifted dramatically in favor of a two-state solution. Increasingly, Americans are rejecting unconditional support for Israeli policies and calling for a just and lasting peace. In this climate, Trump possesses both the leverage and the opportunity to use his influence to bring the involved parties—Israel, the Palestinian leadership, and regional stakeholders—toward a viable two-state solution. Such a move could restore hope to the Middle East, break the cycle of violence and displacement..

PRESIDENT Donald J. Trump’s return to office in January 2025 triggered swift, sweeping action. Armed with the same defiance and unfettered confidence that defined his first term, Trump immediately reimposed the America First doctrine, introducing tariffs and demanding stricter compliance from allies. Predictions of economic collapse, rising inflation, and diplomatic backlash flooded the media. But within six months, reality tells a different story: the U.S. economy is gaining strength, international alliances are being redefined, and old taboos—particularly around America’s unconditional support for Israel—are being questioned as never before.

Recent economic data shows a striking rebound. According to the June 2025 jobs report, the U.S. added 139,000 private sector jobs in May alone, exceeding expectations for the third consecutive month. Unlike the previous two years, when foreign-born workers accounted for much of the labor force growth, the gains since January have been entirely among native-born Americans. Key industries such as leisure and hospitality, construction, and transportation are experiencing consistent growth, while private sector job creation stands at 99.8% of total employment expansion—marking a decisive shift away from government-led hiring trends under the previous administration.

Wage growth is equally notable. Real average hourly earnings have increased by nearly 4% over the past year, with real disposable personal income rising at an annualized rate of 7.5%—a sharp contrast to the 2.3% pace during President Biden’s final year. Inflation has cooled, with the May 2025 CPI showing a year-over-year increase of just 2.4%, the lowest in recent memory. Meanwhile, falling gas prices and stable food costs have contributed to rising consumer confidence. The Nasdaq Composite reached a record high of 20,273 points in late June, driven by renewed optimism in the technology sector and AI-driven investments.

Yet, this domestic optimism is set against a complex and evolving foreign policy backdrop. In April, a 12-day exchange of missile strikes between Israel and Iran raised fears of a broader war. Though conflict was narrowly avoided, the global response—particularly in Europe—marked a turning point. For the first time in decades, the European Union began publicly signaling discomfort with Israel’s conduct in Gaza. The European Council, in its official conclusions dated June 26, 2025, called for an immediate ceasefire and expressed alarm at the dire humanitarian situation. It also acknowledged that Israel may be violating human rights obligations under its existing EU

trade agreement. Separately, 17 out of 27 EU member states have supported initiating a formal review of the EU–Israel Association Agreement—a move that underscores rising European frustration with Israel’s military policies.

These developments represent a profound shift in the EU’s position. While not formalized through a European Parliament resolution, the coordinated statements by EU leaders and ministers signal an emerging consensus across the continent. No longer content to follow Washington’s diplomatic lead, Europe is carving out its own space—politically, economically, and morally. This divergence has been accelerated by Trump’s aggressive demands that NATO countries not only increase defense spending to 5% of GDP but also prioritize the purchase of U.S.-manufactured arms. While this has bolstered the U.S. defense industry, it has strained alliances and created room for greater European independence in foreign policy decisions.

In the United States, debates over Israel’s actions have intensified. Senator Bernie Sanders introduced two resolutions—one to suspend military aid to Israel, the other to impose economic sanctions in response to what he described as collective punishment of civilians in Gaza. Both were overwhelmingly defeated in Congress, gaining only 15 and 20 votes respectively. Sanders blamed the pro-Israel lobbying establishment, arguing that most lawmakers fear political retaliation for any stance that challenges the Israeli government. Although President Trump did not endorse these measures, his administration has allowed such debates to surface without obstruction—a contrast to the traditionally unified bipartisan defense of Israel in past decades. At the local level, symbolic shifts are also taking place. The election of Zoran Mamdani, a progressive Muslim, as mayor of New York City was a milestone. Mamdani’s unapologetic criticism of Israeli airstrikes and his pledge not to host Prime Minister Netanyahu in the city represent a growing undercurrent of opposition, particularly among younger, urban voters. These sentiments, once considered fringe, are increasingly part of mainstream political discourse.

Despite these changes, Trump’s approach to Israel has remained tactically cautious. He has not imposed sanctions or formally suspended aid, but he has made rare and significant public criticisms of Israel’s conduct. He openly expressed frustration when Israel violated a ceasefire that his administration had helped broker, signaling a clear deviation from traditional U.S. deference to Israeli actions. Now, with growing international condemnation of Israel’s military

operations—characterized by many as genocidal and ethnically targeted—the moment is ripe for decisive American leadership.

European allies have begun distancing themselves from Israel, and public opinion within the United States has shifted dramatically in favor of a two-state solution. Increasingly, Americans are rejecting unconditional support for Israeli policies and calling for a just and lasting peace. In this climate, Trump possesses both the leverage and the opportunity to use his influence to bring the involved parties—Israel, the Palestinian leadership, and regional stakeholders—toward a viable two-state solution. Such a move could restore hope to the Middle East, break the cycle of violence and displacement, and lay the foundation for long-term stability and prosperity across the region, benefiting not only those directly affected but also the broader global community.

Domestically, Trump’s approval ratings have benefited from the perception of economic strength. With job creation up, wages climbing, and inflation under control, even some of his skeptics acknowledge the effectiveness of his economic management. At the same time, his reluctance to intervene forcefully in foreign conflicts has earned him rare support from both anti-war conservatives and segments of the progressive left. Six months into his second term, Trump has demonstrated that shock and disruption, when channeled effectively, can yield both economic and political gains. However, the defining challenge of his presidency may still lie ahead.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is deepening, and the chorus of global voices demanding justice is growing louder. If Trump chooses to leverage America’s unparalleled influence to mediate peace and push for a two-state solution, he could reshape not only his legacy but the trajectory of the Middle East. If he fails to act, the current window for diplomatic progress may close, leaving future generations to reckon with the consequences. As 2025 unfolds, the defining test of Trump’s leadership may not be measured in job numbers or trade balances, but in whether he can guide the world’s most powerful nation toward a more balanced and just role in global peacebuilding. With public opinion aligned, Europe asserting independence, and Israel under scrutiny, the opportunity is not only present—it may be historic.

