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Punjab speaker defends his reference

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FM Chairs meeting to review policy

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Field Marshal Asim Munir

# Indian claims of Chinese involvement baseless: COAS

“Naming other states as participants in the purely bilateral military conflagration is also a shoddy attempt at playing camp politics and desperately trying that India remains the beneficiary of larger geopolitical contestation as the so-called net security provider in a region,” COAS Munir said

CENTRELINE REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir has dismissed India's claim of Chinese assistance to Pakistan during the recent armed conflict between Islamabad and New Delhi as a “shoddy attempt at playing camp politics”. “Naming other states as participants in the purely bilateral military conflagration is also a shoddy attempt at playing camp politics and desperately trying that India remains the beneficiary of larger geopolitical contestation as the so-called net security provider in a region,” COAS Munir said while addressing the graduating officers of the National Security and War Course at the National Defence University (NDU). The army chief's remark refers to claims made by the deputy chief of India's army, who said that Beijing gave Islamabad “live inputs” on key Indian positions during the deadly conflict between two nuclear-armed neighbours in May. India fought two adversaries during the conflict, with Pakistan being the “front face” while China provided “all possible support”, Lieutenant General Rahul Singh claimed at a defence industry event in New Delhi. “When the DGMO (director general of military operations) level talks were going on, Pakistan ... said that we know that your such and such important vector is

primed and it is ready for action [...] he was getting live inputs from China,” he claimed. Regarding the possibility of China providing satellite imagery or other real-time intelligence, India's chief of defence staff had said such imagery was commercially available and could have been procured from China or elsewhere. Pakistani officials have previously dismissed allegations of receiving active support from China in the conflict. His statement referred to the conflict that saw both countries using missiles, drones, and artillery fire during the four-day fighting—their worst in decades—triggered by an attack in April on Hindu tourists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) that New Delhi blamed on Islamabad, before agreeing to a ceasefire. Pakistan has denied involvement in the attack. Meanwhile in his address today, the field marshal noted that India's inability to achieve its stated military objectives during Operation Sindoor—and the subsequent attempt to rationalize this shortfall through convoluted logic—speaks volumes about its lack of operational readiness and strategic foresight”. “Insinuations regarding external support in Pakistan's successful Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos are irresponsible and factually incorrect and reflect a chronic reluctance to acknowledge indigenous capability and

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Etisalat led by CEO Hatem Dowidar met with the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

RAINS PM directs NDMA, rescue teams to stay high alert

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), rescue agencies, and administrative authorities to remain on high alert during the recent heavy rains and any potential emergency situations. In anticipation of possible flooding in areas along the Indus River and other rivers, the prime minister has instructed the NDMA, rescue agencies, and administrative bodies to immediately implement safety measures and precautionary actions. The prime minister directed

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Mily leadership Pays homage to Lalak Jan NH



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Naval Staff, Chief of Air Staff and the Armed Forces of Pakistan solemnly commemorate and pay heartfelt tribute to Havildar Lalak Jan Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, honoring his unparalleled courage, unwavering dedication, and supreme

Continued on Page 06

After Lyari tragedy

## Sindh govt moves to demolish 51 dilapidated buildings

SBCA director general has been suspended over building collapse, says provincial minister Sharjeel Memon

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani said on Monday that the committee investigating the recent five-storey building collapse in Lyari was tasked to submit a detailed report on 51 other severely dilapidated buildings across Karachi. “The [same] committee will now also examine the condition of 51 dilapidated buildings in the city and will submit a report in the next 24 hours,” he said while addressing a press conference in Karachi flanked by Sindh senior minister Sharjeel Inam Memon and Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar. The government will start demolishing these 51 dilapidated buildings after a survey, said Ghani. The development comes days after the building collapse in Karachi's Lyari area, which left at least 27 people dead. The search and rescue op-

eration was concluded after nearly three days on Sunday evening. “Twenty-six bodies—including nine women, 15 men, and a ten-year-old boy and a one-and-a-half-year-old girl—were recovered from the rubble, while another person succumbed to their wounds during treatment,” Assistant Commissioner Shehryar Habib told reporters on Sunday. “In addition, the city commissioner has been tasked with compiling data on 588 other buildings deemed dangerous in the port city,” Ghani said in today's presser. Commenting over whether prior notices were issued to residents of the ill-fated building in Lyari, minister Ghani said: “Notices are regularly issued regarding unsafe structures, but unfortunately, the process often ends there.” “We are examining how to prosecute those responsible for unauthorised buildings,” he added.

Continued on Page 06

## Iran president says Israel attempted to kill him

“They did try, yes. They acted accordingly, but they failed,” says Masoud Pezeshkian

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in an interview released on Monday that Israel, which last month fought a 12-day war with Iran, had attempted to assassinate him. The remarks came less than a month after Israel launched its unprecedented June 13 bombing campaign against Iran, killing top military commanders and nuclear scientists. The Israeli attacks took place two days before Tehran and Washington were set to meet for a new round of nuclear talks, stalling negotiations that were aimed at reaching a deal over Iran's atomic programme. “They did try, yes. They acted accord-

ingly, but they failed,” Pezeshkian told US media figure Tucker Carlson in response to a question on whether he believed Israel had tried to kill him. “It was not the United States that was behind the attempt on my life. It was Israel. I was in a meeting... they tried to bombard the area in which we were holding that meeting,” he said, according to a translation of his remarks from Persian, in apparent reference to an alleged assassination attempt during the recent war. More than 900 people were killed in Iran during the conflict, according to the judiciary. The Israeli attacks drew waves of retaliatory drone and missile fire, killing 28 people in

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

Dozen Turkish soldiers dead in Iraq

Deaths occurred as Turkish forces search for soldier killed by Kurdish fighters in May 2022

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Turkiye said on Monday that 12 soldiers had died after being exposed to methane gas during a search operation in caves in northern Iraq, increasing its previous toll of eight. The incident comes at a sensitive time, with Turkiye in talks to end the conflict with the Kurds after the PKK militant group agreed to halt its decades-long armed struggle. The conflict, which began in 1984, has cost more than 40,000 lives. The deaths occurred when the Turkish troops were searching for the remains of a soldier who was shot dead by Kurdish fighters in the area in May 2022 and whose body was never recovered, Turkiye's defence ministry said.

Sweden to reopen visa services in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Sweden Monday announced the resumption of visa services in Islamabad following the Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Sweden, held in Stockholm on July 2nd. The decision will facilitate Pakistanis seeking to visit Sweden for short stays, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release said. Pakistan, it said welcomed this positive development, which reflected the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Alignment with Brics

## Anti-US policies' to invite additional 10% tariffs

Brics leaders take aim at US President Donald Trump's “indiscriminate” import tariffs

CENTRELINE REPORT



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said that countries aligning themselves with the “Anti-American policies” of Brics, will be charged an additional 10% tariff. “Any Country aligning themselves with the Anti-American policies of BRICS, will be charged an ADDITIONAL 10% Tariff. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Thank you for your attention to this matter!” Trump said in a post on Truth Social. Trump did not clarify or expand on the “Anti-American policies” reference in his post. The original Brics group gathered leaders from Brazil, Russia, India and China at its first summit in 2009. The bloc later added South Africa and last year included Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia as members. Brics leaders at a summit on Sunday took aim at US President

Continued on Page 06

## Israel, Hamas due to resume indirect talks

AGENCIES

DOHA: Israel and Hamas were due to resume indirect talks in Qatar on Monday, according to a Palestinian official, ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting in Washington with President Donald Trump, who is pushing for a deal. The latest round of negotiations on the war in Gaza began on Sunday in Doha, aiming to broker a ceasefire and reach an agreement on the release of hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. A Palestinian official familiar with the negotiations told AFP indirect talks between Hamas and Israeli delegations. As of 1230 GMT there was no confirmation

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# Karachi Tragedy — a reflection of national apathy

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



ON July 4, 2025, another tragedy has Karachi—a city that never sleeps, yet never seems to awaken from the nightmare of misgovernance and human suffering. People were yet trying to recover from the Swat River tragedy that also took many precious lives, the news came that a five-storey residential building collapsed like a house of cards, reducing concrete and steel to dust, and with it, burying precious human lives under the rubble. Mothers, children, elderly residents—people with dreams, memories, and hopes—were mercilessly crushed. And once again, all we are left with are rescue sirens, news flashes, hollow statements of sorrow, and the same old promise of “strict action” against those responsible. This isn't just the story of a building collapse; it's the story of a system collapse. A collapse of values, governance, justice, and above all—humanity. This heart-wrenching incident speaks volumes for the sheer apathy of the concerned quarters. It screams of the poverty that shackles millions of Pakistanis, forcing them to live in crumbling, unlivable struc-

tures because they simply do not have a choice. The truth is bitter and painful: People don't live in such dangerous buildings by choice—they do so because poverty has left them with no options. They cannot afford repairs, renovations, or even relocation. Their rooms, their so-called homes, are more like ticking time bombs. And yet, nobody cares. There are no jobs. No opportunities. The wealth of this country remains concentrated in the hands of a select few, while the rest are left to struggle, to suffer, and to perish. The Sindh government, as usual, remains absent when needed most. Corruption continues to rot the roots of every institution in the province. Reports abound of public funds being misused, siphoned off into the pockets of the powerful, leaving behind a trail of broken roads, overflowing gutters, and unsafe buildings. Accountability is a joke. Inspections are either never done, or signed off without a second glance. Everything is available for a price—even human life, it seems. But let us not limit this tragedy to Sindh alone. This is the state of governance across the country. Pakistan as a whole is grappling with a systemic collapse. There is no mechanism in place to protect the common citizen. No one to listen to the cries of the poor. No government department that takes its duty as sacred. The entire structure of the state has been hijacked by individuals who are more interested in filling their own coffers than serving the people who elected them.

This country was meant to be a welfare state. An Islamic Republic, where the principles of justice, equality, and compassion were supposed to guide every policy and law. But look around—where is that vision? Where is the care for the weak, the protection for the vulnerable, the support for the broken? In Pakistan today, the poor have no right to live, let alone dream. Their lives are expendable, their deaths mere statistics. If you are not part of the elite, the powerful, or the connected, then this country is not meant for you. It suits only the big-wigs—the untouchables who roam freely in their bulletproof vehicles, while the common man lies buried under concrete slabs. We hear stories every day—of parents committing suicide after killing their own children because they can no longer feed them. Is this the land our founding fathers envisioned? Is this the state that was supposed to uphold the values of Islam, where helping the oppressed is a divine duty, and serving the people is an act of worship? And yet, nobody fears God anymore. Nobody fears accountability—not in this life, nor the hereafter. Especially those in power. They act with impunity, as if they will live forever, as if there is no Day of Judgment. But there will be a day. A Day of Reckoning where each misdeed, each stolen rupee, each ignored cry for help will be brought to account. But for now, they continue to live in denial, mocking not just the people, but the very God they claim to serve. For how long will this continue? For how long will

the poor continue to suffer in silence? For how long will the corrupt thrive, while the helpless are buried under the weight of injustice? For how long will injustice be the rule and not the exception? This tragedy in Karachi is not an isolated incident—it is a symptom of a much deeper disease. It reflects the moral decay of a nation that has forgotten its soul. A nation where human life has no value, and where suffering is just another news headline. What we need is not just mourning and condemnation. We need a revolution of conscience. We need the rulers to remember their purpose—not to rule, but to serve. We need institutions that value human life. We need a media that doesn't move on to the next story, but keeps asking the hard questions. And above all, we need citizens who hold the powerful accountable, who remember that silence in the face of injustice is complicity. To the families who lost their loved ones in this tragedy, no words can ease your pain. But let this not be just another forgotten incident. Let this be a wake-up call. Let this be the moment where we as a nation say: Enough is enough. Because if we continue to let the poor die like this—unnoticed, unprotected, uncared for—then we are all complicit in the crime. And we too, will have to answer one day—not just to history, but to God. May God have mercy on the souls we lost. And may He awaken the dead conscience of those who still rule over the living.