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Why Inclusion must be more than a promise

Amina A Ghafoor



In societies like ours, where patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched, the burden of change cannot rest solely on the shoulders of women. Men, especially those in leadership positions, must become active participants in the movement toward gender equity. They must be willing to listen, to learn, and to challenge the behaviors and attitudes that perpetuate inequality

I RECENTLY attended a professional development event that brought together a diverse group of attendees men and women from a range of industries and backgrounds. At first glance, the gathering appeared to reflect progress: inclusion, diversity, and collaboration. However, what unfolded during the session left me disheartened and frustrated. It served as a reminder that while there is visible respect for women in professional spaces, true inclusivity especially in practice still has a long way to go. The session, unfortunately, was poorly planned. Although women were part of the audience, every activity, example, and interaction seemed to be designed exclusively with men in mind. From the outset, it was clear that no thought had been given to creating an inclusive environment. As a woman in attendance, I felt not only excluded but deeply uncomfortable. The discomfort didn’t stem from being in the minority, which is a familiar experience for many women in male-dominated fields like engineering but from the blatant disregard for gender sensitivity. Throughout the session, patriarchal jokes were made, often at the expense of women. These jokes were not harmless or funny; they were offensive, tone-deaf, and completely inappropriate for a professional setting. What was more disturbing was the casualness with which they were delivered, and the laughter that followed from the majority of the male participants. The few women present accomplished, experienced professionals were visibly uneasy, their confidence clearly shaken. Some made efforts to engage, but gradually withdrew as the environment did not foster equal participation. There were a handful of men who noticed the imbalance and tried to advocate for fairness and respect. But they were quickly dismissed or silenced either directly or indirectly by the dominant group, which seemed uninterested in examining its behavior. This experience was a powerful and painful reminder of why gender equity remains such a critical and urgent issue in our society, particularly in professional environments.

In sectors like engineering and technology, where women remain significantly underrepresented such experiences can be especially disheartening. They echo the early challenges many women face in their careers: often being the only woman in the room, constantly needing to prove their capabilities, working twice as hard to gain recognition, and confronting biases rooted in gender rather than merit.

There is often hope that things are moving in the right direction, that professional spaces are becoming more inclusive and equitable. Many individuals actively foster such environments by mentoring young women, advocating for diversity, and ensuring that all voices are heard and respected, regardless of gender. Yet, experiences like this serve as a sobering reminder that progress is not as widespread as it may seem. The attitudes encountered are not isolated incidents; they remain deeply ingrained in many areas of professional culture. What’s most disheartening is recognizing that many young women entering the workforce today continue to face the same challenges that previous generations encountered. Despite progress in certain areas, the underlying structures of bias and inequality remain largely intact. This ongoing reality is not only disappointing, it’s deeply discouraging.

We must understand that the gender gap isn’t something that can be closed through token gestures or one-time diversity initiatives. It requires sustained, systemic change. And the first step toward that change is acknowledging that the problem exists. Too often, we dismiss concerns about gender bias as exaggerated or irrelevant. But those of us who experience it know the reality all too well.

In societies like ours, where patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched, the burden of change cannot rest solely on the shoulders of women. Men, especially those in leadership positions, must become active participants in the movement toward gender equity. They must be willing to listen, to learn, and to challenge the behaviors and attitudes that perpetuate inequality. Achieving gender equity is not just a matter of social justice, it is an economic imperative. In a country grappling with economic instability, the exclusion of women from key industries and leadership roles is not just unjust, it is inefficient. We cannot afford to ignore the contributions of half our population. When women are empowered to participate fully in the economy, societies thrive. Yet, with such a slow pace of gender awareness and inclusivity, we are stalling our own development.

It is time to move beyond surface-level solutions and commit to deep, meaningful change. Gender awareness and sensitivity must be integrated into every realm of society especially in education, industry, and policy. Gender studies should be a compulsory subject from school through university just like our religious studies. Early education

plays a critical role in shaping mindsets. Instilling in children the importance of valuing all genders equally helps lay the groundwork for a society that not only upholds equality in principle but actively practices inclusivity and equity in both every day and professional life.

Moving beyond awareness, professional environments must translate intent into action by fostering spaces where women are not just present, but genuinely included and supported. In fields like engineering and IT, where gender disparities remain stark, proactive measures are essential. Creating safe, inclusive, and equitable work environments, where all voices are heard and valued, should be more than a policy statement; it should be a cultural standard embedded in everyday practice. Of course, it’s important to recognize that progress is being made. There are individuals and organizations that are actively working to close the gender gap, sometimes at great personal and professional cost. These trailblazers women and men are our hope. Their efforts may seem small in the grand scheme, but they matter. They create ripples that eventually lead to waves of change.

And so, while this recent experience was disappointing, it also strengthened my resolve. I am reminded of why we must continue to speak up, even when it’s uncomfortable. Why we must continue to challenge the status quo, even when it resists. And why we must continue to support one another especially women who are just beginning their professional journeys. One can hope for a future where no woman walks into a room and feels invisible, unheard, or out of place, a future where no young professional is made to question her abilities, shrink her presence, or conform to a space that was never meant to include her. A future where workplaces are not only diverse in numbers but inclusive in culture, where leadership reflects the richness of different perspectives, and where policies are not performative but transformative. One can hope that respect, opportunity, and equity are not things to be demanded, but values inherently upheld. And perhaps one day, voices won’t need to be raised, articles won’t need to be written, and reminders won’t need to be issued because fairness and inclusion will be the norm, not the exception.

Those days are coming. But only if we keep working for them. Change doesn’t just happen. We build it together.

– Manager Sales Technical & Commercial-BEE, MSPM

Briefs

Pakistan indebted to Saudi support

FROM PAGE 01
economic and social reform blueprint aimed at reducing Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil and diversifying its economy. The two leaders also exchanged views on key regional and international developments, including the situation in the Middle East and South Asia. The Prime Minister appreciated Saudi Arabia's steadfast support on the Kashmir issue and its consistent stance at multilateral forums, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Ambassador Al-Malki reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's commitment to playing a constructive role in fostering dialogue and stability in the region. He praised Pakistan's efforts in counterterrorism and its contributions to regional peace. Recognizing the significant Pakistani diaspora in Saudi Arabia, the Prime Minister thanked the Kingdom for its hospitality towards Pakistani expatriates, who contribute substantially to both economies. Discussions also touched upon enhancing cultural exchanges, religious tourism, and educational collaborations between the two nations. The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to further elevate the historic Pakistan-Saudi relationship. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed optimism about future collaborations, stating, "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are bound by unbreakable ties of faith, brotherhood, and mutual trust. We are determined to take this partnership to new heights."

AC among 5 killed in Bajaur blast

FROM PAGE 01
group and directed the Counter-Terrorism Department's additional inspector general of police to send a special team to Bajaur. "A special branch is obtaining intelligence related to the incident," Hameed said, adding that according to initial information, the TTP targeted the assistant commissioner's vehicle. Hameed said that teams were formed "to arrest the elements involved in the incident while all necessary evidence is being collected from the spot", adding that bomb disposal teams were present on site. Those elements disturbing the country and province's peace will be strictly dealt with, the KP police chief said. KP government spokesperson Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif strongly condemned the incident and said the loss of lives was regrettable. "The KP chief minister has issued orders for an enquiry into the incident and to provide medical facilities to the injured," Saif said.

Ruling coalition gets lion's...

FROM PAGE 01
the lower house which were handed over to the PML-N, PPP, and JUI-F. **KP Assembly:** As per the notification, 21 reserved seats for women were reinstated in the KP Assembly of which 8 were allocated to JUI-F, six to PML-N, and 5 to PPP. One seat each was also allotted to the PTI Parliamentarians and the Awami National Party (ANP). Meanwhile, four reserved seats for minorities in the KP Assembly were restored of which two were handed over to the JUI-F, one each to the PML-N and PPP. **Punjab Assembly:** The ECP restored 24 reserved seats for women in the Punjab Assembly of which the PML-N got 21 one each by PPP, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), and Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q). Three minority seats were restored and two of them were allotted to the PML-N and one to the PPP. **Sindh Assembly:** Two reserved seats for women and one for minorities have been reinstated in the Sindh Assembly of which one was allotted to the PPP and another to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P).

‘Asia Cup 2025 likely to commence on Sept 5’

High-voltage Pakistan-India clash expected to take place on September 7 in Dubai, claims Indian media

DNA

NEW DELHI: DAs cricket fans are eagerly waiting for the schedule of Asia Cup 2025, it has come to light that the tournament is likely to commence on September 5 with the high-voltage clash between Pakistan and India due on September 7 in Dubai, a report published in Times of India claimed on Wednesday. Apart from the September 7 group stage match, the

two arch-rivals are likely to again take on each other on September 14 in a Super Four fixture – as per the initial schedule. The media reports come as the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) – which is said to have almost finalised the 17-day window for the tournament – is expected to unveil a schedule for the Asia Cup 2025 in the first week of July, as this key development shows a shift from previous uncertainty driven by India-Pakistan tensions. The upcoming tournament is likely to

be held under a hybrid model, similar to the 2023 edition. The UAE continues to remain the frontrunner to host the tournament, although there is also some discussion around staging it in a hybrid format, the report said. While India is the designated host this time, the ACC had earlier decided that when it is India or Pakistan's turn to host the Asia Cup, the tournament would be held in a neutral venue – for understandable reasons, it added.

In 2023, Pakistan was the official host, but due to political tensions, India opted to play all of its matches in Sri Lanka under a hybrid hosting arrangement. Therefore, the tournament is expected to be held entirely in the UAE or follow a hybrid model once again, with six teams confirmed to participate being Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the UAE. As per the Times of India, the final of the tournament will take place on September 21.

Real Madrid oust Juventus as Dortmund reach Club World Cup quarters

ATLANTA: Spanish giants Real Madrid beat Juventus 1-0 on Tuesday to set up a Club World Cup quarter-final clash against Borussia Dortmund, who edged Mexican side Monterrey. Serhou Guirassy struck twice for the German outfit as they scraped past Sergio Ramos's side 2-1 in a tight last-16 clash in Atlanta and denied the former Real Madrid skipper a match-up against his former team. Youngster Gonzalo Garcia headed home his third goal of the tournament to help Madrid edge Italian side Juventus at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami earlier. It was an impressive display from Xabi Alonso's Madrid side, unbeaten under the new coach, and they were further boosted by Kylian Mbappe's return from illness as a substitute. "We had a lot of chances in the second half, but their goalkeeper was really good," said Madrid shot-stopper Thibaut Courtois. The first half was a finely-balanced contest with

Igor Tudor's Juventus starting brightly before Real ended it on top. Los Blancos kept turning the screw and found their goal when Trent Alexander-Arnold crossed for Gonzalo to head home after 54 minutes. Alonso decided to introduce Mbappe to the delight of the 62,149 crowd but the striker did not find any clear openings as Juve pushed for an equaliser. Madrid's coach was pleased with his team's performance, including that of Gonzalo – who he had compared to former Real great Raul – but also suggested that Mbappe might be ready for a bigger contribution in the next game. "We will keep watching him... I think he will be much better for the quarters," Alonso said. Alonso added that he was satisfied to see Real produce the necessary grit to grind out the result in the second half. "We had to be patient, we had to mature into the game," said the coach. "With the players and myself, you know you have

to grit your teeth and do what you have to do. And in the end, we had to hold on a bit, and I'm happy about that too." Juve boss Tudor said his team became exhausted as the game developed. "In the end there were 10 of them asking to be substituted. Obviously you can't do that but there was an incredible tiredness," he said, offering his reasons. "There is the tension of the game which burns energy but then there is the heat and humidity," explained Tudor, also noting they were at the end of a long season. In Atlanta, Guirassy's brace was enough to help Dortmund past Monterrey in a hard-fought clash, setting them up to play a Madrid side who beat them in the 2024 Champions League final. "Real has a great team, they have many good individual players," Dortmund coach Niko Kovac told reporters. "If we put everything on the pitch, (giving) the same performance as we saw today, I think that we will have a good chance." – APP

PTI never backed off...

FROM PAGE 01
The PTI core committee also discussed strategies to counter what it called "political victimization" and reaffirmed its commitment to protecting democratic norms. Gandapur warned that any undemocratic action against the KP government would provoke a strong public reaction. The meeting comes amid escalating tensions between PTI and the federal government, with the opposition party accusing authorities of targeting its leaders and workers. Gandapur's defiant stance signals PTI's readiness for a prolonged political struggle. Analysts suggest that PTI's aggressive posture could lead to further political instability if the standoff continues. The party has been mobilizing its supporters nationwide, preparing for what it describes as a decisive movement against the current setup. As the political temperature rises, all eyes remain on whether the federal government will take any action against the KP administration and how PTI's resistance will unfold in the coming days.

Singing for Pakistan-China Unity, Tariq Rocks the Wall

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Australian singer of Pakistani origin, Tariq Naveed, has delivered a powerful tribute to Pak-China friendship through his latest song "Mil Bethay" (Let's Sit Together), symbolizing cultural unity and cross-border harmony. What makes the song truly historic is its stunning music video – filmed at two iconic landmarks: the Great Wall of China and Lahore Fort. With this, Tariq Naveed becomes the first singer since Justin Bieber to shoot a music video at the Great Wall, blending global heritage with heartfelt expression. Tariq had previously gained international recognition with his song during the ICC T20 Cricket World Cup, and now once again he is making waves with a unique musical gesture that celebrates the deep-rooted bond between Pakistan and China. The song is being widely praised as a symbol of peace, friendship, and cultural diplomacy, and has gone viral across social media platforms, resonating strongly with audiences in both countries.

President of Uzbekistan to pay state visit to Azerbaijan

TASHKENT: At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev will pay a state visit to Azerbaijan on July 2-4. According to the visit program, the second meeting of the Supreme Interstate Council and other top-level events are scheduled to take place on July 2-3 in Baku. The agenda includes discussions on further strengthening friendship, strategic partnership, and alliance between Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, as well as expanding cooperation and exchanges in priority areas. On July 4, in the city of Khankendi, the President of Uzbekistan will participate in the 17th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization and hold several bilateral meetings. – DNA

Re-employed pensioners allowed to draw reduced salary

Federal govt permits pensioners to receive their pensions while being re-employed

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has permitted pensioners to receive their pensions while being re-employed, as long as their salary is lower than an amount equal to their total pension. This decision has brought relief to thousands of re-employed pensioners across 36 departments, including the President's Secretariat, Prime Minister's Secretariat, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Senate Secretariat, National As-

sembly Secretariat, Election Commission of Pakistan, and several others. Earlier, the Ministry of Finance had asked the re-employed workforce to get a salary or pension and barred them from getting both simultaneously. It was conveyed to the Regulation Wing of the Finance Ministry that the condition of choosing between salary and pension in case of re-employment will result in creating difficulties for different bodies to retain their workforce. For instance, in the case of regulatory bodies, the government had to hire a specialised workforce, and in the case of hiring from the private sector, it would be hard to find people who do not have any vested interests.