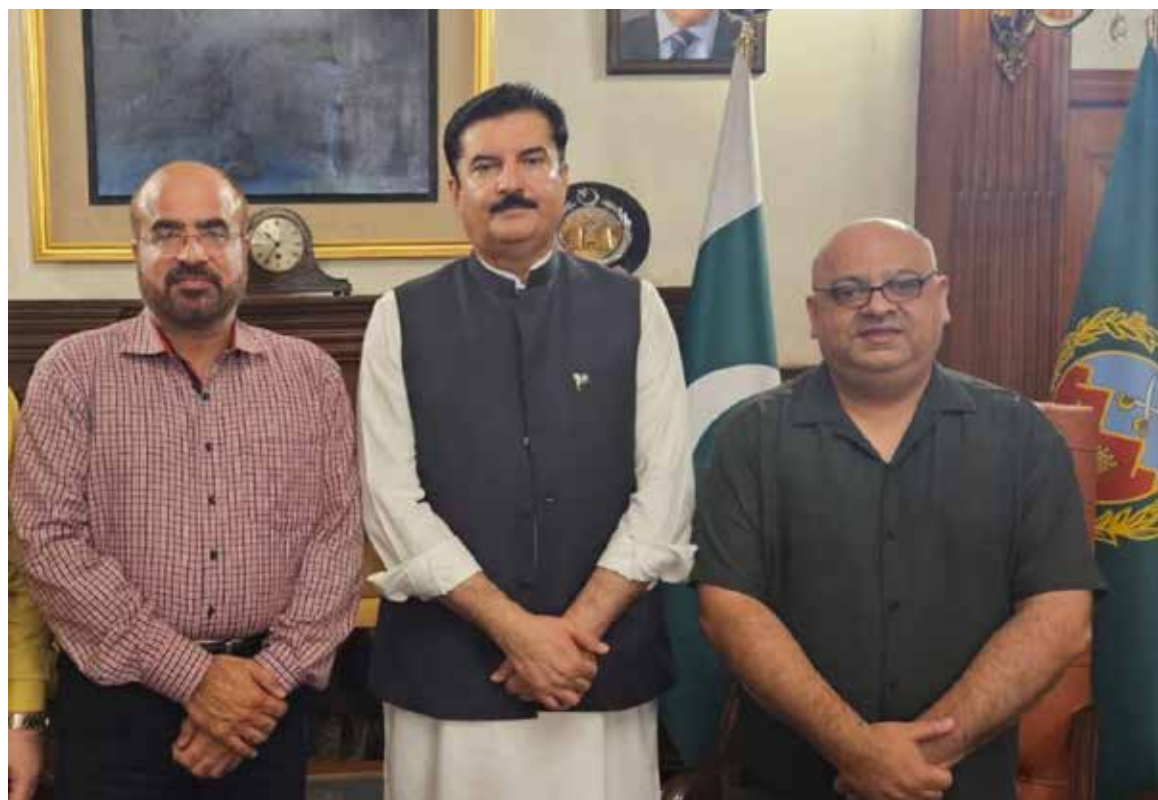


# Tarar highlights constitutional rights for minorities

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar said on Monday that articles enshrined in Pakistan's 1973 Constitution were not merely symbolic but also guarantees of equality, freedom, and fundamental rights. Talking to the inaugural ceremony of National Outreach Programme for Minorities at the Civil Services Academy here, he particularly cited Article 36, which pertains to the protection of minority rights, as part of the state's ethical and social responsibilities. Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar said: "I am here today as the Minister for Human Rights to remind young officers that the country must be steered collectively, just like carriages of a train moving in the same direction. Unfortunately, our train has fallen behind, and it is now our responsibility to set it back on the right track". He stressed the need for building an inclusive society, stating, "Pakistan needs people who could spread love, not command from above. We are all Pakistanis, whether part of a majority or a minority, and that singular identity must prevail." He said: "On the instructions of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, I'm here to reaffirm that the dream envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and embedded in our Constitution is not just an aspiration, it is a living reality. Every citizen, regardless of religion, deserves equal rights and recognition under the law", he added. Highlighting social responsibility, he said: "We must also turn our attention to the underprivileged,

the children playing in the dirt and the brick kiln laborers. These are the segments of Pakistan that need our compassion and focus." He also spoke about the Civil Services Academy, calling it a vital institution for nurturing future nation-builders. "This is no longer the era of colonial command-and-control. What we need now is love, empathy, and dialogue, not hatred," he emphasized. Referring to the white in Pakistan's flag, he said it symbolizes minorities and that the spirit must be reflected in our behavior, not just our symbols. The senator also highlighted the formation of the National Commission for Minority Rights, established under Articles 20, 26, 27, and 36 of the Constitution, to ensure equal opportunities and protection for non-Muslim citizens. "These provisions are not dormant clauses, they are living elements of our constitutional fabric. With sincere efforts, a time will come when special quotas for minorities will no longer be necessary, as inclusivity becomes the norm," he said. He expressed gratitude to the organizers, artists, and attendees and prayed for Pakistan's progress and interfaith harmony. Later, talking to the media, Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the suspension of 26 members of the Punjab Assembly falls within the Speaker's jurisdiction. He added that the speaker had the authority to refer a reference to the Chief Election Commissioner to de-seating the assembly members as he was the head of the House. He noted that all as-

sembly members had taken an oath under the Constitution to perform their duties with honesty and integrity. "If any member violates this oath, the speaker has the authority to take action against them," Tarar said. Senator Tarar acknowledged the opposition's right to protest but condemned acts of violence and vandalism. "Throwing chairs, breaking microphones, and damaging assembly property is not protest, it is a violation of the law," he remarked. He expressed hope that the speaker of the Punjab Assembly would resolve the issue in a way that upholds the dignity of the House and democratic traditions. On the occasion, Patron-in-chief Pakistan Hindu Council Ramesh Kumar Vankwani Dr Ramesh Kumar said that the term "non-Muslim" should be preferred over "minority", as the latter reflects a narrower, exclusionary mindset. He urged that this terminology be adopted across all government institutions, including the academy. Dr. Ramesh Kumar also advocated for increasing the age limit for civil service exams to 35 years to give more opportunities to young aspirants, particularly from marginalized backgrounds. State Minister for Political Affairs Talha Burki, Punjab Human Rights Secretary Farid Ahmad Tarar, Member National Commission for Human Rights Punjab Nadeem Ashraf CSA Director General Farhan Aziz Khawaja, Director Capacity Building Dr Shabeer Akbar and others were present.—DNA



PESHAWAR: PRBC delegation comprising Chairman Sohail Shamim Firpo and Advisor & Chief Operating Officer Atif Farooqi called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi.

## Over 8,500 cops deployed across Hazara division on Ashura

ABBOTTABAD: Extensive security arrangements were implemented across Hazara Division to ensure a peaceful observance of Ashura, with over 8,500 security personnel deployed in key districts. According to official details released here Monday, 3,500 policemen were on duty in Abbottabad, 3,000 in Mansehra, and 2,000 in Haripur. The deployment was part of a comprehensive and multilayered security and emergency response plan, developed through close coordination between police and other law enforcement agencies.

Commissioner Hazara Division, Fayaz Ali Shah and Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Hazara Range, Nasir Mehmood Satti, personally monitored the Ashura processions. They visited key procession routes and reviewed operations at the integrated monitoring control rooms established for real-time surveillance and rapid response. The Commissioner and DIG expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and appreciated the efforts of the district administrations, police, Rescue 1122, and other departments involved in ensuring the security of processions and Majalis. They emphasized the importance of inter-agency coordination, timely communication, and public cooperation in maintaining peace and order during religious events.—APP

## Pak, Romania business council explores trade opportunities in KPK

During the meeting, Mr. Atif Farooqi expressed optimism about the meeting's potential to foster increased trade and investment between the two nations

DNA  
PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Romania Business Council (PRBC) delegation, comprising Chairman Mr. Sohail Shamim Firpo and Advisor & Chief Operating Officer Mr. Atif Farooqi, held a meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkh-

wa Governor, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi, to discuss potential trade collaborations between Pakistan and Romania. During the meeting, Mr. Atif Farooqi expressed optimism about the meeting's potential to foster increased trade and investment between the two nations. As Advisor to Marsh McLennan

in Pakistan, represented by Unique Insurance Brokers, Mr. Farooqi highlighted the possibility of introducing premium insurance brokerage services to the KPK market. The Governor reaffirmed his commitment to supporting initiatives that promote bilateral trade and investment.

## KP governor voices frustration over severe power outage

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday expressed dissatisfaction over the ongoing harsh power load shedding and low voltage issues affecting residents throughout the province. Chairing a meeting with Wapda and PESCO officials, the Governor said that the situation was unacceptable and directed immediate measures to address public complaints and improve electricity supply. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has directed Wapda and PESCO officials to take immediate action to resolve complaints regarding excessive load shedding and low voltage in various areas. The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer Akhtar Hameed Khan, Chief Engineer Development Zubair Kundi, Project

Directors Zafar Iqbal and Ajmal Khan and PDC Executive Engineer Kashif Khan. During the briefing, Wapda officials informed the Governor about ongoing recovery operations in Dera Ismail Khan, construction of new grid stations, coordination issues with FESCO in the Balochistan Power Supply Project (Bilot), and other related matters. Governor Kundi expressed concern over the negative impact on services due to the shortage of staff in PESCO, terming it an injustice to both the public and the department. He instructed that a letter be written to the federal government, requesting the fulfillment of staffing requirements to improve public service delivery. He also emphasized the swift installation of machinery at the Bandkurai Grid Station,

saying that its completion would reduce load shedding and low voltage complaints in connected areas by better distribution of electrical load. Furthermore, the Governor urged that load shedding schedules should be managed in a way that water supply schemes are not disrupted, especially during the intense summer heat when water shortages create serious difficulties for citizens. He stressed the need for proactive measures to mitigate these hardships. Meanwhile in another meeting, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has emphasized that the Governor serves as the true representative of the people, reaffirming the Pakistan Peoples Party's longstanding commitment to addressing public issues and securing people's rights.—APP

## Training session on digital admission, merit-based aid

GUJRAT: A training session in connection with processing and verification of admission applications for Fall 2025, was held at the Hafiz Hayat Campus of the University of Gujrat (UOG) here on Monday, under the auspicious of the Department of Information Technology. According to university spokesperson, the session focused on the newly introduced features in the online admission portal, including automatic determination of scholarship eligibility at the time of application submission. Web Manager and session focal person Abu Al-Khair Muhammad Umar briefed the participants on the application process, noting that applicants could now select their intermediate education board while applying, enabling top-performing students from various boards to be considered for full fee waivers. He further said that special financial assistance would also be provided on merit to orphan students, transgender individuals, Hufiz-e-Quran, and those from low-income families. The training was attended by a large number of faculty members, departmental focal persons, and chairpersons, who were given detailed awareness of the updated admission policy and portal features. The university has begun accepting online admission applications for various academic programmes, with August 15 set as the deadline.—APP

## Climate crisis grips coastal Sindh, Thatta, Badin

ISLAMABAD: With over 70 lives already lost and more than 130 injured during just ten days of monsoon rains, Pakistan faces another potentially catastrophic spell of weather. This year's rainfall is expected to exceed average levels by 13%, and the warning signs are most alarming in the coastal districts of Thatta and Badin, regions long neglected yet now squarely on the frontlines of climate change. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has raised concerns as extreme weather events become more frequent and intense. Pakistan, though responsible for a fraction of global emissions, is among the countries most exposed to the consequences of climate change. From flooding to drought, the impact is no longer distant

or theoretical, it is happening now, and most severely in places least equipped to cope. One of the driving forces behind this crisis is the changing nature of rainfall. Dr. Furrukh Bashir, Director at the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), talking to APP said the structure of precipitation events has altered significantly in recent years. In the past, rainfall would span over several days in large, manageable systems. Now, short-lived but highly intense bursts of rain dominate, causing rapid water accumulation and overwhelming drainage systems. This shift has led to deadly flash floods, such as the recent incident in Swat where river discharge surged to 77,782 cusecs, resulting in multiple fatalities.

Wind patterns during monsoon season have also become increasingly volatile. Southern Sindh, which typically experiences dry westerly winds, now encounters moist easterly winds from the Bay of Bengal. These moisture-laden winds, when interacting with low-pressure systems, unleash heavy rains across low-lying coastal areas. This was clearly seen in 2022, when Thatta and Badin were hit hard, and the absence of adequate drainage infrastructure worsened the devastation. Roads turned into rivers, homes were flooded, and entire communities were cut off. Sea intrusion worsens the crisis in low-lying areas like Ketri Bandar and Badin, where rising sea levels push inland, forming deepening channels.—APP

## AIOU launches Turkish summer camp for kids

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has launched a two-week "Turkish Summer Camp" to promote children's education, creativity and physical development in a culturally enriching environment. The initiative was formally inaugurated in a ceremony attended by children, their parents and distinguished guests including Dr. Zahid Majeed (Director, International Office), Prof. Dr. Khalil Tokar (Director, Yunus Emre Institute), the Education Attaché of the Turkish Embassy in Islamabad, Dr. Mehmet Toyran and Prof. Dr. Samina Tokar, an expert in Turkish language. The speakers praised the camp as a unique educational and cultural experience for young learners and described it as a practical demonstration of the strong and enduring friendship between Pakistan and Türkiye. The summer camp, which will continue until July 18, comprises three interactive sessions held each day. The first session focuses on teaching the Turkish language, helping children learn basic vocabulary, sentences, and conversational phrases. The second session involves calligraphy training based on Islamic and Turkish cultural themes, aimed at developing the children's aesthetic and artistic abilities. The third session introduces traditional Turkish games such as archery and Mangala, encouraging physical activity and offering children a deeper, hands-on appreciation of Turkish traditions. Addressing the opening ceremony, Dr. Zahid Majeed stated that this is the University's third Turkish Summer Camp, and it continues to serve as an effective platform to nurture children's hidden talents, broaden their exposure to global cultures, and shape their personalities with confidence and awareness. He further announced that the camp's closing ceremony will feature AIOU Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, and the Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan as chief guests. Prof. Dr. Khalil Tokar, in his remarks, expressed hope that the summer camp would further strengthen the cultural and emotional bonds between the people of Pakistan and Türkiye. Education Attaché Mehmet Tugrul Türker added that the camp provides children with more than just language skills—it also offers a comprehensive understanding of Türkiye's rich history, cultural values, and modern advancements. The event reflects AIOU's commitment to fostering international collaboration and cultural exchange, especially among younger generations.—DNA

## Naqvi lauds Coast guards for role in anti-smuggling efforts

The Interior Minister said that the induction of two new RHIB (Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats) into the Coast Guards fleet will enhance the operational capacity of the force

KARACHI: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi attended the ceremony of inclusion of two new boats in Pakistan Coast Guards as Chief Guest in Karachi. Director General Pakistan Coast Guards Major General Jawad Riaz welcomed the Minister upon his arrival. The ceremony was also attended by senior military and civil officials, as well as foreign diplomats. Director General Anti-Narcotics Force Major General Abdul Mueed was also present on the occasion. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected the newly inducted boats and took a ride on one of them. He appreciated the initiative to strengthen the