Costa Rica top court abolishes President immunity

SAN JOSÉ: Costa Rica's Supreme Court on Tuesday asked Congress, for the first time ever, to strip the country's president of his immunity from prosecution to be tried on corruption charges. President Rodrigo Chaves was accused by the attorney general of forcing a communications services company hired by the presidency to give \$32,000 to his friend and former image advisor Federico Cruz. The top court's unprecedented request comes against the backdrop of a clash between the judiciary and Chaves, a conservative economist and former World Bank official. Attorney General Carlo Diaz accuses the 64-year-old president of bribery, a crime punishable by up to eight years in prison for public officials. The court also asked for Culture Minister Jorge Rodriguez to be stripped of his immunity for the same reason. According to the accusation, the communications company was contracted for Chaves's 2022-2026 term with funds from the Central American Bank for Economic Integration under an allegedly improper procedure. – Agencies

SA bag convincing win in 1st Test against Zimbabwe

Home side's batting unit bowled out for 208 runs while chasing mammoth 537-run target

DNA

BULAWAYO: South Africa secured a thumping 328-run win in the first Test against Zimbabwe courtesy of debutant Luan-dre Pretorius's record-shattering century, followed by Corbin Bosch's all-round brilliance. Chasing a daunting 537-run target, in the first Test of the two-match series, the home side's batting unit unfolded on a meagre 208 runs. Zimbabwe resumed their pursuit from 32-1 through opener Prince Masvaure and Nick Welch (0) and got off to a worst possible start as Bosch dismissed the number three batter on the first delivery of the day. First-innings centurion Sean Williams then joined Masvaure for a brief 32-run partnership after the early blow. Williams dominated the stand by scoring a quickfire 26 off 18 deliveries before Bosch got him caught behind. Zimbabwe then lost three more wickets in quick succession and consequently slipped to 82-6, needing a further 455 runs. Following the slump, skipper Craig Ervine and Wellington Masakadza attempted to launch a recovery by putting together 83 runs for the sixth wicket. Momentum-filled Bosch broke the crucial partnership by getting rid of Ervine, who scored 49 off 77 deliveries, laced with seven boundaries.

Masakadza, on the other hand, was involved in a meagre eight-run partnership with Vincent Masekesa (3) before being ultimately removed by Codi Yusuf. He remained the top scorer for Zimbabwe in the run chase with 57 off 92 deliveries, featuring nine boundaries. Zimbabwe's number 10 Blessing Muzarabani was the other notable run-getter as he remained unbeaten with a gutsy 32 off 29 deliveries,

comprising four fours and two sixes. Bosch was the standout bowler for South Africa in the second innings, taking five wickets for 43 runs in 12 overs, followed by Yusuf with three, while Keshav Maharaj and Deward Brevis made one scalp apiece. For the unversed, debutant wicketkeeper batter Luan-dre Pretorius was adjudged the Player of the Match for his monumental 153 in the first innings, which helped

South Africa pile 418-9. In response, Zimbabwe could muster 251 despite a valiant century from Williams as Wiaan Mulder's four-wicket haul dismantled their batting unit. Mulder then showcased his batting prowess in the second innings and scored an anchoring century at number three, which was pivotal in helping South Africa to set a mammoth total.



Govt cuts duties on imported goods

FROM PAGE 01

Papayas and apples will now incur a 36% duty, down from 45%, read the notification. Regulatory duty on general nuts has been slashed by 4%, and the duty on frozen fish has been halved to 17.5%. Imports of cheese and yogurt will now face a 50% duty following a 10% reduction.

Hasina Wajid gets six months..

FROM PAGE 01

she arrives in Bangladesh or surrenders to the court," chief prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam told reporters after the court decision. The case centred around comments that prosecutors said she had made after she was ousted from power, which they said threatened witnesses in ongoing court hearings. "The prosecution team believes her comment created an aura of fear among those who filed the cases and among the witnesses," Islam said. Shakil Akanda Bulbul, a fugitive leader of her now-banned Awami League, was sentenced to two months in prison in the same case. Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August last year, according to the United Nations, when Hasina's government ordered a crackdown on protesters in a failed bid to cling to power.

South African air force chief...

FROM PAGE 01

Lieutenant General Wiseman Mbambo lauded PAF's robust operational readiness, its multi-domain warfare capabilities and its success in maintaining a credible deterrence posture. Recognizing the shared values and interests between the two Air Forces, the South African Air Chief articulated a strong desire to further strengthen and institutionalize the formal relationship between South African Air Force and PAF. One of the central themes of the discussions was the revamping of South African Air Force's training regime. In this context, Lieutenant General Mbambo sought Pakistan Air Force's support in developing a modern and comprehensive training framework, commencing at the academy level. The visiting dignitary also expressed his earnest desire of participation of South African Air Force officers as observers in PAF's major operational exercises. Acknowledging the technical excellence and cost-effective maintenance capabilities offered by PAF's engineering infrastructure, he also conveyed the intent of South African Air Force to undertake the inspection and maintenance of its C-130 fleet in Pakistan.

Pakistan ready to forge...

FROM PAGE 01

A Bulwark Against Terrorism", Bilawal called on Indian leadership to move past zero-sum thinking and cooperate on counter-extremism, not as rivals, but as neighbours with a shared duty to protect the lives of over a billion people in South Asia. "All it requires is for India's leadership to step down from the high horse that is galloping its republic towards the abyss," Bilawal said. "Pursue peace with Pakistan. Sit with us. Talk to us. Let us resolve Kashmir [dispute] in accordance with the aspirations of its people." He further called for an end to the "weaponisation of water", referencing India's recent move to suspend participation in the IWT – an accord brokered by the World Bank in 1960 which governs the use of shared rivers. "Let us end the weaponisation of water and build instead a peace as mighty as the Himalayas," Bilawal urged. "Let us return to our shared traditions grounded not in hatred but in the ancient soil of the Indus Valley Civilization." His comments came in the wake of renewed tensions between the two nucleararmed neighbours after India accused Pakistan of involvement in the killing of 26 civilians in IIQJK earlier this year – an allegation Islamabad has strongly denied.

Briefs

Gold prices decrease by 600 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.600 and was traded at Rs.356,200 on Wednesday as compared to its sale at Rs. 356,800 on the last trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs514 to Rs.305,384 from Rs. 305,898 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went down by Rs.471 to Rs.279,945 from Rs. 280,416. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver decreased by Rs.18 and 16 and were sold at Rs.3,816 and Rs.3,271 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$6 to \$3,342 from \$3,348, whereas that of silver decreased by \$0.18 to at \$36.32, the Association reported.—APP

RCCI concerned over hike in petroleum prices

RAWALPINDI : The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed serious concern over the government's recent decision to increase petroleum prices, calling it an anti-business move that will trigger a new wave of inflation and significantly raise the cost of doing business. In a statement issued by RCCI's Acting President, Qazi Khalid Farooq, termed the Rs. 8 per litre hike in petrol and Rs. 10 per litre hike in diesel as an extremely harsh and unjustified decision. "The increase in petroleum prices will severely impact the purchasing power of the common man, reduce business activity, and accelerate inflation across all sectors," he said. Qazi Khalid Farooq emphasized that global crude oil prices are currently on a downward trend, and it is imperative for the government to pass on this relief to the public instead of burdening them further. "The rising fuel prices will directly increase transportation and logistics costs, which will hit the construction sector and further damage the already struggling tourism industry," he added. The RCCI urged the government to reconsider this decision and immediately adopt business-friendly policies that support economic recovery instead of undermining it. "At a time when the public is already facing severe economic difficulties, any further pressure on fuel prices is unjust and unsustainable," the statement concluded.—APP

Over 40% of Tuvalu citizens apply for relocation to Australia

SYDNEY: More than 4,000 citizens of the small Pacific nation of Tuvalu, equivalent to 42 percent of the population, have applied for a landmark climate visa to migrate to Australia as rising sea levels threaten their home, according to official figures. The climate migration visa program offered by Canberra allows up to 280 Tuvalu citizens to migrate to Australia each year under a treaty signed by the two countries in 2023, dubbed the "Falepili Union." With an estimated population of just 9,600, Tuvalu could be depopulated in 35 years at that rate. Lying at an average elevation of just 2 meters above sea level, the climate crisis threatens to submerge Tuvalu within decades. Since applications opened for the visa lottery system in mid-June, 1,124 Tuvaluans have registered, with family members bringing the total number to 4,052 as of Friday, according to figures from government sources obtained by Kyodo News. Registration for the lottery will close on July 18, after which those selected will be able to formally apply for the visas. While the agreement provides a pathway for migration in the face of climate change, Tuvalu's government is working to secure a future for the archipelago by fortifying its coastline through land reclamation and adaptation projects, hoping there will not be a mass departure from the country. The government has emphasized that the Falepili migration pathway provides for movement back.—APP

DG FAO lauds Pak's agri transformation agenda

In closing, Rana Tanvee Hussain reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working closely with FAO and other UN agencies to build equitable, climate-resilient agri-food systems aligned with the SDGs and global food security goals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, held a one-on-one meeting with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Qu Dongyu, during the 44th Session of the FAO Conference in Rome. The minister expressed Pakistan's deep appreciation for FAO's longstanding support to Pakistan's agriculture sector, said a press release received here on Wednesday. Pakistan travel guide He briefed the Director-General on Pakistan's ongoing reform efforts aimed at transforming its agri-food systems to become more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient in the face of climate change. Highlighting agriculture's critical role contributing 24 percent to GDP and employing 37 percent of the labor force—Rana Tanveer Hussain outlined major initiatives under Vision 2025 and the Prime Minister's Agricultural Emergency Program.



These include reforms in water conservation, seed systems, digital extension services, and targeted farmer subsidies. He also discussed new national policies on biotechnology, e-commerce integration for smallholders and

soil health mapping. The minister noted significant outcomes such as the improved affordability of a healthy diet (from 37 percent of households in 2019 to 52 percent in 2024) and a drop in the real cost of healthy diets. However,

he also underscored persistent challenges, including food insecurity affecting 36.9 percent of the population, rising input costs, and severe climate-induced stress. Calling for enhanced international cooperation, Mr. Hussain

urged FAO to support Pakistan's access to climate financing, carbon markets, and adaptation mechanisms for vulnerable farming communities. Pakistan travel guide Director-General Qu Dongyu appreciated Pakistan's strong reform momentum and reaffirmed FAO's continued technical and policy support. He praised Pakistan's efforts in climate-smart agriculture, digital innovation, and capacity building. Mr. Qu welcomed the country's focus on smallholder inclusion and emphasized the importance of regional knowledge sharing and data-driven solutions. Both sides agreed to deepen collaboration in areas such as seed biotechnology, food system transformation, early warning systems, and institutional capacity strengthening, especially through Pakistan's research institutions and the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) platform. In closing, Rana Tanveer Hussain reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working closely with FAO and other UN agencies to build equitable, climate-resilient agri-food systems aligned with the SDGs and global food security goals.

Paramount settles with Trump over '60 Minutes' interview for \$16m

Settlement of \$16 million will be allocated to future Trump presidential library

CENTRELINE REPORT

NEW YORK: CBS parent company Paramount on Wednesday settled a lawsuit filed by US President Donald Trump over an interview broadcast in October, the latest concession by a media company to a president who has targeted outlets over what he describes as false or misleading coverage. Paramount said it would pay \$16 million to settle the suit with the money allocated to Trump's future presidential library, and not paid to Trump "directly or indirectly." "The settlement does not include a statement of apology or regret," the company statement added. Trump filed a \$10-billion lawsuit against CBS in October, alleging the network deceptively edited an interview that aired on its "60 Minutes" news

programme with then-vice president and presidential candidate Kamala Harris to "tip the scales in favour of the Democratic Party" in the election. In an amended complaint filed in February, Trump bumped his claim for damages to \$20 billion. CBS aired two versions of the Harris interview in which she appears to give different answers to the same question about the Israel-Hamas war, according to the lawsuit filed in federal court in Texas. CBS previously said the lawsuit was "completely without merit" and had asked a judge to dismiss the case. The White House did not immediately respond to a Reuters' request for comment. Edward A Paltzik, a lawyer representing Trump in the civil suit, could not be immediately

reached for comment. A spokesperson for Paramount Chair Shari Redstone was similarly unavailable for comment. The case entered mediation in April. Trump alleged CBS's editing of the interview violated the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices-Consumer Protection Act, which makes it illegal to use false, misleading or deceptive acts in commerce. Media advocacy groups said Trump's novel use of such laws against news outlets could be a way of circumventing legal protections for the press, which can only be held liable for defamation against public figures if they say something they knew or should have known was false.

The settlement comes as Paramount prepares for an \$8.4-billion merger with

Skydance Media, which will require approval from the US Federal Communications Commission. On the campaign trail last year, Trump threatened to revoke CBS' broadcasting license if elected.

He has repeatedly lashed out against the news media, often casting unfavourable coverage as "fake news." The Paramount settlement follows a decision by Walt Disney-owned ABC News to settle a defamation case brought by Trump. As part of that settlement, which was made public on December 14, the network donated \$15 million to Trump's presidential library and publicly apologised for comments by anchor George Stephanopoulos, who inaccurately said Trump had been found liable for rape.

Egyptian driver who killed 19 heads to trial

CAIRO: Egyptian prosecutors on Tuesday referred a driver to trial on charges of involuntary manslaughter after he crashed his truck into a minivan last week, killing 18 girls and their driver. Friday's crash on a newly constructed highway stirred up public outrage over the poor transportation safety record in the world's most populous Arab country. Many, including pro-government commentators and lawmakers, lashed out at the government and called for accountability. Most criticism was directed at Transportation Minister Kamel Al-Wazir, with some calling for his resignation. A statement from the office of chief prosecutor said the truck driver was accused of abusing drugs and driving the truck without a relevant license.