Coast Guards with modern boats. DG Coast Guards

Major General Jawad Riaz briefed the Minister on the

advanced features of the boats. Interior Minister also

addressed the ceremony. While commending the professional capabilities of the Pakistan Coast Guards he said that Pakistan Coast Guards is recognized as an important and vital force in the country. He added that the Pakistan Coast Guards have ensured the enforcement of law against smuggling, illegal immigration, and anti-trawling fishing. In particular, they have shown outstanding performance in combating smuggling, narcotics, and human trafficking, he added. The Interior Minister said that the induction of two new RHIB (Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats) into the Coast Guards fleet will enhance the operational capacity of the force.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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MH.....561116

Cannt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

MDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Seminar explores Pak-Russia new horizons of` multilateral coop

The dialogue focused on current regional and global developments, including the shifting geopolitical landscape, evolving security trends, and opportunities for enhanced bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, humanitarian, and strategic domains

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A high-level think-tank dialogue took place between the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ICCA RAS), marking a continued commitment to deepening scholarly and strategic engagement between Pakistan and Russia. The meeting was hosted at ICCA-RAS in Moscow and brought together leading experts and scholars from both institutions. Representing IC-CA-RAS were Prof. Kirill Babaev, Director of the Institute; Dr. Dmitry Novikov, Head of the Center for Central Asian Studies; Ms. Alexandra Perminova, Deputy Head and Research Fellow; and Ms. Larisa Shashok, Research Fellow. The ISSI delegation was led by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General of ISSI, accompanied by Mr. Jetha Nand, Second Secretary at the Embassy of Pakistan in Moscow. The dialogue focused on current regional and global developments, including the shifting geopolitical landscape, evolving security trends, and opportunities for enhanced bilateral cooperation in the po-



litical, economic, humanitarian, and strategic domains. Both sides also explored avenues for multilateral engagement and sustainable development within the broader Eurasian context. This round of engagement builds on the institutional partnership formalized earlier this year when ISSI and ICCA RAS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April 2025 in Islamabad. The MoU aims to promote joint research, scholarly exchanges, and dialogue on critical regional and global issues. The meeting reaffirmed the shared com-

mitment of both institutions to fostering long-term academic and research collaboration and contributing to the rapidly evolving multi-faceted Pakistan–Russia partnership.

# Atif reaffirms commitment to serve business community

ISLAMABAD: President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the one-year extension in his tenure is truly a result of the trust, support, and prayers of the business community. He said they have always strived to keep the FPCCI free from political influence, policy-driven, and actively working in the national interest—and will continue to stand firm on this vision. He added that solving the challenges faced by the business community, tax reforms, export promotion, and training and mentoring the younger generation of entrepreneurs remain their priorities. He was speaking to a delegation of prominent business leaders from Islamabad who visited him at the FPCCI President Secretariat to congratulate him on the extension and to assure full support. The delegation included UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, former FPCCI President Zubair Ahmed Malik, former ICCI Presidents Khalid Iqbal Malik and Ejaz Abbasi, ICCI Council Member Chaudhry Masood, and ICCI Executive Member Sardar Tahir. Atif Ikram Sheikh stated that the presidency of FPCCI is not just an honorary position for him but a great responsibility, aimed not at gaining power, but at public service. He said the trust and support of the business community are their greatest strength. Over the past term, they have raised their voice on national platforms regarding issues like the economy, exports, tax policies, and regulatory challenges, and presented serious recommendations to the government. He added that they have promoted consultation across all sectors and established strong links with stakeholders. Their goal is to ensure continuity in policies, protect the business community from instability, and create an environment where industry, trade, and investment can thrive. He also mentioned launching targeted policy programs for youth, women, small businesses, and exporters. This extension, he said, will provide them with more time and motivation to realize these goals. Zafar Bakhtawari said that under Atif Ikram Sheikh's leadership, the FPCCI has followed a path of institutional autonomy, strong governance, and true representation of ground-level business issues. —DNA

# CDA chief inspects rain-affected areas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and DG Civil Defence, Muhammad Ali Randhawa visited the various areas of Islamabad to personally monitor the joint operations carried out by the CDA District Administration and MCI in Islamabad in response to the recent heavy rainfall and hailstorm in Islamabad. All field teams of CDA, District Administration and MCI were mobilised immediately after the heavy rainfall, with clear instructions to provide maximum relief and assistance to citizens with best of their abilities and resources. Pursuing the instructions of Chairman CDA, the Emergency & Disaster Management Directorate, along with the Sanitation, Environment Wing, Building Control, Islamabad Water Agency, Road and Maintenance Wing, CDA carried out to swiftly remove fallen trees, debris and other obstructions from all major roads in Islamabad. During the visit, Chairman CDA further directed to expedite efforts for remaining road cleaning, clearing of water and restore normal traffic flow on priority basis. The staff and machinery from the Sanitation, Environment and Engineering Wings had already been deployed to clear blockages in the city's drains, waterways and underpasses. A special monitoring mechanism was activated to ensure effective drainage in low-lying areas, underpasses and key roads. Chairman CDA, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and DG Civil Defence Muhammad Ali Randhawa personally monitored the joint operation and efforts of all formations of CDA, District Administration and MCI and traffic police personnel in order to clear all road immediately and ensure flow of traffic. The citizens of Islamabad have appreciated prompt and effective measures under the leadership of Chairman CDA, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and DG Civil Defence for swiftly removing fallen trees, clearing all roads thus ensuring smooth flow of traffic inspite of heaving rain and thunderstorm in Islamabad.



# NDMA forecasts elevated flood risk

ISLAMABAD: National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday issued a two-day alert as strong monsoon currents from the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, coupled with a westerly wave, may cause heavy rainfall and potential riverine and flash flooding across major river catchments till July 10. According to NEOC, these weather conditions are expected to bring moderate to heavy rainfall, particularly over major river catchments, with a high likelihood of both riverine and flash flooding in vulnerable areas. Authorities urge residents in at-risk regions to stay informed and take necessary precautions. According to NEOC's forecast, increased water flows are expected in all major rivers including Kabul, Indus, Jhelum and Chenab. Currently, low flood levels are

being observed at Tarbela, Kalabagh and Chashma on the Indus River, while Taunsa is also expected to reach the low flood mark. River Chenab is likely to experience low flood levels at Marala and Khaniki stations. River Kabul at Nowshera is expected to rise to low flood levels, while Swat and Panjkora Rivers, along with their associated streams and nullahs, may swell due to rainfall in their catchment areas. River Jhelum, along with its tributaries, is expected to experience elevated inflows, resulting in localized flash floods. Inflows at Mangla Dam on River Jhelum are projected to reach the low flood limit. In northeastern Punjab, nullahs originating from the Pir Panjal range may experience significant increases in water levels, possibly reaching medium flood intensity. Hill torrents in Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur districts may once

again become active, generating medium to high flows. In Balochistan, nullahs and seasonal streams in the northeastern districts including Jhal Magsi, Kachi, Sibi, Qila Saifulah, Zhob, and Musakhel are also likely to experience high flows. In Gilgit-Baltistan, the Hunza and Shigar rivers may see increased water discharge, with flash flooding possible in their tributaries, including Hispar, Khunjerab, Shimshal, Braldu, Hushe and Saltoro Rivers. Residents living near rivers, streams and nullahs are advised to stay vigilant for sudden increases in water levels, particularly at night or during periods of intense rainfall. Communities are urged to stay informed through official flood alerts and weather warnings. People living in vulnerable areas should identify safe evacuation routes and relocate essential items, vehicles, and livestock to higher.—APP

## Former FATA representatives inclusion urged in Jirga reform bodies

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Tribal Affairs and Member of the National Assembly, Mubarak Zeb Khan, has called for representation of the merged districts (formerly FATA) in the committee tasked with drafting recommendations to legalize the jirga system. During the meeting on Monday, Mubarak Zeb emphasized that the representation of the merged districts in the committee is essential to safeguard their constitutional, political and other rights, said a press release on Monday. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had constituted a committee to draft recommendations for the restoration of the jirga system, following consultations with all stakeholders and ensuring alignment with the constitutional framework.—APP

## Aleem visits Islamabad-Murree Expressway


ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan undertook a visit to inspect the ongoing construction and up gradation works on the Islamabad-Murree Expressway. Accompanied by senior officers, the minister instructed that the pace of work be accelerated and directed about beautification of both sides of the Murree Expressway with green belts. He set a target date of July 30 for the reconstruction of the Murree Toll Plaza and linked with the E-Tag System, said a press release issued on Monday.—APP

Court Notice


In the Court of Naeem Shahbaz Senior Civil Judge (Family Division) Jhelum

suit For Dissolution of Marriage Basis of Khulah Case title: Nighat Maimuna vs Muhammad Muneeb Sultan, son of Muhammad Siddique, residence: Mohal, Post Office, Dina, Tehsil Dina, District Jhelum. (Currently residing in Abroad)

As there is not possible to call the defendant through Summons in the instant suit so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the court on 17.07.2025 at 08:00 AM., otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.



PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA REGULATORY AUTHORITY ISLAMABAD



INVITATION TO APPLY FOR CABLE TV LICENCES AT DISTRICT LEVEL IN THE PROVINCE OF PUNJAB

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) invites applications under Section 19 of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 (as amended by PEMRA Amendment Act 2023) from the companies registered with Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), interested in establishing and operating Cable TV distribution services at District Level in the Punjab Province.

The PEMRA (Eligibility Criteria and Bidding Procedure for District Level Cable TV Licensing) Regulations, 2025 containing Application Form, Eligibility Criteria, Bidding Procedure along with Base Price for the districts where bidding will be held are available at PEMRA website i.e., <https://www.pemra.gov.pk/ctv/>

Interested companies shall apply on the Application Form, along with requisite documents and application processing fee [non-refundable fee] of Rs. 100,000/- in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft in favor of PEMRA. If a company intends to apply for more than one district(s), a separate application(s) is/are required to be submitted along with a separate Pay Order/Demand Draft.

A pre-bid conference is also scheduled at 11:00 am on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025 at PEMRA Regional Office, House No. 80-80/A, Bridge Colony, Abid Majeed Road, Lahore, Cantt, (Phone No. 042-99220532-3) to educate the potential applicants and to address their relevant questions/queries (if any). The companies/potential applicants interested in attending the pre bid conference may proceed with prior registration at the link: <https://bit.ly/prebidctvpunjab> before July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Only shortlisted companies fulfilling the prescribed criteria shall be invited to participate in the bidding process under Section 19 of PEMRA Ordinance 2002, at a date and time, to be communicated later. Bidding will be held in the respective Provincial HQs for ease of interested applicants and general public. The Cable TV licences shall be issued to the successful bidders after completion of all legal requirements under PEMRA laws along with payment of applicable fee(s).

For any further information, aspiring applicants may visit PEMRA Headquarters or concerned Regional Offices of PEMRA during office hours (09:00 am to 05:00 pm). Contact detail is available at website i.e. <https://www.pemra.gov.pk/contact/>

The complete applications along with required documents should reach to the address given below before closing of office hours (i.e. 05:00 PM.) on or before August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

The submission of applications/shortlisting shall not establish any right or claim of any applicant company, whatsoever, for the grant of a licence. The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject all or any application by recording reason in writing in the light of PEMRA laws.

Director General (Licensing Distribution) PEMRA Headquarters Sector G-8/1, Mauve Area, Islamabad. Tel: +92 (51) 9107178, +92(51) 9107131. [www.pemra.gov.pk](http://www.pemra.gov.pk)

PID 0113/25



## Briefs

## ITP issues traffic plan for 11th Muharram procession

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Monday announced special traffic arrangements for the 11th Muharram procession, scheduled to be taken out from Noor Pur Shahan. An ITP spokesperson told APP that the procession will start from the residence of Nawazish Shah in Noor Pur Shahan, by passing through Darbar Bazaar Road, and will enter the shrine of Bari Imam before returning to its starting point for culmination. He said that during the procession, T-cross on Quaid-e-Azam University Road and T-cross Bari Imam Chowk will remain closed for general traffic. Chief Traffic Officer Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider said commuters can use alternate routes including Third Road, Margalla Road, Kashmir Chowk, and Murree Road to avoid inconvenience. CTO Zeeshan said citizens are advised to use alternative routes during the procession to ensure smooth traffic flow. He said the general public must avoid illegal parking around the procession route to prevent congestion. CTO said vehicles should only be parked in designated parking areas. He said citizens are requested to fully cooperate with traffic police during the procession. CTO Zeeshan urged the public to support the ITP in maintaining order and facilitating safe movement during religious gatherings.—APP

## Court Notice

IN the court of Saba Alam Judge Family Court

Rawalpindi Maria Anwar Versus Malik Bilal Javed Suit for Recovery of Maintenance etc, To Malik Bilal Javed S/O Javad Iqbal R/O Mohra Kotian P.O Basali Rawalpindi Whereas Defendant cannot be served in Ordinary manner So you are inform to attend the court personal through counsel or attorney on 08/07/25 at 08am to avoid ex parte Proceedings.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Head of Mission of Indonesian embassy with his spouse taking interest in various items displayed on the occasion of the Rwanda Liberation Day. —DNA

# Microsoft's exit is a critical warning for Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prominent economic commentator and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Shahid Rashid Butt on Monday described Microsoft's recent closure of its direct operations in Pakistan as a warning sign for the country's entire digital economy, urging the government to take immediate corrective measures before the damage spreads to other sectors. He said the tech giant's decision to shut down its office after 25 years reflects mounting frustration with an unstable economic environment, inconsistent regu-

latory frameworks, and chronic policy discontinuity. Shahid Rashid Butt noted that Microsoft's withdrawal is officially part of a global restructuring effort in which the company has laid off over 9,100 employees and shifted many regions to a partner-led model. However, Microsoft's decision to maintain stronger footprints in countries like Vietnam and Egypt, along with a new investment of three billion dollars in India—while excluding Pakistan from its long-term strategy—highlights growing concerns about Pakistan's investment climate. "Pakistan is no longer seen as a strategic destination by global tech leaders," he warned. "This is

not just a business decision. It is a reputational downgrade for our entire digital sector." Speaking to the business community, he said the absence of Microsoft's direct office will impact more than just customer engagement. The loss includes diminished access to knowledge transfer, enterprise-grade solutions, and certified training programs that have historically helped build local IT capacity. He revealed that Microsoft had previously explored deeper engagement with Pakistan. "Bill Gates personally met Pakistani leadership in 2022 to explore tech collaboration, but politics and institutional disinterest stalled the process. The same year, Microsoft chose to expand in Viet-

nam," he added. The business leader pointed out that Pakistan's deteriorating economic indicators have contributed to this strategic shift. "Our trade deficit stood at \$24.4 billion in FY 2024, foreign exchange reserves barely exceed \$11.5 billion, and IT exports have stagnated despite global growth. Who would risk expansion in such an environment?" he asked. Butt said that Microsoft's departure could trigger a broader retreat from global players, who may now choose to serve Pakistan remotely via UAE or Singapore. "If immediate reforms are not made, Pakistan's digital economy may be reduced to a buyer, not a builder," he warned. The closure of even a

symbolic operation by a company signals that Pakistan is not ready for sustained digital engagement, he said.

Butt called for a stable, long-term tax regime for IT and cloud services, as well as regulatory clarity and immediate re-engagement with global tech leaders.

He further recommended expanding domestic cloud infrastructure, supporting indigenous IT firms, and enabling Microsoft's local partners to continue service delivery without disruption. This is a moment to reset the technology narrative, not surrender it. Delay will only invite more exits and more profound isolation from the global digital economy, he concluded.

## Chinese firm gets green light for cancer drug biosimilar in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's drug regulator has approved a biosimilar version of a costly cancer drug bevacizumab in the country, Chinese firm Kexing Biopharm said in a statement. The move is set to increase local access to more affordable cancer treatments and deepen health-sector partnerships between the two countries, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The approval allows the enterprise to market the bevacizumab biosimilar drug manufactured by China-based TOT Biopharm that is a near-identical alternative of the widely used therapy for several advanced cancers, including colorectal, ovarian, and lung cancers. The original drug, marketed by Roche as Avastin, can cost several hundred dollars per dose, placing it beyond the reach of most patients in the country of more than 240 million people. The need for more affordable options is critical. Pakistan records more than 118,000 cancer deaths a year, with lung, colorectal and ovarian cancers—all potential targets for bevacizumab therapy—among the major contributors, according to data from the World Health Organisation's Global Cancer Observatory.—DNA

## Interior Minister thanks forces

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has expressed deep gratitude to Almighty Allah and commended the coordinated efforts of security forces and government institutions for ensuring a peaceful and secure environment during Ashura across Pakistan. In a statement, Naqvi said that due to divine blessings and effective government measures, Ashura was observed peacefully in all parts of the country including Islamabad, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan,

and Azad Kashmir. All processions and majalis concluded safely and without incident, he confirmed. "I wholeheartedly thank every soldier, officer, and official deployed for Ashura security," said Naqvi, praising the dedication and professionalism of the Army, Rangers, Police, and civil administration. He also acknowledged the commendable role of religious scholars in promoting sectarian harmony and interfaith unity throughout Muharram. "Our forces performed their duties with devotion and unity, providing foolproof security to

mourners and gatherings," Naqvi added, emphasizing that the entire nation witnessed disciplined and exemplary coordination between field formations and law enforcement agencies. He noted that from the first of Muharram to the 10th (Ashura), a comprehensive and integrated security plan was implemented successfully, which played a pivotal role in maintaining peace. Naqvi concluded by saying, "We bow our heads in gratitude before Allah Almighty for the peaceful completion of the sacred days of Muharram."

## Sindh's P&D departt surpasses all other provinces with its outstanding performance

The Planning and Development Department is effectively advancing the vision of Bilawal Bhutto and Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah



MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI

THE Planning and Development (P&D) Department of Sindh has emerged as a cornerstone of the province's progress, driving transformative initiatives that align with Pakistan's broader development goals. Under the visionary leadership of Chairman Najam Ahmed Shah and the strategic oversight of Secretary Sajjad Hussain Abbasi, the department has achieved remarkable milestones in fostering sustainable development, economic growth, and social upliftment across Sindh. As the Chairman of the Planning and Development Board, Najam Ahmed Shah holds one of the most pivotal roles in the Government of Sindh. His tenure has been marked by strategic foresight, innovative policymaking, and a commitment to inclusive development. Shah's leadership has been instrumental in steering the department toward achieving Sindh's developmental objectives while maintaining robust coordination with international and national stakeholders. Shah has adeptly managed partnerships with global institutions such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and USAID, channeling their support into high-impact projects. By liaising through

the Economic Affairs Division of the Government of Pakistan, he has ensured that Sindh benefits from international expertise and funding, particularly in infrastructure, education, and healthcare sectors. As the competent authority for approving development schemes, Shah has streamlined the process of evaluating and greenlighting proposals from various provincial departments. His rigorous oversight ensures that only projects with measurable outcomes and long-term benefits are prioritized, optimizing resource allocation. Shah has bolstered the efficiency of key wings within the P&D Department, including the Monitoring and Evaluation Cell, the Bureau of Statistics, and the Research and Training Wing. These units have become critical in providing data-driven insights and ensuring accountability in project implementation, making the department one of the largest and most effective in the province. Shah's vision aligns with Pakistan's Vision 2025, emphasizing sustainable growth, poverty alleviation, and inclusive development. His leadership has driven projects aimed at improving literacy, employment opportunities, and social security, particularly for marginalized communities in Sindh. His ability to balance administrative excellence with a forward-thinking approach has earned him accolades as a leader who not only envisions a developed Sindh but also takes concrete steps to realize it. Complementing Shah's leadership is the administrative prowess of Secretary Sajjad Hussain Abbasi, whose role has been pivotal in translating strategic directives into actionable outcomes. Appointed as Secretary of the P&D Department, Abbasi has brought a wealth of experience and a results-oriented approach to the department's operations. His contributions have been critical in ensuring seamless execution of development initia-

tives and maintaining operational efficiency. Abbasi has introduced robust administrative frameworks to enhance the department's efficiency. By streamlining workflows and improving inter-departmental coordination, he has ensured that projects are implemented on time and within budget, minimizing delays and cost overruns. Under Abbasi's guidance, the Monitoring and Evaluation Cell has become a cornerstone of the department's success. His emphasis on real-time monitoring and data-driven decision-making has ensured that projects remain on track and deliver tangible results. Recognizing the importance of human capital, Abbasi has prioritized capacity-building initiatives through the Research and Training Wing. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, he has empowered the department's workforce to tackle complex developmental challenges with confidence and expertise. Abbasi has been a strong advocate for inclusive policies, ensuring that development projects address the needs of rural and underserved communities. His focus on social welfare, education, and healthcare initiatives has significantly improved living standards across Sindh. The combined efforts of Shah and Abbasi have positioned the P&D Department as a model of excellence in provincial governance. The department has spearheaded major infrastructure projects, including roads, water supply systems, and public buildings, enhancing connectivity and access to essential services across urban and rural Sindh. Significant investments in education and healthcare have led to improved literacy rates and better healthcare access, particularly in underserved regions. Specialized projects targeting maternal and child health, as well as vocational training, have empowered communities and boosted economic participation. The department's focus

on agriculture, industry, and youth employment has created new opportunities for economic growth. By supporting small and medium enterprises and modernizing agricultural practices, the P&D Department has contributed to poverty alleviation and economic stability. The Bureau of Statistics, under the department's purview, has provided critical data to inform policy decisions. This has enabled the government to design targeted interventions that address specific regional challenges, from low agricultural productivity to urban-rural disparities. The P&D aims to further align its initiatives with global sustainable development goals, leveraging technology and data to drive smarter governance. With Shah's strategic vision and Abbasi's administrative acumen, the P&D Department is poised to lead Sindh toward a future of prosperity, inclusivity, and resilience. The Planning and Development Department of Sindh, under the dynamic leadership of Chairman Najam Ahmed Shah and Secretary Sajjad Hussain Abbasi, has set a benchmark for excellence in public administration and development. Their collaborative efforts have transformed the department into a powerhouse of progress, delivering impactful projects that uplift millions of lives across the province. As Sindh continues its journey toward sustainable development, the leadership of Shah and Abbasi will undoubtedly remain a driving force behind its success. Sindh's P&D Department has made significant strides in projects transparency, PPP implementation, and infrastructure development, aligning with the inclusive and sustainable vision of Bilawal Bhutto and Murad Ali Shah. The Planning and Development Department of Sindh has surpassed the P&D departments of all other provinces in terms of excellent performance. It is effectively advancing the vision of Bilawal Bhutto and Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah.

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## Will the Trump-Netanyahu meeting bring peace

THE recent meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has once again brought the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into the global spotlight. With the ongoing war in Gaza, thousands of civilian casualties, and a fragile ceasefire hanging in the balance, the world is watching closely to see whether this high-profile discussion will lead to meaningful progress or further escalation. The critical questions remain: Will this meeting contribute to lasting peace? Can the ceasefire hold? And what must both sides do to prevent more bloodshed? Trump's presidency was marked by a strong pro-Israel stance, including the controversial recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the brokering of the Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Israel and some Arab states. However, these moves largely sidelined the Palestinians, deepening their sense of abandonment. Netanyahu, meanwhile, has consistently pursued hardline policies, including expanding settlements in the West Bank and rejecting the two-state solution. Given this history, the latest Trump-Netanyahu meeting raises skepticism. While both leaders may seek to project an image of strength and diplomacy, past actions suggest that their approach risks further alienating Palestinians rather than fostering genuine dialogue. Without addressing the root causes of the conflict—Palestinian statehood, illegal settlements, and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza—any discussions risk being superficial. The current ceasefire is fragile. Hamas and Israel have engaged in multiple wars, each followed by temporary truces that eventually collapse. For any ceasefire to last, several factors must be addressed: The U.S. remains the most influential mediator in this conflict. However, its credibility is damaged if it is seen as unconditionally supporting Israel. A balanced approach—pressuring Israel to moderate its policies while ensuring Hamas is held accountable—is crucial. The international community must also step up, providing not just aid but diplomatic pressure to enforce peace. What Both Sides Must Do to Avoid More Casualties 1: Halt Settlement Expansion – Continued construction in the West Bank undermines any possibility of a future Palestinian state. 2: End Indiscriminate Bombing – While Israel has the right to defend itself, the scale of civilian deaths in Gaza is unacceptable. 3: Precision strikes, rather than blanket bombardment, must be prioritized. 4: Engage in Direct Talks – Refusing to negotiate with Palestinian representatives only prolongs the conflict.



## ASEAN's achievements and Pakistan role in a rising regional power

THE Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967, has emerged as a dynamic regional bloc that has significantly shaped Asia's political, economic, and socio-cultural landscape. Comprising ten member states—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia—ASEAN has grown from a Cold War-era alliance into one of the world's most influential regional organizations. Its evolution from a conflict-prevention mechanism into a powerful economic and diplomatic player is a testament to the success of regional cooperation. Among ASEAN's major achievements is its economic integration. With a combined GDP of over \$3.6 trillion and a population exceeding 670 million, ASEAN constitutes the fifth-largest economy in the world. Through the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the bloc has advanced regional trade, reduced tariffs, and facilitated investment flows among member states. Additionally, initiatives like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—the world's largest free trade agreement involving ASEAN and key partners including China, Japan, and South Korea—underscore ASEAN's growing centrality in global commerce. Peace and stability in a historically volatile region is another key ASEAN success. Through consistent dialogue and multilateral diplomacy, ASEAN has maintained relative peace among its members for decades. Its consensus-based approach, while sometimes criticized for being slow, has prevented open conflicts and fostered trust among nations with diverse political systems and historical grievances. In the socio-cultural sphere, ASEAN has worked to promote regional identity and cultural exchange. Programs in education, youth exchange, environmental sustainability, and disaster relief have helped build a sense of community and mutual resilience. Notably, ASEAN's role during the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of sharing resources and medical support, highlighted its capacity for coordinated regional response. Pakistan, though not a member of ASEAN, has steadily strengthened ties with the bloc. As a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since 2004, Pakistan has engaged in security dialogue and regional cooperation. Islamabad views ASEAN as a crucial partner for its "Vision East Asia" policy, seeking enhanced trade, investment, and diplomatic ties. Pakistan's exports to ASEAN are growing, and its strategic location offers potential as a bridge between South-east Asia and Central Asia. Pakistan's deeper involvement with ASEAN can also serve as a counterbalance to regional isolation and an opportunity for economic diversification. With China as a major player in both CPEC and RCEP, Pakistan can leverage these linkages to align more closely with ASEAN's economic frameworks. Moreover, collaboration in areas like counter-terrorism, education, tourism, and climate change can further solidify Pakistan's role as a proactive partner.