Prosecutors also requested the court to initiate a misdemeanor procedure against the truck's owner for allowing the man to drive the vehicle while knowing that he didn't have the required license. The trial is scheduled to start on July 8, the statement said. The truck collided with a microbus — a mass transit minivan — on a highway in the Nile Delta city of Ashmoun. The microbus was carrying girls to a vineyard where they worked as informal laborers. Three other girls were injured in the crash, according to the Labor Ministry. The crash happened on part of the highway that was under maintenance. Deadly traffic accidents claim thousands of lives every year in Egypt, with many caused by speeding, bad roads or poor enforcement of traffic laws. Egypt's official statistics agency says 5,260 people died in road accidents last year, compared to 5,861 in 2023 — a 10.3 percent decrease. But 76,362 were injured in 2024, up from 71,016 the previous year — an increase of 7.5 percent.—DNA

Tax reform must build confidence, not fear: ICCI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has called for the immediate repeal of Section 37AA of the Income Tax Ordinance, which empowers tax authorities to arrest individuals without prior judicial approval. In a strong statement issued here on Wednesday, the ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry have warned that granting unchecked powers to tax officials could severely undermine investors' confidence and derail Pakistan's already fragile economy. "Such a provision poses a serious threat to the constitutional rights of citizens and adds the prevailing uncertainty in the business environment," the statement added. They emphasized that the recent amendments introduced by the government are merely cosmetic and fail to address the core concerns of the business community. "Rather than restoring confidence, these measures risk further damaging the country's investment climate and complicating the government's own economic and export ambitions," they cautioned. They reiterated that the business community has never been against paying taxes, but stressed that taxation must be fair and rational. "Instead of putting pressure on the existing taxpayers, the government should focus on expanding the tax net to meet its fiscal goals," they added. They assured that ICCI has always supported.—DNA

Dalai will have successor after his death

MCLEOD Ganj, India: The exiled spiritual leader of Tibet confirmed Wednesday that he will have a successor when he dies, reassuring Buddhist followers around the globe that the 600-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama will continue. It is a landmark decision for Tibetans, many of whom had feared a future without a leader, as well as for global supporters who see the Dalai Lama as a symbol of non-violence, compassion and the enduring struggle for Tibetan cultural identity under Chinese rule. According to Tibetans, Tenzin Gyatso is the 14th reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama is lauded by his followers for his tireless campaign for greater autonomy for Tibet, a vast high-altitude plateau in China about the size of South Africa.—APP

ICCD, FPCCI moot to promote Pakistan as global healthcare destination

KARACHI: The Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) and the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) will jointly organize a Medical Tourism Conference under the theme "Serving Global Patients with Paramount Quality Services." The conference, part of the "Tea for Tourism Series," launched by organizers, is scheduled to be held on July 15, 2025, at the ICCD Headquarters in Karachi. It will bring together top-tier experts, healthcare professionals, hospital administrators, pharmaceutical and biomedical firms, supply chain specialists, and government officials from Pakistan and abroad. The conference will serve as a dynamic platform to discuss the latest trends, innovations, and challenges in the medical tourism sector—aiming to identify actionable strategies to enhance service delivery and attract global patients to Pakistan and the broader OIC region. The conference will be complemented by a dedicated Expo, providing participants with an opportunity to showcase their healthcare products and demonstrate their medical and wellness services. The inauguration of the event and expo will be graced by a distinguished VIP guest. This landmark event follows the recent success of the Sustainable Tourism Forum (STF) jointly hosted by ICCD and FPCCI which welcomed international delegations and stakeholders. Building on that momentum, both institutions are taking practical steps to position Pakistan as a leading hub for sustainable and medical tourism among OIC member countries. The leadership of FPCCI and ICCD emphasized the importance of linking health and tourism to unlock new economic opportunities. With rising global demand for affordable, high-quality medical care, Pakistan is uniquely placed to emerge as a destination of choice for international patients. Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) is an international institution affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), representing the private sector across 57 member states. ICCD is headquartered in Karachi, Pakistan.—DNA

China's Xinjiang to host international dance festival

URUMQI: The 7th China Xinjiang International Dance Festival will open on July 20 in Urumqi, capital of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and run until Aug. 5, the organizers told a press conference held in Urumqi on Wednesday. Co-hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the State Council Information Office, and the regional government of Xinjiang, the event will feature 52 performances by 24 art groups from home and abroad. Besides the main venue of Urumqi, there are six branch venues across Xinjiang, including Ili, Hotan, Aksu, Karamay, Hami and Alaer. Renowned art groups from eight countries, including Kazakhstan, Cambodia, the United States and Italy, will participate, showcasing genres such as dance dramas, ethnic operas, musicals, ballet, and modern dance, among others, according to Yu Jie, deputy director of the regional culture and tourism department. Launched in 2008, it is the first major international arts festival in China centered around dance. During the previous six sessions, it had attracted a total of 138 art groups from more than 70 countries and regions, which staged over 200 performances, providing a key platform for cultural exchange under the Belt and Road Initiative.—APP

Beijing's largest airport set for busy summer travel season

BEIJING: Beijing Daxing International Airport, the largest airport in the Chinese capital, has forecast a passenger throughput of over 9.52 million during the July-August peak summer travel period. From July 1 to Aug. 31, the airport expects to handle approximately 60,400 flights, representing a 4.18 percent year-on-year increase. Passenger volume is projected to come in at 9.52 million, up 4.41 percent from 2024. Air travel peaks are anticipated on Aug. 5, with 1,031 flights and 170,500 passengers set to transit through the capital's aviation hub. The surge stems from converging demand for leisure travel, family reunions and family-oriented trips. Domestically, popular routes will connect people to cool-summer destinations in northeastern and southwestern China, alongside tourism hotspots. International travelers are favoring short-haul destinations in Southeast Asia and East Asia, while European cities like London, Moscow and Amsterdam are also reporting rising bookings. Accelerated visa facilitation policies have vitalized cross-border tourism. During the summer period, the Daxing airport estimates it will see daily averages of nearly 100 international flights and 17,000 border crossings. Since January, the airport has processed over 2.7 million international passengers.—APP

RISJA celebrates World Sports Journalists Day

"Your voices shape not only public perception but also national pride and aspiration," added POA Secretary General Muhammad Khalid Mahmood. "We remain committed to working alongside you in fostering a sporting culture that is ethical, inspiring, and worthy of our athletes and youth"