## How Muslims can dismantle Israel's war machine

Qamar Bashir



Muslims have failed to build a lobbying apparatus to challenge AIPAC's grip on American power. Yet the resources are not lacking. The Gulf States alone manage over \$2 trillion in sovereign wealth. Even a fraction—just \$1 billion annually—could fund an American-staffed, data-driven, secular Muslim PAC, built not on sermons, but on strategy. Former lawmakers, PR experts, constitutional lawyers, media consultants, and think tanks could be mobilized to reshape the American narrative from within. This would not be “interference.” It would be participation in democracy—the very kind Israel has perfected

THE Israel-Iran conflict has revealed a truth the Muslim world can no longer afford to ignore: Israel is not invincible. Without the shield of the United States, it is not the iron fortress it pretends to be—it is fragile, overstretched, and deeply dependent. But once wrapped in the diplomatic, military, and political embrace of Washington, Israel becomes a force few dare to challenge. It is not superior military strategy or moral high ground that sustains Israeli power—it is American sponsorship, bought and secured through decades of strategic manipulation. No amount of resistance in Gaza, no fiery speech at the United Nations, no emotional outcry from the Muslim world will dismantle Israel's machinery of oppression. Because that machine doesn't run on Israeli fuel—it runs on Washington's power grid: congressional endorsements, media narratives, think tanks, and corporate lobbying. And Israel's greatest tool to harness that power is AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee—a political juggernaut that does not merely influence U.S. policy, it engineers it. With over \$100 million spent in the 2024 elections alone, AIPAC and its Super PACs didn't just promote pro-Israel candidates—they systematically crushed dissent, targeting Muslims, progressives, and even Jewish critics of Israeli apartheid. Through campaign donations, policy drafting, media alignment, and think tank funding, AIPAC ensures that support for Israel is not just bipartisan—it's mandatory. The irony is staggering. The U.S. sends Israel \$3.8 billion in military aid annually. Israel uses that money to fund lobbying infrastructure that then cycles back into American politics, shaping public opinion and buying silence. This is not foreign policy—it is political laundering. And yet, there is an even darker undercurrent to this influence—one rooted not just in money, but blackmail and coercion. That shadowy underside came dangerously close to exposure with the saga of Jeffrey Epstein. Though widely branded as a disgraced financier and sex offender, Epstein's real role was far more sinister. Backed by vast, unexplained wealth and cloaked in luxury, Epstein constructed an elite trap—an opulent web of yachts, villas, and underage girls designed not for personal pleasure alone, but for surveillance and leverage. Powerful politicians, industrialists, scientists, and media figures were lured in, indulged, and secretly recorded. His guest list included former presidents, royalty, billionaires, and lawmakers—many now suspiciously silent. According to multiple intelligence reports and leaked sources, Epstein was an operative tied to Mossad,

Israel's elite spy agency. The data gathered—videos, images, confidential conversations—formed a cache of blackmail so extensive and so damning that it could paralyze the upper echelons of American power. Epstein's mysterious death in custody—whether suicide or assassination—is widely believed to have been an effort to prevent those secrets from ever seeing daylight. What remains is a chilling reality: those files still exist—and they're being weaponized by Mossad to control, blackmail, and compromise the very people entrusted with U.S. policymaking. This is why every resolution at the UN demanding accountability for Israel is vetoed. Why every bomb dropped on a school in Gaza is whitewashed. Why every massacre is met with the same script: “Israel has a right to defend itself,” “Hamas uses human shields,” “It's complicated.” These aren't diplomatic statements—they are the product of manipulated consensus created by fear, funding, and in some cases, deep compromise. The Muslim world's response to this has been, at best, symbolic. Protests erupt. Speeches are delivered. Hashtags trend. But the facts on the ground remain unchanged. Gaza still burns. Settlements still grow. Aid convoys are still bombed into oblivion. Because the real battlefield is not Gaza—it's Washington, D.C. And unless Muslims engage there—with the same precision, professionalism, and persistence as Israel—nothing will change. This is not a call for violence. This is a call for strategy. Muslims have failed to build a lobbying apparatus to challenge AIPAC's grip on American power. Yet the resources are not lacking. The Gulf States alone manage over \$2 trillion in sovereign wealth. Even a fraction—just \$1 billion annually—could fund an American-staffed, data-driven, secular Muslim PAC, built not on sermons, but on strategy. Former lawmakers, PR experts, constitutional lawyers, media consultants, and think tanks could be mobilized to reshape the American narrative from within. This would not be “interference.” It would be participation in democracy—the very kind Israel has perfected. It would fund candidates who support justice, oppose apartheid, and understand that human rights cannot be selective. It would challenge biased media through ownership and oversight. It would publish studies, mobilize communities, organize town halls, and train the next generation of Muslim American leaders to speak in the language Washington understands—policy and power. Some will recoil at the idea of using money and lobbying to influence governance. But this is how the American system works. Corporate America lobbies. The gun industry lobbies.

Big Pharma lobbies. Christians, Jews, Armenians, Cubans, Taiwanese—all have professional lobbying infrastructure. The only group that continues to shout from the outside is Muslims—and that isolation is costing innocent lives. Now, cracks are forming in Israel's carefully choreographed illusion. Western academics like Judith Butler and Pankaj Mishra are labeling Israeli policies as genocidal. Editorials in CNN, BBC, and even the New York Times have begun questioning Israel's brutality. European parliaments are debating sanctions. Youth protests across American campuses are echoing the cries of “Free Palestine.” Even Jewish activists are joining the calls. And yet, despite all this growing unrest, nothing changes—because Israel still owns the power centers of the United States. More disturbingly, Israeli thinkers now justify conquest with colonial analogies—likening the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians to the U.S. treatment of Native Americans or the British colonization of Africa. This isn't just immoral—it's legally and philosophically bankrupt. If colonial conquest is acceptable, so too is resistance—as enshrined in international law, the UN Charter, and the Geneva Conventions. Palestinians, like Afghans before them, have the right to resist occupation. But until the machine enabling that occupation is dismantled, resistance alone will not prevail. That machine is AIPAC. It is Epstein's tapes. It is Mossad's silent hand. And it is America's refusal to confront its own corruption. So here lies the choice for the Muslim world: keep protesting, or start investing. Stop reacting—and start shaping. Replace symbolic outrage with strategic influence. Build a Muslim AIPAC. Fund campaigns. Draft bills. Support honest media. Train candidates. Influence education. Enter the boardroom. Make standing for Palestine profitable and political suicide to oppose it. Only when the cost of supporting Israel outweighs the benefits will the tide turn. And only then will the Palestinians find what they've long deserved—not pity, but power. Not charity, but justice. Not slogans, but sovereignty. Because the war for Palestine will never be won with rockets from Rafah—but with policies from Capitol Hill. And the blueprint for victory does not lie in ancient grievances—it lies in Washington, D.C.

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## Government Employees and Tax Collection

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



TAX collection has always been an indispensable pillar in the architecture of a functioning state. Since the earliest formations of organized governance, levying taxes has been a standard practice to ensure the sustenance of administrative machinery, provision of public services, and the defense of the realm

TAX collection has always been an indispensable pillar in the architecture of a functioning state. Since the earliest formations of organized governance, levying taxes has been a standard practice to ensure the sustenance of administrative machinery, provision of public services, and the defense of the realm. No society, however prosperous or modest, can remain viable without a steady inflow of revenue, and taxes provide precisely that foundation. In modern states, particularly those with large populations and growing development needs, tax collection becomes not merely a fiscal necessity but a moral and civic obligation. Citizens who enjoy the privileges and protections offered by the state are expected, in return, to contribute their due share. This principle, though universally acknowledged in theory, often faces glaring contradictions in practice. Pakistan, unfortunately, presents a classic example of this discrepancy. Despite repeated campaigns and policy measures to broaden the tax base, there remains a large segment of society that views tax payment not as a duty, but as a burden to be shirked. Various interest groups, often shielded by special patronage or informal networks, have for decades found ways to escape their share of contribution. Yet, amidst this culture of evasion and selective accountability, there exists one group that bears the burden consistently and inevitably—the government servants. Unlike many other classes, the salaried government employees in Pakistan have no room to maneuver or evade. Their income, being drawn directly from the state exchequer, is subject to automatic deductions at the source. Regardless of their consent or financial flexibility, they are taxed before their salaries even reach their hands. And this past fiscal year, these deductions reached a record high. According to recent reports, the salaried class contributed an astounding Rs. 545 billion in income tax during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025. This contribution not only surpassed but dwarfed the combined tax paid by two other significant segments of the economy—exporters and retailers. Exporters, despite enjoying the benefits of earning

in foreign currency and having access to substantial government incentives, paid only Rs180 billion. Retailers, a politically entrenched group historically resistant to documentation and regulation, contributed a meager Rs62 billion under sections 236G and 236H of the Income Tax Ordinance. When added together, these two sectors paid Rs242 billion—less than half of what the salaried class alone contributed. This disparity speaks volumes about the structural inequalities embedded within the tax regime. Why are income tax rates not levied on other sectors of life at the same rate and with the same spirit as government employees? This question echoes across the corridors of public discourse, unanswered and inconvenient. The government employees' contribution of Rs545 billion marked a sharp increase from Rs367 billion in the previous fiscal year, indicating an additional burden of Rs178 billion. Such a dramatic rise, though indicative of increased revenue collection, also highlights the lack of equitable tax enforcement across sectors. It is deeply ironic that those who are most exposed, most transparent in their earnings, and least able to avoid taxation, are the ones carrying the largest share of the burden. The much-publicized Tajir Dost Scheme (TDS), introduced with fanfare as a mechanism to bring retailers into the formal tax net, has largely failed to deliver on its promises. Retailers, despite their profitability and volume of transactions, have managed to evade meaningful taxation yet again. Sections 236G and 236H, which impose taxes on distributors, dealers, wholesalers, and retailers based on their gross sales, were meant to serve as deterrents against non-compliance. However, even these measures have resulted in limited success. While they have generated some revenue and forced a few into the net, the overall response remains lukewarm. In light of this, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has attempted to offer some relief to the already overburdened salaried class. According to FBR's officials, the first two tax slabs have been revised downward for the fiscal year 2025-26. Individuals earning between Rs600,000 and Rs1.2 million annually will now

be taxed at 1 percent instead of 5 percent, and those earning between Rs1.2 million and Rs2.2 million will see their rate reduced from 15 percent to 11 percent. This adjustment is expected to provide a collective relief of Rs50 billion to the salaried class—though one could argue it is a modest reprieve considering the scale of their contribution. Among the salaried class, government employees serving in teaching and research roles had long benefited from a modest tax rebate—a recognition of their intellectual service to the nation. This rebate was first introduced under General Pervez Musharraf's government in 2006 at a generous 75%, later reduced to 40% in 2013, and then to 25% by 2022. However, under the Finance Act 2022, the rebate was entirely withdrawn, leaving academicians and researchers without the relief they had relied upon for over a decade. In March 2025, following sustained advocacy by teacher associations, the federal cabinet reinstated the 25% rebate. Yet this reinstatement was met with resistance from the IMF, which objected to the rebate's continuation on the grounds of tax harmonization. Despite IMF pressure, the government, through the Finance Bill 2025-26, restored the 25% rebate retrospectively for Tax Years 2023, 2024, and 2025. This gesture has been welcomed as a step toward acknowledging the unique service of educators and researchers, though uncertainty looms over the rebate's future. Such episodes illustrate the broader dilemma—whether national fiscal policy should prioritize external directives or respond to domestic needs and the principle of fairness. In any fair and responsible state, the tax regime must be broad-based, equitable, and transparent. Burdening only those who are easily accessible while allowing powerful segments to remain untouched breeds resentment and erodes public trust. The salaried class, especially government servants, have performed their duty—often without applause or recognition. It is now time for other sectors to rise to the same standard. Equity in taxation is not merely a question of numbers; it is a test of the state's moral authority and administrative integrity.



## Briefs

## Indian claims of Chinese involvement baseless: COAS

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institutional resilience developed over decades of strategic prudence,” he added. Highlighting India’s strategic behaviour resting on parochial self-alignment, the COAS stressed that Pakistan has forged lasting partnerships based on principled diplomacy, anchored in mutual respect and peace, establishing itself to be a stabilizer in the region. He also reiterated Islamabad’s “principled stance that any misadventure or attempts to undermine Pakistan’s sovereignty or violation of territorial integrity will continue to be reflexively met with a swift, and resolute response without any constraints or inhibitions”. “Any attempt to target our population centres, military bases, economic hubs and ports will instantly invoke a ‘deeply hurting and more than reciprocal response,’ the army chief warned, adding: “The onus of escalation will squarely lie on the strategically blind arrogant aggressor who fails to see the grave repercussions of such provocative actions against a sovereign nuclear state”. The army chief further remarked that wars are not won through media rhetoric, imported fancy hardware, or political sloganeering, but through faith, professional competence, operational clarity, institutional strength and national resolve. Furthermore, highlighting the evolving character of warfare, he underscored the centrality of mental preparedness, operational clarity, and institutional professionalism in navigating complex strategic issues and lauded the role of premier institutions like NDU in enhancing civil-military synergy and nurturing future leadership capable of mitigating hybrid, conventional, and sub-conventional threats with poise and resolve. Urging the graduating officers to remain steadfast in the values of integrity, selfless service, and unwavering commitment to the nation, Field Marshal Munir expressed full confidence in the professionalism, morale, and readiness of the country’s battle hardened armed forces.

## Anti-US policies’ to invite additional 10% tariffs

FROM PAGE 01

Donald Trump’s “indiscriminate” import tariffs. The 11 emerging nations – including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – account for about half the world’s population and 40% of global economic output. The bloc is divided about much, but found common cause when it comes to the mercurial US leader and his stop-start tariff wars – even if they avoided naming him directly. Voicing “serious concerns about the rise of unilateral tariff” measures, Brics members said the tariffs risked hurting the global economy, according to a summit joint statement. They also offered symbolic backing to fellow member Iran, condemning a series of military strikes on nuclear and other targets carried out by Israel and the United States. In April, Trump threatened allies and rivals alike with a slew of punitive duties, before offering a months-long reprieve in the face of a fierce market sell-off. Trump has now warned he will impose unilateral levies on partners unless they reach “deals” by August 1. In an apparent concession to US allies, the summit declaration did not criticise the United States or its president by name at any point. Conceived two decades ago as a forum for fast-growing economies, the Brics have come to be seen as a Chinese-driven counterbalance to US and western European power. But as the group has expanded to include Iran, Saudi Arabia and others, it has struggled to reach meaningful consensus on issues such as US global dominance. Brics nations, for example, collectively called for a peaceful two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict – despite Tehran’s long-standing position that Israel should be destroyed.



ISLAMABAD: Younger boys are enjoying swimming at pool at F-9 Park to cool off during high temperature in Federal Capital. – DNA

# Hockey turf fee hike draws criticism; players urge PSB to reconsider

Comparisons are also being drawn with other facilities. The Shehnaz Sheikh Hockey Stadium in Rawalpindi, for instance, charges just Rs 1,500 for a two-hour slot — significantly lower than the new PSB rate. This stark disparity has prompted further calls for standardization and affordability in access to turf grounds.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A sharp increase in the usage fee for the hockey turf at the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) facility has triggered strong reactions from players, coaches, and sports enthusiasts. The fee has been raised from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,700 for a two-hour session – a move widely seen as detrimental to efforts aimed at reviving Pakistan’s national game. With the revised rates, any team or group training twice a week would be forced to pay nearly Rs 45,000 per month – a cost unaffordable for most hockey players, many of whom already struggle with limited resources and a lack of institutional support.

The hockey community is now appealing to the Secretary of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), the body overseeing PSB, to urgently revisit and revise the fee structure. They argue that instead of encouraging youth participation and making turf facilities accessible, such pricing policies will drive aspiring players away from the sport. “This decision is a major setback,” said a senior coach associated with youth development programs in Islamabad. “We’re trying hard to revive hockey, but this kind of pricing makes it nearly impossible. Instead of promoting the sport, we are placing hurdles in the way of those who still believe in it.” Comparisons are also being drawn with other facilities. The Shehnaz Sheikh Hockey

Stadium in Rawalpindi, for instance, charges just Rs 1,500 for a two-hour slot – significantly lower than the new PSB rate. This stark disparity has prompted further calls for standardization and affordability in access to turf grounds. Players and sports analysts alike emphasize that the decision is particularly harmful given the declining state of hockey in Pakistan. Once a powerhouse in the sport, Pakistan is now struggling to keep its hockey programs afloat, with poor infrastructure, minimal funding, and dwindling grassroots engagement. “The facility should ideally be free or heavily subsidized,” said a former international player. “The government should invest in

the sport instead of commercializing it to the point of extinction.” The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) is also being urged to take up the matter with PSB officials, advocating on behalf of players who rely on regular training sessions to maintain form and fitness. “If PSB cannot support hockey, then at least it should not make it harder for those still willing to play,” remarked a club manager. As the debate over turf access intensifies, the larger question looms: Can Pakistan afford to let its national game fade away due to high costs and bureaucratic indifference? The answer lies with the policymakers – and whether they are willing to act before it is too late

## France beat England at Euro 2025 as Miedema completes Dutch century

ZURICH: France staked their claim to be contenders for Women’s Euro 2025 by beating holders England 2-1 on Saturday and joining the Netherlands at the top of Group D. Marie-Antoinette Katoto and Sandy Baltimore netted within three minutes of each other towards the end of the first half as Les Bleues deservedly defeated England in Zurich. Laurent Bonadei’s team are level on three points with leaders the Dutch, who cruised past Wales 3-0 earlier on Saturday, after striking a big blow in the battle to qualify from possibly the hardest group at the tournament. France face underdogs Wales next on Wednesday while England have a huge clash with the Netherlands, again at the Letzigrund Stadium. The French were better all over the pitch, driven by the sparkling wing play of Baltimore and Delphine Cascarino, while Keira Walsh’s lovely strike with three minutes remaining made the scoreline flatter unconvincing England. Not even Lauren James’ return to the starting XI could inspire England, the Chelsea star way below her best as the Lionesses struggled to put any pressure on France until it was too late. Alesia Russo thought she had given England the lead in the 16th minute when she prodded home on the rebound after Pauline Peyraud-Magnin kept out Lauren Hemp’s shot, only for the goal to be ruled out for a razor-thin offside in the build-up. From there, France took the initiative, pushing England back into their own half and dominating possession, and they had a deserved lead through Katoto in the 36th minute when the Lyon forward guided home Cascarino’s low cross. – Agencies

## Shubman Gill, the ‘Prince’ who is now India’s new cricket king

BIRMINGHAM: India captain Shubman Gill continued to give fresh meaning to the phrase “leading from the front” with a stunning innings of 161 in the ongoing second Test against England at Edgbaston on Saturday. The 25-year-old’s second century of the match took his overall tally for the game to 430 runs, a figure bettered by India great Sachin Tendulkar. Test cricket’s all-time leading run-scorer, just three times in a series, led alone a match, during his celebrated career. Following his commanding 269 in the first innings, Gill also became the first batsman in 148 years of Test history to make score of 250 and 150 in the same match. All that came after Gill’s 147 in his first Test as captain, India’s five-wicket loss in last week’s series opener at Headingley. – Agencies

## PSG set up Club World Cup semi clash with Mbappe’s Real Madrid

ATLANTA: Nine-man Paris Saint-Germain set up a Club World Cup semi-final clash against their former superstar striker Kylian Mbappe and Real Madrid with a 2-0 victory over Bayern Munich on Saturday in Atlanta. Los Blancos squeezed out Borussia Dortmund 3-2 in New Jersey in the day’s other quarter-final clash, with Mbappe on the scoresheet for the first time at the tournament. Luis Enrique’s PSG needed to dig deep in front of 67,000 fans at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium after late red cards for Willian Pacheco and Lucas Hernandez. The French side won the UEFA Champions League for the first time in their history in May, despite their key player Mbappe departing for Real last year. Young forward Desire Doue, who shone on PSG’s road to European glory, and Ballon d’Or candidate Ousmane Dembele got the goals in the second half of an enthralling clash against Vincent Kompany’s Bayern, who had two strikes ruled out for offside. The German giants also lost playmaker Jamal Musiala to a horror ankle injury just before half-time, which Kompany said made his “blood boil” because of how unfortunate it is for the 22-year-old. “After the first red card it became complicated, then with two players less it was a bit of a lottery,” said a relieved Luis Enrique. PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and his Bayern counterpart Manuel Neuer both made several excellent saves in a pulsating battle at the air-conditioned, covered venue which allowed both sides’ high-pressing, attacking approaches to shine. Players and spectators at both matches observed a minute of silence in honour of Liverpool forward Diogo Jota and his brother Andre Silva, who tragically died in a car crash on Thursday. PSG’s clash with Bayern was FIFA’s expanded tournament’s biggest heavyweight clash thus far and the game delivered, even if fans had to wait until the 78th minute for the opener. After Harry Kane gave the ball away, PSG surged forward and 20-year-old Doue fashioned some space on the edge of the box before flashing a low strike home at the near post. – Agencies

# Big beautiful bill or the great gamble

DR. HAMID KHAN ALMASHRIQI



ON July 4th the symbolic day of American independence President Donald Trump celebrated a narrow yet significant legislative victory: the passage of his controversial budget plan, dubbed the “Big Beautiful Bill.” Approved by the U.S. House of Representatives with a razor-thin margin of 218-214, this bill represents far more than just fiscal manoeuvring. It could mark a turning point in the history of American economic governance. one that might reshape the global financial landscape for better or worse. While Trump has hailed the bill as a hallmark of his economic vision, many experts argue that it may be the biggest fiscal gamble in modern U.S. history. Amid rising national debt, currency devaluation, and increasing geopolitical tensions, the bill raises a fundamental question: Is the dollar, and by extension the U.S. economy, in danger? This bill is just the latest in a series of bold and risky moves by President Trump in his

second term. His presidency has been characterized by unorthodox economic policies and aggressive diplomacy, including: Trade wars and tariffs, especially targeting China and the European Union. Cuts in NATO funding, undermining long-standing defense alliances. Open threats to European leaders regarding Ukraine and U.S. troop deployments. Dismissal of climate change, reversing environmental commitments. Verbal confrontations with global leaders and international institutions. Now, Trump is attempting to push forward a domestic economic revolution with tax cuts and increased public spending which is a move that some analysts describe as economic brinkmanship. The current budget is structured around deep tax reductions and increased federal spending which is a combination that might provide a short-term economic boost but carries long-term fiscal consequences. The U.S. national debt currently stands at \$37 trillion, and this budget is projected to add another \$3 trillion over the next few years. While the bill introduces cuts in some spending areas, the tax reductions far outweigh them. There’s a strong argument would this imbalance will worsen the fiscal deficit, which is already running at over 6% of GDP, the highest peacetime level in decades. Elon Musk, once a Trump supporter now a rival and upcoming threat to his plans, has called the bill a “horrible law.”

Economists and financial markets are increasingly worried about America’s growing reliance on borrowed money to sustain its fiscal operations. The financial markets have already started reacting. Since the start of this year: The U.S. dollar has depreciated by 10% against the British pound. It has fallen by 15% against the euro. The “yield curve” – the gap between short-term and long-term interest rates. It has widened, signalling investor anxiety over America’s future economic health. Under normal circumstances, higher U.S. interest rates would attract global investors and strengthen the dollar. But this time, confidence is wavering, even as the Federal Reserve has been slower than the Bank of England or the European Central Bank in reducing rates. Ray Dalio, founder of Bridgewater Associates – the world’s largest hedge fund – has sounded the alarm. According to Dalio, the U.S. economy is approaching a critical juncture. “If the current trajectory continues,” Dalio warns, “the U.S. will be spending trillions of dollars annually just to service the interest on its debt.” Like a typical under debt third world country. He recommends reducing the budget deficit to 3% of GDP or less as an immediate priority. Failure to do so, he cautions, will not only harm economic stability but could lead to social unrest and geopolitical weakening. In reality if America fails to manage its debt re-

sponsibly, the following scenarios could unfold Austerity and Tax Hikes which means, This would involve massive cuts in government spending, potentially affecting defense, healthcare, education, and social services – alongside sharp increases in taxes. As the matter of fact such measures are deeply unpopular and difficult to sustain. Printing more dollars like in past during the 2008 global financial crisis, the Federal Reserve could inject liquidity by printing money to buy government debt. While this can stabilize markets in the short term, it risks high inflation, asset bubbles, and worsening wealth inequality, but in typical scenario this will be benefiting the wealthy while burdening workers and the middle class. The last and least but almost impossible to take risk of a U.S. default – failing to repay its debt obligations. Given that the U.S. dollar and Treasury Bonds are the backbone of global finance, this would spark a global economic crisis of unprecedented magnitude. The mere hint of default could trigger panic in international markets. But nothing is surprising from Trump on the name of MAGA and his bully nature. Despite these concerns, no serious alternative to the dollar has yet emerged. But the cracks are showing. According to economist Mohamed El-Erian, the dollar remains the world’s preferred reserve currency – not because it is flawless, but because “it is the cleanest dirty shirt in the laundry.”

## Iran president says Israel attempted to kill him

FROM PAGE 01

Israel, according to authorities. The 12-day war between Iran and Israel saw it, along with the United States, launching strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities at Fordo, Isfahan and Natanz. A ceasefire between Iran and Israel took hold since June 24. On June 16, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not rule out plans to assassinate Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, saying it would “end the conflict” after reports emerged at the time that US President Donald Trump had vetoed the move.

## Israel, Hamas due to resume indirect talks

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the talks had begun, however. Speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, the official said the delegations had exchanged views on Sunday via mediators, with representatives of the two sides seated in different rooms in the same building.

## Sindh govt moves to demolish 51 dilapidated..

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The minister also announced Rs1 million compensation for each victim’s family. Speaking on the occasion, Sindh senior minister Sharjeel Memon said that CM Murad chaired an emergency meeting on building collapse today and decided to suspend Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) director general.

## PM directs NDMA, rescue...

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the NDMA to strengthen coordination with the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) for effectively dealing with the flood situation. The NDMA has also been instructed to strengthen close coordination with provincial governments and other relevant institutions, a press statement issued by the PM Office said. The prime minister directed the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to keep the public informed using all available means, providing accurate and real-time information. He expressed concern that the operation of the Tarbela Dam spillways may increase flooding in the lower districts along the Indus River. All provincial administrations have been directed to continue effective public awareness campaigns in view of the potential flood situation. The National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) has also been instructed to identify and clarify through the media, the areas that are vulnerable or less protected, where there is a risk of high, medium, or low-level flooding, so that the public can be warned in a timely manner. The prime minister further directed that provincial administrations must be fully prepared in advance for any situation, and that the NDMA should ensure this preparedness.

## Mily leadership Pays...

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sacrifice in the defence of the motherland during the Kargil conflict. On this day in year 1999, Havildar Lalak Jan Shaheed demonstrated extraordinary valour by fearlessly repelling enemy attacks and defended his post despite sustaining critical injuries. Refusing evacuation, he continued to fight until he embraced martyrdom in the line of duty. The Armed Forces of Pakistan and the nation, remember his sacrifice with immense respect and gratitude. His legacy remains a beacon of inspiration for present and future generations of Pakistan Armed Forces.