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA) celebrated World Sports Journalists Day on July 2, 2025, with great enthusiasm and a renewed commitment to promoting responsible and ethical sports reporting in Pakistan. The ceremony, held at a local hotel, was attended by senior sports journalists, athletes, and officials from the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), Islamabad Olympic Association (IOA), and various sports federations. On the occasion, tributes were paid to veteran sports journalists for their lifetime contributions, while younger members of the profession were encouraged to

uphold the highest standards of journalism. Addressing the gathering, RISJA Patron Abdul Mohi Shah, Chairman Shakeel Awan and President Abubakar Bin Tallat emphasized the critical role sports journalists play in shaping public perception and promoting values such as national pride, fair play, and the Olympic spirit. "This day reminds us of the important role sports journalists play — not just in covering competitions, but in upholding the spirit of sportsmanship and inspiring future generations," they said. A cake-cutting ceremony



was held to commemorate the occasion, followed by a panel discussion on the evolving landscape of sports journalism in the digital and social media age. Adding prestige to the celebrations, the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) issued a special message

recognizing the contributions of sports journalists. POA President Arif Saeed and Secretary General Muhammad Khalid Mahmood extended heartfelt appreciation to the sports media fraternity. "On the occasion of World Sports Journalists Day, the Pakistan Olympic



Association conveys its deepest respect and gratitude to sports journalists worldwide — especially to the committed and courageous professionals in Pakistan — for their enduring service to the Olympic Movement and the broader world of sport," said Arif Saeed in his official message. "Your voices shape not only public perception but also national pride and aspiration," added POA Secretary General Muhammad Khalid Mahmood. "We remain committed to working alongside you in fostering a sporting culture that is ethical, inspiring, and worthy of our athletes and youth." The RISJA event concluded with a collective pledge to continue promoting truthful, fair, and impactful sports journalism in service of athletes and the broader sporting vision of Pakistan.

Briefs

Nepra cuts electricity rate by Rs1.15 per unit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), in a move to ensure uniform power tariff across the country, has reduced the electricity rate by Rs1.15 per unit for all but lifeline consumers with the change also applicable to K-Electric consumers.

The development follows Nepra's hearing of the Power Division's motion seeking a uniform basic tariff, contending that tariff rationalisation is not aimed at raising any revenues for the federal government but in fact enables the fulfilment of parameters set forth in the Constitution as well as the policy. In its decision, the regulator has maintained the tariff for lifeline consumers using 50 units at Rs3.95 per unit, whereas those using 100 units will continue to pay Rs7.74 per unit. Protected consumers with 100 units on their bill will now pay at rate of Rs10.54 per unit, whereas an Rs13 per unit rate will apply to those consuming 200 units a month.

Iran suspends Cooperation with IAEA

Law stipulates that any future inspection by IAEA would need approval by Supreme National Security Council

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has granted a final approval to a law to suspend cooperation with the United Nations nuclear watchdog, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), state media said on Wednesday. "Masoud Pezeshkian promulgated the law suspending cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency," state TV said, meaning the measure drawn up in the aftermath of the Iran-Israel war last month is now in effect.

The development comes after Iran's parliament approved a bill to suspend cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, following an air war with Israel in which Iran's longtime enemy said it wanted to prevent Tehran developing a nuclear weapon.

The law stipulates that any future inspection by the IAEA would need approval by the Supreme National Security Council.

Last week, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf was quoted by state media as also saying Iran would accelerate its civilian nuclear programme. Tehran has denied seeking nuclear weapons and said that an IAEA resolution earlier in June declaring Iran in breach of its non-proliferation obligations paved the way for Israel's attacks. Qalibaf was quoted as saying that the IAEA had refused even to appear to condemn the attack on Iran's nuclear facilities and "has put its international credibility up for sale."

Aurangzeb for country-led, results-based development

Finance Minister laid out a comprehensive three-pronged strategy to effectively implement the Sevilla Outcome and foster meaningful progress. As a first step, he stressed the need for urgent execution of priority actions to transition from pledges to tangible delivery

DNA

MADRID: DFederal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, has called for a renewed global commitment to revitalising international development cooperation to meet the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Speaking at a Multistakeholder Round Table during the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) in Sevilla, Spain, the Minister emphasised that such revitalisation is not merely desirable but essential at this pivotal juncture for global development. In his remarks, the Finance Minister laid out a comprehensive three-pronged strategy to effectively implement the Sevilla Outcome and foster meaningful progress. As a first step, he stressed the need for urgent execution of priority actions to transition from pledges to tangible delivery. This, he noted, must involve greater country ownership of development agendas, with national strategies taking precedence over donor-driven models. Aligning frameworks with domestic priorities is key to ensuring sustainability and relevance on the ground.

The Minister further underscored the importance of expanding access to concessional and blended financing—particularly for climate initiatives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-related investments—in order to catalyse private capital in fiscally constrained devel-



oping countries. He called for a thorough reform of the global financial architecture, urging multilateral development banks, international financial institutions, and credit rating agencies to better reflect countries' reform efforts, climate vulnerabilities, and developmental ambitions in their lending terms and assessments.

Senator Aurangzeb also highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in how development cooperation is approached within developing countries themselves. He advocated

moving away from input-focused models towards strategies that are results-oriented and linked to measurable development outcomes. He urged the integration of cross-cutting themes such as climate resilience, gender equity, and digital inclusion into development plans, while emphasising the need to scale up South-South and triangular cooperation through context-specific, peer-driven solutions rather than externally imposed frameworks.

As a third key measure, the Minister proposed the establishment of global delivery mechanisms to accelerate implementation of the Sevilla Commitments. These could include expanded blended finance platforms designed to de-risk private investment through instruments such as guarantees, first-loss capital, and outcome-linked bonds. He called for the formation of new multi-stakeholder partnerships that would bring together governments, development banks, philanthropic entities, and private investors around shared, measurable goals. Additionally, the Minister recommended setting up a dedicated global facility or task force tasked with monitoring and fast-tracking the Sevilla action agenda, complete with timelines, assigned responsibilities, and robust accountability systems. Concluding his address, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering inclusive and results-driven partnerships. He urged the international community to move decisively from rhetoric to action, stating, "Let us resolve today to drive this transformation together."

Monsoon rains expected to intensify across Pakistan from July 05

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Wednesday has forecast a significant intensification of monsoon activity across the country beginning from the evening of July 05, with widespread rain, thunderstorms and the possibility of flash floods and urban flooding in several regions. According to the Met Office, moist monsoon currents were continuously penetrating the country and will likely strengthen over the weekend. A westerly wave was also expected to approach the upper parts of Pakistan on July 06, further enhancing the rainfall. As per the regional forecast highlights, rain-wind/thunderstorms with scattered heavy to very heavy rainfall are expected from July 5-10 in multiple areas including Muzaffarabad, Neelum Valley, Rawalakot, Swat, Dir, Malakand, Kohistan, Chitral, and others. Gilgit-Baltistan regions like Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, and Astore may also experience similar conditions from July 6 to 10.