## Briefs

## 32 go on trial over fatal hotel fire in Turkiye

ISTANBUL: Thirty-two people went on trial in Turkiye on Monday over a fire at a luxury ski resort hotel in January that killed 78 people, including 36 children, local media reported. Entire families perished when the huge blaze swept through the Grand Kartal Hotel in the northern mountain resort of Kartalkaya in the early hours of January 21. Questions have multiplied about fire safety measures at the hotel and victims' families allege that negligence contributed to the high death toll. More than 130 people were injured and the 12-story building was destroyed. Thirteen of the defendants – including senior officials at the hotel, the fire department and the city council – face up to 1,998 years in prison each on 78 charges, including “manslaughter with possible intent” to kill. Survivors and experts have said the hotel's fire alarm system did not work. —APP

## 12 Turkish soldiers killed by gas exposure

ANKARA: Seven more Turkish soldiers have died from methane gas poisoning following a cave search operation in northern Iraq, Turkiye's Defense Ministry said Monday, bringing the death toll to 12. The soldiers had been searching for the remains of a fellow soldier previously killed by Kurdish militants. The troops were searching a mountain cave when 19 of them were exposed to the gas, according to the ministry. Five of the soldiers died Sunday from the colorless, odorless, flammable gas that can cause asphyxiation in sufficient concentration, and seven more succumbed on Monday. “We pray for God's mercy upon our heroic martyrs who lost their lives in this tragic event,” the ministry said Monday, also expressing hope for a rapid recovery for other troops that were affected. —APP

## Rupee loses 25 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday depreciated by 25 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 284.21 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.96. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.5 and Rs 286.65 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.57 to close at Rs 333.81 against the last day's closing of Rs 335.38, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen depreciated by 01 paise and was traded at Rs1.95 against Rs1.96, whereas a decrease of Rs1.36 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 386.65 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 388.01. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 06 paise and 07 paise to close at Rs 77.37 and Rs 75.78 respectively. —APP

## UN seeks breakthrough in Cyprus peace talks

NICOSIA: The United Nations is pushing for a breakthrough when Cyprus's rival leaders meet in New York next week for a renewed attempt to revive stalled peace talks, an UN envoy said Monday. Maria Angela Holguin held separate meetings with Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar, crossing the island's UN-patrolled ceasefire line in a day of shuttle diplomacy. “All this effort the UN is doing is for the prosperity of the island, so that the people have a better life,” Holguin, who was appointed the UN envoy to Cyprus earlier this year, told reporters after meeting Tatar.

## Aurangzeb reviews progress on PM's fan replacement program

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb highlighted the Prime Minister's special emphasis on this initiative, underscoring its significance in promoting energy efficiency, fostering financial inclusion, and contributing to economic stability

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress on the readiness and forthcoming launch of the Prime Minister's Fan Replacement Program. The meeting was attended by the Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Chairman Pakistan Banks' Association, and senior officials from the Finance Division, Power Division, and other relevant departments. During the meeting, stakeholders presented detailed updates on the program's operational readiness and its expected roll-out schedule. The participants reviewed the progress shared by National Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (NEECA) on progress regarding completion of key preconditions, including the finalization of agreements with participating banks, integration of banking systems, and the facilitative role of the Punjab Technology Investment Board and Power Information Technology Company in providing technological solutions for expediting the implementation process. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb highlighted the Prime Minister's special emphasis on this initia-



tive, underscoring its significance in promoting energy efficiency, fostering financial inclusion, and contributing to economic stability. He noted that the program has the potential to influence consumer behavior positively,

reduce energy consumption, and offer broader economic benefits. The Minister appreciated the active participation and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, particularly the banking sector, in advancing this vital national initia-

He directed that all requisite actions be completed within the next two to three weeks to enable the launch of the program's first phase, along with the initial batch of participating banks, by the end of the month. The meeting

concluded with a reaffirmation of commitment from all participants to ensure timely and seamless execution of the program, in line with the government's broader economic and energy sector reform agenda.

## Business community's issues to be resolved on priority basis

KARACHI: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday assured the business community of Karachi that the government was actively working to resolve all their issues, including law and order, crimes, water shortages, smuggling, narcotics and encroachments on priority basis. Addressing a ceremony at the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), the interior minister emphasized that the government was considering all proposals to address the concerns of traders. Upon his arrival at the KCCI, the minister was warmly welcomed by the Chamber's office bearers and leading members of the city's business community, who briefed him on the challenges they are facing. During his speech, Naqvi highlighted the government's efforts to improve the global ranking of the green passport, stating, “We are proud of our green passport, and in the future, it will be a source of even greater pride.” He also praised the performance of the Sindh Police and Karachi Police, noting that the law and order situation in the city has significantly improved compared to the past, with a noticeable reduction in crime. “If Karachi is healthy, Pakistan will be healthy,” he remarked. On the issue of water scarcity, the Interior Minister said that Karachi, being a large metropolitan city, faces challenges similar to other major urban centers. He cited Islamabad as an example, where only 33% of the population currently receives water supply, and called for collective efforts to find a sustainable solution. Regarding smuggling, Naqvi said that the government has made considerable progress in curbing illegal trade. “A few years ago, even dollars were being smuggled from here, but the situation has improved, and further measures are underway,” he said. However, he clarified that while smuggling has not been completely eradicated, it has been significantly reduced. The minister expressed concern over the limited resources available to the Pakistan Coast Guards in tackling smuggling along the coastline. “With only six operational boats to cover a 1,002-kilometer coastal border, how can we effectively counter smuggling?” he questioned, announcing that the government plans to provide more operational boats and strengthen all border security forces. Naqvi also stressed the importance of the Safe City Project in controlling crime, calling it a key initiative endorsed by the Prime Minister. He mentioned Faisalabad as a successful model where the project has led to a decline in criminal activity and expressed his hope that similar efforts would be intensified in Karachi. On the issue of verifying employees' criminal backgrounds, the minister said the government will work with NADRA to streamline ID and SIM card verification, enabling businesses to make informed hiring decisions. Touching on narcotics, Naqvi noted that enforcement alone is not sufficient to combat drug abuse. He called for joint efforts between the government, business community, and Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), emphasizing the need for rehabilitation centers before arresting drug users. He cited Lahore's experience, where prior actions without proper facilities had limited impact. Addressing the problem of encroachments, the minister called for strict legislation, including penalties and fines, to effectively deal with the issue. “Without proper laws and punishments, the problem of encroachments cannot be resolved,” he concluded. —DNA

## Gaza civil defense says 12 killed by Israeli forces

GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defense agency said Israeli forces killed at least 12 people on Monday, including six in a clinic housing Palestinians displaced after 21 months of war. Israel has recently expanded its military operations in the Gaza Strip, where the war has created dire humanitarian conditions for the Palestinian territory's population of more than two million. Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that six people were killed and 15 injured in an Israeli air strike that hit the Al-Rimal clinic, “which houses hundreds of displaced people, in the Al-Rimal neighborhood west of Gaza City.” AFP footage showed Palestinians, including groups of young children, combing through the bombed-out interior of the clinic, where mattresses lay alongside wood, metal and concrete broken apart in the blast. “We were surprised by missiles and explosions inside the building,” eyewitness Salman Qudum told AFP. “We did not know where to go because of the dust and destruction.” In the south of the territory, Bassal said two people were killed and 20 others injured by Israeli forces' gunfire while waiting for aid near a distribution site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). A US- and Israel-backed group, the GHF took the lead in food distribution in the territory in late May, but its operations have had a chaotic rollout with repeated reports of aid seekers killed near its facilities. The UN human rights office said last week that more than 500 people have been killed waiting to access food from GHF distribution points. —APP

## Pakistani delegation highlights film collaboration potential at SCO Film Festival

CHONGQING: Pakistan's film delegation expressed fervent enthusiasm for regional cooperation at Chongqing's 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Film Festival. Despite a grueling 21-hour journey from Islamabad and Karachi, the delegation, led by Executive Director General, Directorate of Electronic Media Publication (DEMP), Samina Farzin, emphasized their commitment to strengthening cultural ties through cinema. Samina Farzin spotlighted the critical need for an SCO-wide digital distribution framework. “Our films and dramas rarely reach China, our closest ally, due to language barriers and fragmented distribution,” she noted. The delegation revealed that Pakistan's acclaimed drama Coke Studio and recent hits like The Legend of Maula Jatt remain virtually unseen in SCO markets. Farzin proposed a dedicated SCO streaming platform to showcase regional content alongside streamlined dubbing initiatives. “When emotions are universal, language shouldn't isolate our stories,” she asserted. Both filmmakers and officials highlighted concrete collaboration avenues. Director Umair Nasir Ali envisioned a “cinematic bazaar” where SCO nations combine strengths: “Imagine Pakistani narratives with Chinese production scale or Iranian screenwriting prowess.” Producer Irfan Malik identified technical synergy, noting China's post-production and AI leadership: “Pakistan lacks advanced facilities – our films are processed in Singapore. Collaborating here accelerates our growth. Ali added that script exchanges, co-productions, and university partnerships could build grassroots connections, while Farzin advocated for biannual SCO training workshops to supplement the festival's impact. The delegation's heated AI discussion revealed fundamental tensions. Producer Irfan Malik positioned artificial intelligence as non-negotiable: “China leads this revolution – Pakistan lacks AI infrastructure entirely. Most high-budget films go to Singapore for post-production.” He emphasized concrete collaboration: “We require GPU access, server farms, and capacity building. SCO workshops could fast-track Pakistan's technical parity.” Director Umair Nasir Ali countered with artistic reservations. Comparing AI to the digital camera revolution, he acknowledged its inevitability but warned, “Prompt-generated visuals gratify superficially, yet starve creative souls. Green screen replacements help efficiency but erode authenticity – actors become coordinates in a data map.” Ali advocated balanced adoption: “Like classical painting coexisting with digital art, AI should expand – not replace – human storytelling.” Both agreed that SCO nations must jointly address AI ethics. Malik stressed collective infrastructure: “China's rendering farms and Pakistan's cost-effective studios could merge strengths.” Ali proposed writer-director labs to preserve narrative integrity: “Emotions unite our cultures. Technology should amplify – not algorithmize – that humanity.” Ali concluded optimistically: “SCO's shared landscapes and histories can birth cinematic magic. Let's start co-writing tomorrow.” As Pakistan showcases its films White Ant and Nayab at the festival, the delegation aims to turn dialogue into action, beginning with digital distribution and technical alliances. —APP

## Islamabad, Baghdad set to become sister cities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Republic of Iraq and Pakistan are moving to formalize a sister city relationship between Baghdad and Islamabad in a step toward strengthening bilateral ties and fostering urban cooperation. The announcement came during a meeting between Abdul Qadir Suleiman Al-Himeiri, Head of Mission at the Iraqi Embassy, and Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), and Chief Commissioner Islamabad on Monday. Held at the CDA Headquarters, the meeting centered on enhancing collaboration in urban development, cultural exchange, and sustainable city planning. The two sides agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish Baghdad and Islamabad as sister cities, paving the way for long-term cooperation in municipal management, infra-



structure development, heritage conservation, and beautification of public spaces. “This twinning arrangement is a significant step to deepen our cultural and urban linkages,” said Abdul Qadir Suleiman Al-Himeiri. “We are eager to share

knowledge and explore joint initiatives that can strengthen economic, cultural, and tourism connections between Iraq and Pakistan.” Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa briefed the Iraqi envoy on Islamabad's recent develop-

ment initiatives, particularly the upgradation of the Diplomatic Enclave. “On the directions of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, we are working to modernize the enclave to meet international standards, transforming it into

a secure and vibrant diplomatic hub,” Randhawa stated. He added that renowned architects and landscaping professionals are being brought in to ensure the area reflects global standards of design and functionality. The Iraqi ambassador commended these efforts and expressed his appreciation for the CDA's commitment to enhancing the capital's urban landscape. The meeting, described as cordial and forward-looking, concluded with both sides reaffirming their intent to deepen institutional ties. Randhawa presented a commemorative souvenir to Ambassador Al-Himeiri as a token of friendship, symbolizing the shared ambition of building a lasting partnership between the two nations. “This initiative reflects Pakistan's commitment to international cooperation rooted in mutual respect and shared goals,” Randhawa said, expressing optimism about the future of Islamabad-Baghdad collaboration.