In Punjab and Islamabad, widespread rain and thunderstorms with heavy falls are expected from July 5-10 in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and several other districts. Southern Punjab regions including Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan will receive rain between July 06-08. About Sindh and Balochistan, the PMD forecast that rain-thunderstorms are likely in southern and northeastern Balochistan including Loralai, Khuzdar, and Lasbella from July 03-04 and again from July 06-08. Sindh regions such as Karachi, Hyderabad, Tharparkar, and Sukkur may experience moderate rainfall during July 3-4, with chances of isolated heavy falls in southeastern parts. As per possible impacts and public advisory, heavy to very heavy rains may generate flash floods in local nullahs and streams of Murree, northeast Punjab, Kashmir, and parts of Balochistan from the night of July 05-08. — Agencies

'Hospital not renamed after CM Maryam'

Aurangzeb says fourteen new hospitals will be established in "Nawaz Sharif Medical District"

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab senior minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that the Jinnah Institute of Cardiology (JIC) Lahore has not been renamed after Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, quashing speculations amid outcry on social media. "The name 'Jinnah Institute of Cardiology Lahore' remains 'Jinnah Institute of Cardiology Lahore' and no changes are under consideration," Aurangzeb wrote in a post on X. "Funding in the Punjab government's Annual Development Programme for the fiscal year 2025-26 has been allocated under the name 'Jinnah Institute of Cardiology.'" This controversy stems from remarks made by Punjab's Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz during a session of the Punjab Assembly last Saturday regarding the cardiovascular institute. During the session, the Punjab chief minister said: "The Maryam Nawaz Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases will be an extension of the PIC. It is in the final stage of completion." She also presented images of the project as she discussed the plan.

Iran retaliatory strikes against Israel unified the Muslim World

Mushahid Hussain Syed presented the 3-R's concept

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a conference organized by Center for Pakistan and Persian Gulf Studies (CPGS), Mushahid Hussain Syed presented the 3-R's concept. He argued that the global geopolitics was witnessing resurgence of Islamophobia which was spearheaded by racial supremacy of the West and the dominance of right-wing politics. He also elaborated that the rise of China in technological and AI domains had shifted the power center from the West to the East. These developments, he argued, had resulted in the retrenchment of the West and global order. Discussing the conflictual situations both in South Asia and the Middle East, Senator Mushahid observed that Pakistan's retaliation against India unified the entire nation while Iran's retaliatory strikes against Israel unified the entire Muslim world. General (R) Samrez Salik, former DG Institute of Strategic Studies & Research Analysis (ISSRA) highlighted that the US and Israel miscalculated Iran's response. They didn't expect that the conflict with Iran would be prolonged, he noted. This indicated the transformation in international and regional systems where power and technology didn't guarantee victory in the war, he concluded. Instead, as demonstrated in the Iran-Israel conflict, what matters was the war strategy, General Samraz analyzed.

Subsidies for vulnerable consumers a top priority

Leghari attributed the recent rise in electricity prices to the previous govt's failure to review contracts with Independent Power Producers

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy, Awaiz Leghari said Wednesday that the government is taking practical steps to cut electricity tariffs for multiple consumer categories, with special attention to domestic users, as part of a strategy coordinated with ongoing IMF discussions to enhance power sector stability and economic growth. Speaking to a local news channel, Leghari attributed the recent rise in electricity prices to the previous government's failure to review contracts with Independent Power Producers (IPPs). He said that distribution companies (Discos) have achieved a remarkable 101% recovery rate in controlling electricity theft, surpassing previous targets. This achievement reflects the government's focused efforts to clamp down on power theft, which has historically contributed to significant financial losses in the sector, he added. According to the minister, these measures have not only improved the financial health of Discos but have also helped stabilize electricity tariffs for consumers.

He further emphasized that the current administration has taken aggressive and targeted steps to control electricity theft and reduce the financial losses faced by distribution companies (Discos). The minister stressed the government's commitment to ensuring transparency and accountability within the power sector to protect both the economy and consumers. Leghari added that some areas have achieved over 90% recovery, marking a major milestone in the ongoing power sector reforms. He affirmed that the government will continue working to stabilize electricity prices and improve service delivery across the country. Responding a query, he made it clear that that consumers using less than 200 units are receiving 70 to 80% subsidy, with priority given to facilitating the low-income class. He added that upcoming initiatives will prioritize support for impoverished and low-income households to ease their electricity costs. He further explained that the government remains committed to protecting the most vulnerable segments of society by ensuring affordable access to electricity. "Our policies are designed to provide maximum relief to those who need it the most, particularly the poor and low-income families," he said, highlighting that ongoing reforms will keep their welfare at the forefront. He also mentioned that controlling electricity theft remains a top priority for the government. "Significant progress has been made in curbing power theft, which directly reduces financial losses for distribution companies and helps keep tariffs more affordable for consumers," he said.

Pahalgam attack

Quad ministers do not take Pakistan name

Group calls for perpetrators to be brought to justice without any delay

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The Quad grouping of the United States, India, Japan and Australia called on Tuesday for the perpetrators of Pahalgam attack that killed 26 tourists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to be brought to justice without delay.

The April 22 attack sparked heavy fighting between nuclear-armed Pakistan and India in the latest escalation of a decades-old rivalry as India blamed it on Pakistan without offering any evidence. Pakistan denied responsibility while calling for a neutral investigation into the deadly attack.

The US State Department issued a joint statement by the foreign ministers of the grouping, who met in Washington, but stopped short of naming Pakistan or blaming Islamabad. "The Quad unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism," the ministers said in the statement. They called on all members of the United Nations to cooperate actively with "all relevant authorities" in delivering justice to the "perpetrators, organisers, and financiers of this reprehensible act", without any delay.

Air chief concludes successful visit of USA

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RAWALPINDI: In a significant development aimed at strengthening bilateral defence cooperation and advancing mutual interests, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, undertook an official visit to the United States of America — the first by a serving PAF Air Chief in over a decade. The high-profile visit marked a strategic milestone in Pakistan-U.S. defence cooperation and proved instrumental in deepening institutional ties in addition to addressing key regional and global security issues. During the visit, Chief of the Air Staff held a series of high-level meetings with senior U.S. military and political leadership. At the Pentagon, he called on Ms. Kelli L. Seybolt, Secretary of the Air Force (International Affairs), and General David W. Allvin, Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force.

During the meetings the discussions centered around advancing bilateral military cooperation, enhancing interoperability and exploring avenues of joint training & technology exchange.

Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the historic and multifaceted relationship between Pakistan and United States, particularly in the domains of defence and security cooperation.

Ethiopian envoy meets Governor Sindh to discuss cooperation



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ISLAMABAD: Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), held a productive meeting with H.E. Kamran Tessori, Governor of Sindh, to discuss bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Their discussion focused on further enhancing the bilateral and multilateral cooperation in key sectors such as trade, investment, aviation, energy and climate change.

On the occasion, Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker briefed the Honorable Governor about launch of this year's Green Legacy Initiative by Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed in June under the theme

'Renewal through Planting'. He said Ethiopia had planted more than 40 billion seedlings of various species since 2019, setting a target of planting over 7.5 billion seedlings, this year which would not only expand its green cover but also ensure food security and create more jobs in the country. To foster deeper bilateral relations, the Ambassador proposed to launch a joint plantation and awareness campaign in Sindh under the theme of "Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity under the Green Legacy Initiative". The Honorable Governor said the Governor House Sindh would fully cooperate with the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad for launch of the joint plantation and awareness campaign, stressing the importance of public mobilization in this regard. He noted the growing relations between Ethiopia and Pakistan, emphasizing on enhanced the bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries.

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