## Israel grabs Palestinian land near Ramallah to expand settler outpost

LONDON: The Palestinian Authority's settlement activity watchdog reported that Israeli authorities on Monday seized 77.4 hectares of land in north-eastern Ramallah, the administrative capital in the occupied West Bank. The Palestinian Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission said that the land in the villages of Al-Mughayir and Jabait was declared “state land” to justify its seizure on Monday. The commission added that Israeli authorities have incorporated the newly captured area into the Malakhi HaShalom outpost, an illegal Israeli settlement established in 2015 on land belonging to the village of Al-Mughayir. The Israeli far-right government in 2023 announced a plan to legalize Malakhi HaShalom and expand its territory. The commission reported that the total Israeli land grab, designated as “state land” since early 2023, is estimated at 6,381 hectares, or 25,824 dunams, a measurement used by Palestinians since the Ottoman era. More than 700,000 settlers live in the West Bank, where the Israeli government has maintained a military occupation since June 1967. The expansion of settlements has long been viewed as an obstacle to the establishment of a Palestinian state and the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. —APP

## Bangladesh lawyers seek to quash ex PM's murder trial

DHAKA: State-appointed defense lawyers sought on Monday to throw out the charges against Bangladesh's convicted ex-prime minister Sheikh Hasina in her crimes against humanity trial. 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. Hasina, 77, fled to India at the culmination of the student-led uprising in August and has defied orders to return to Dhaka, where her trial in absentia opened on June 1. “I sought discharge from all the allegations... as they appear false, fabricated and politically motivated,” Md Amir Hossain told reporters. He added that he had not been able to speak to Hasina directly. Prosecutors say that Hasina held overall command responsibility for the violence. Prosecutors have filed five charges against her – including failure to prevent mass murder – which amount to crimes against humanity under Bangladeshi law. The trial resumes on July 10. Hasina was already convicted of contempt of court in a separate case on July 2, receiving a six-month sentence. —APP

## Bali flights nixed after huge Indonesia volcano eruption

JAKARTA: Dozens of flights to and from Indonesia's Bali island were canceled Monday after a volcano belched a colossal ash tower 18 kilometers (11 miles) into the sky, authorities said. The aviation disruption came just weeks after the same rumbling volcano caused dozens of flight cancellations to and from the popular resort island. Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki, on the tourist island of Flores, erupted at 11:05 am (0305 GMT), the volcanology agency said. “An eruption of Lewotobi Laki-Laki Volcano occurred... with the observed ash column height reaching approximately 18,000 m above the summit,” the agency said in a statement. It forced the cancellation of 24 flights at Bali's international airport, general manager Ahmad Syaqui Shahab said. “Several airlines serving the routes to Labuan Bajo (on Flores), Australia, Singapore, and South Korea have confirmed cancellations and delays,” he said in a statement. —APP



## Briefs

## 'Rs40bn corruption' revealed at NICVD

Two-member committee formed to probe audit report within 15 days

## MONITORING DESK

KARACHI: A major financial irregularity worth Rs40 billion has been unearthed at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) Karachi, according to the audit report of the Sindh Directorate General of Audit for the fiscal year 2023-24. The report revealed alleged corruption at the prominent cardiac institute, prompting Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho to take immediate notice. In response, she has ordered a formal inquiry and constituted a two-member committee to investigate the matter. According to the official notification, the inquiry committee includes the Additional Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Health. The committee is tasked with submitting its findings within 15 days. Meanwhile, the NICVD spokesperson has downplayed the development, saying that audit paras are a routine part of review processes for all government institutions. "Observational reports from the Auditor General are standard and meant to improve financial transparency," the spokesperson said.

## India admits Rafale pilot deaths

Over 250 Indian soldiers also reportedly killed during Operation Sindoor, say security sources

## DNA

NEW DELHI: After repeatedly denying any casualties, the Indian military has now indirectly acknowledged the deaths of several personnel, including Rafale fighter jet pilots, by announcing military honours for them, security sources told Geo News on Sunday. The move, reportedly taken under internal pressure, has lifted the lid on what was previously kept under wraps: India suffered heavy losses during Operation Sindoor. According to security sources, the Indian armed forces took a major hit in the operation, particularly along LoC, where over 250 fatalities were reported. Despite this, the Indian government and military avoided publicly acknowledging the scale of damage until the announcement of honours brought the casualties into the open.

## Israel attacks Houthi targets in Yemen

## DNA

YEMEN: Hospital officials in Gaza are reporting that at least 13 people have been killed by Israeli attacks across the besieged enclave today, reported Al Jazeera. A senior Houthi official has reaffirmed the group's commitment to Palestinians, saying that operations to support Gaza will not stop until Israeli attacks on the enclave end and the siege is lifted.

## Can't allow vulgar language

## PA speaker defends move to dethrone opposition MPs

"I have always acted as a good custodian of the House," says Malik Ahmad Khan

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan on Monday defended his move to file a disqualification reference against 26 opposition members of the provincial assembly (MPAs) over "unparliamentary conduct". Addressing a press conference in Lahore, the speaker said he has always tried to fulfill his responsibilities as a good custodian of the House. "I have always acted as a good custodian of the House, but I cannot permit the use of vulgar language on the assembly floor," he added. Malik Ahmad's presser comes days after he filed disqualification reference against 26 PTI-backed opposition MPs with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The disqualification reference was filed following the unrest during the Punjab Assembly budget session when opposition members raised slogans and disrupted the proceedings. In an order dated June 27, the speaker, while exercising powers conferred under Rule 210(3) of the Rules of Procedure 1997, suspended the opposition members for a total of 15 assembly sessions. He confirmed that some lawmakers had been suspended and others served notices for repeated violations of assembly rules. PA speaker argued that while protest is a constitutional right, it must remain within certain limits. "Tearing budget



documents, climbing on desks, cannot be justified as democratic expression," he said in the presser today. Responding to criticism over the use of constitutional provisions, Malik Ahmad said: "While I oppose Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution... they do grant the speaker the authority to take action when lawmakers violate the rules of parliamentary conduct." Calling Articles 62 and 63 "remnants of dictatorship", he said that these clauses remain part of the Constitution and confer authority upon the speaker to take action when needed.

"It cannot be that these articles are selectively used. Either remove them from the Constitution or apply them uniformly," he stated. The speaker said MPs themselves had urged him to take action under Article 63(2), referencing the Panama Papers ruling as a precedent. "If a prime minister can be disqualified on false statements, then those who disrupt the sanctity of the House must also be held accountable," he added. Extending a dialogue offer to the opposition, the speaker said he was still open to talks. "Sit down and talk. There's still time," he urged the opposition, adding that the assembly cannot be allowed to become a theatre of chaos. The reference filed against PTI-backed MPs includes Malik Farhad Masood, Muhammad Tanveer Aslam, Syed Rifaat Mehmood, Yasir Mehmood Qureshi, Kaleem Ullah Khan, Muhammad Ansar Iqbal, Ali Asif, Zulfiqar Ali, Ahmad Mujtaba Chaudhary, Shahid Javed, Muhammad Ismael, Khayal Ahmad.

## Calling current governance system 'hybrid' not appropriate: Sanaullah

Better word should be used to describe harmony among civil and military leadership, says PM's aide

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's aide on political and public affairs Rana Sanaullah has said that calling the current governance system in the country 'hybrid' is inappropriate and that a better word should be used to describe harmony among the civil and military leadership of the country. "If by 'hybrid [system]' you mean that the country's political and military leadership work together for the economy, prosperity, and defence — then we should have such a system," said Sanaullah while speaking on Geo News programme "Jirga" on Saturday. "But what I have seen in dictionary, the [meaning of hybrid] is twofaced, which does not suit," he said. The premier's adviser stated this in response to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's statement that under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, the country's hybrid system is functioning successfully. Asif had described the hybrid system as one based on consensus between the political and military establishments, noting that such an arrangement ensures political stability and effective governance. The defence czar had also contrasted the current model with the PTI era, saying the hybrid system failed under ex-prime minister Imran Khan due to distrust between partners.

In further break from Trump  
Elon Musk announces forming of 'America Party'

"By a factor of two to one, you want a new political party and you shall have it!" says Elon Musk on X

DNA

WASHINGTON: The tattered bromance between Republican President Donald Trump and his main campaign financier Elon Musk took another fractious turn on Saturday when the space and automotive billionaire announced the formation of a new political party, saying Trump's "big, beautiful" tax bill would bankrupt America. A day after asking his followers on his X platform whether a new US political party should be created, Musk declared in a post on Saturday: "Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom." "By a factor of two to one, you want a new political party and you shall have it!" he wrote. The announcement from Musk comes after Trump signed his self-styled "big, beautiful" tax-cut and spending bill into law on Friday, which Musk fiercely opposed. Musk, who became the world's richest man thanks to his Tesla car company and his SpaceX satellite firm, spent hundreds of millions on Trump's re-election and led the Department of Government Efficiency from the start of the president's second term, aimed at slashing government spending. The two have since fallen out spectacularly over disagreements about the bill. Musk said previously that he would start a new political party and spend money to unseat lawmakers who supported the bill. Trump earlier this week threatened to cut off the billions of dollars in subsidies that Musk's companies receive from the federal government. Republicans have expressed concern that Musk's on-again, off-again feud with Trump could hurt their chances of protecting their majority in the 2026 midterm congressional elections. Asked on X what was the one thing that made him go from loving Trump to attacking him, Musk said: "Increasing the deficit from an already insane \$2tr under Biden to \$2.5tr. This will bankrupt the country." He referenced the growth of Greece from subjugation to preeminence in the ancient world in another tweet, saying: "The

Trump laughs off Musk's political party idea

"Third parties have never worked, so he [Musk] can have fun with it," says US president

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump called Elon Musk's plans to form a new political party "ridiculous," saying Musk could have fun with his new project but that the United States functions best under a two-party system. A day after Musk escalated his feud with Trump and announced the formation of a new US political party, the Republican president was asked about it before boarding Air Force One in Morristown, New Jersey, as he returned to Washington upon visiting his nearby golf club. "I think it's ridiculous to start a third party. We have a tremendous success with the Republican Party. The Democrats have lost their way, but it's always been a two-party system, and I think starting a third party just adds to the confusion," Trump told reporters.

way we're going to crack the uniparty system is by using a variant of how Epaminondas shattered the myth of Spartan invincibility at Leuctra: Extremely concentrated force at a precise location on the battlefield." There was no immediate comment from Trump or the White House on Musk's announcement. The feud with Trump, often described as one between the world's richest man and the world's most powerful, has led to several precipitous falls in Tesla's share price. The stock soared after Trump's November re-election and hit a high of more than \$488 in December, before losing more than half of its value in April and closing last week out at \$315.35. Despite Musk's deep pockets, breaking the Republican-Democratic duopoly will be a tall order, given that it has dominated American political life for more than 160 years, while Trump's approval ratings in polls in his second term have generally held firm above 40 percent, despite often divisive policies.

## FIA nabs 3 key human traffickers

DNA

PESHAWAR: In a major operation, the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Anti-Human Trafficking Circle here arrested three key members of an organized human smuggling network. According to FIA spokesman, the operation was carried out based on credible intelligence. The suspects, identified as Saddam, Dareesh Muhammad, and Muhammad Ilyas, were apprehended during a raid at Deen Trade Center. Initial investigations revealed that prime suspect Saddam was involved in smuggling people from Peshawar to Libya, and then onward to Europe. He reportedly extorted large sums of money from the victims in the process. During the raid, officials recovered five Pakistani passports from Saddam's possession. Further raids, conducted based on information provided by Saddam, led to the arrest of Dareesh Muhammad and Muhammad Ilyas from Motor Bargain. Authorities also recovered substantial evidence related to human smuggling activities, including documents indicating connections with international smuggling networks and plans for illegal migration to Europe. FIA spokesperson confirmed that further raids are underway to apprehend other accomplices linked to the network.

## Sanjog Gupta appointed as new ICC CEO

ICC Chairman Jay Shah approves Indian journalist's appointment as ICC CEO

DNA

NEW DELHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has appointed Sanjog Gupta as its new chief executive officer. He will assume charge on July 7, 2025, becoming the seventh CEO in the history of the global cricket body. The announcement was made following a comprehensive international recruitment process that began in March, drawing over 2,500 applications from 25 countries. The selection included candidates from global sports bodies and top corporate organisations. After shortlisting 12 profiles, the ICC's Nominations Committee — comprising Deputy Chair Imran Khwaja, ECB Chair Richard Thompson, SLC President Shammi Silva, and BCCI Honorary Secretary Devajit Saikia — unanimously recommended Gupta for the role. The recommendation was approved by ICC Chairman Jay Shah and ratified by the ICC Board. Confirming the development, the ICC said in a statement: "Sanjog is a visionary leader with proven expertise in building successful consumer franchises and is widely regarded as one of the architects of the modern sports ecosystem in India." Gupta currently serves as CEO — Sports & Live Experiences at JioStar and brings over two decades of experience in media, sports strategy, and commercial development. He was appointed CEO of JioStar Sports in November 2024 following the merger of Viacom18 and Disney Star, and is credited with leading the transformation of sports broadcasting in India.

## Brics calls out Gaza strikes

Vacuum left by others ends up being filled almost instantly by Brics, G7's dominance fading, says diplomat

DNA

BEIJING: Leaders of the BRICS group of developing nations condemned attacks on Iran, Gaza and Kashmir during their summit on Sunday, presenting the bloc as a defender of multilateral diplomacy while indirectly criticising US military and trade policy. With forums such as the G7 and G20 groups of major economies hamstrung by divisions and the disruptive "America First" approach of US President Donald Trump, the expansion of the BRICS has opened new space for diplomatic coordination. In his opening remarks at the meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva drew a parallel with the Cold War's Non-Aligned Movement, a group of developing nations that resisted joining either side of a polarised global order. "BRICS is the heir to the Non-Aligned Movement," Lula told leaders. "With multilateralism under attack, our autonomy is in check once again." BRICS nations now represent more than half the world's population and 40% of its economic output.

## Pakistan and Afghanistan hold Addl. Secy level talks

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The inaugural round of the Additional Secretary-Level Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Pakistan and Afghanistan was held today in Islamabad pursuant to decisions reached during the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of Pakistan to Kabul, Afghanistan, on 19 April 2025. Pakistan side was led by



Additional Secretary (Afghanistan & West Asia), Ambassador Syed Ali Asad Gillani, while the Afghan side was led by Director General, First Political Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mufti Noor Ahmad Noor. Discussions covered key areas of bilateral interest, including trade and transit cooperation, security, and connectivity. Both sides recognized terrorism as a serious threat to regional peace and security. The Pakistani side emphasized the need for concrete actions against terrorist groups operating on Afghan soil, noting that such groups undermine Pakistan's security and hinder regional development. The two sides exchanged views on deepening trade and transit cooperation. They reviewed the implementation status of measures announced during the visit of Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of Pakistan to Kabul for facilitating Afghan transit trade, including the removal of a 10% processing fee, provision of an insurance guarantee, reduction in scanning and examination, and operationalisation of the track and trace system. They underlined the importance of enhanced regional connectivity as a catalyst for sustainable growth and shared prosperity. Noting the strategic significance of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway in that regard, they agreed to make concerted efforts towards early finalisation of the Framework Agreement.

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