



Thursday, July 10, 2025

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India using cells to tarnish Pakistan image: Gen Sharif

Detailed News On Page-01

Aurangzeb for consultative policy plan

Detailed News On Page-08



Joao Pedro sends Chelsea into Cup final

Detailed News On Page-06



Friendship bonds

Pakistan, Turkiye pledge to boost bilateral trade volume to \$5bn

Turkish Foreign Minister and Defence Minister call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan and the Minister of National Defence, Yasar Güler, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad today. The Prime Minister was joined by the Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Chief of the Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, National Security Advisor Lt. General Muhammad Asim Malik and other senior officials.

While welcoming the Turkish delegation, the Prime Minister underscored the longstanding fraternal ties between Pakistan and Türkiye, that remain deeply rooted in shared history, culture, and mutual respect. He expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to further strengthening cooperation with Türkiye in diverse fields, including trade, investment, technology, and defence.

Recalling his interactions with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the year, including the most recent meeting between the two leaders on the margins of the 17th ECO Summit, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's firm resolve to transform Pak-Türkiye relations into a strategic partnership in the days to come. Welcoming the convening of the Joint Commission's meeting, co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, the Prime Minister expressed hope

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan to launch pilot for digital currency

Ahmad says new law would "lay down foundations for licensing and regulation" of virtual assets sector

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is preparing to launch a pilot for a digital currency and is finalising legislation to regulate virtual assets, central bank Governor Jameel Ahmad said on Wednesday, as the country ramped up efforts to modernise its financial system. Central banks globally are exploring the use of digital currencies as interest in blockchain-based payments grows. Pakistan's move follows similar steps by regulators in China, India, Nigeria and several Gulf states to test or issue digital currencies through

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan and Minister for National Defence of the Republic of Türkiye Yasar Güler calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

PHC nullifies ECP's notifications

Court orders against de-notification of two JUI-F women MPs; ECP directed to re-allocate seats in 10 days

DNA

PESHAWAR: As the reserved seats saga continues to unfold, the Peshawar High Court declared null and void the 2024 notifications issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) about reserved seats for women and minorities in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. The bench, comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Dr Khurshid Iqbal, issued a brief written order after hearing the case. The court also declared that the ECP's deadline of February 22, 2024 for independent candidates to join a political

Continued on Page 06

Meeting of ASEAN Regional Forum on 11th

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar will lead the Pakistan delegation at the 32nd Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), being held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 11 July 2025. The meeting will be attended by the Foreign Ministers and representatives of the 27 ARF member countries, along with the Secretary-General of ASEAN. At the ARF Ministerial Meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister will participate in discussions on political

Continued on Page 06

Post-war scene

'Bully India' using transnational killings: DG ISPR

"There is not one face of Indian terrorism Indian terrorism in Pakistan has multiple faces," says Lt-Gen Ahmed Sharif

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has once again called out India for using terrorism to suppress Pakistan's rise. The DG ISPR said that India is acting as a "bully" and using terror cells and carrying out transnational killings in Pakistan. "Who is the beneficiary [...] by these acts of terrorism in Pakistan. It is India. The strategy of India is to keep Pakistan embroiled in the menace of terrorism so that Pakistan's true potential is not realised," the military's spokesperson said in an interview with Al Jazeera. Lt Gen Chaudhary said that the progress and prosperity was the destiny that the state owes the 250 million

Continued on Page 06

At least one killed in Bannu drone attack

Police say one drone fell on a house, whereas the other one crashed on Miryan Police Station

BUREAU REPORT

BANNU: A drone attack killed one and injured three others in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu, the police said on Wednesday. "One drone fell on the Miryan Police Station whereas the other fell on a home," the police said,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Police arrest man for killing her daughter

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police on Wednesday said they arrested a man for allegedly killing his daughter for 'honour' over not deleting her account on social media platform TikTok.

The first information report (FIR) of the case was registered at Rawat Police Station a day ago on the complaint of Head Constable Shahbaz Anjum Kayani under Section 302 (Punishment of qatl-i-amd), and Section 311 (Waiver or compounding of qisas) of the Pakistan Penal Code. Under Section 311, the state becomes the complainant, as this provision is non-compoundable, and the case must proceed to a logical conclusion. The punishment for 'honour' killings, under Sections 311 and 302, includes the death sentence or life imprisonment.

Red Bull sacks Horner

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Christian Horner was sacked on Wednesday by Red Bull after 20 years as team principal of the Formula One outfit. The 51-year-old has been in charge since the team was formed in 2005 and has led them to eight drivers' titles and six constructors' crowns. Dutchman Max Verstappen has won the past four drivers' titles for Red Bull, matching the achievement of Sebastian Vettel, who dominated for the team from 2010 to 2013. Horner's dismissal as CEO and team principal comes 17 months after he was accused by a female colleague of "inappropriate behaviour". The Englishman was twice cleared over the claims by the Formula One team's parent company, Red Bull GmbH, and his wife, former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell, stood by him.

'Some opinions are wrong'

US on India's denial of Trump's role in ceasefire

"So many comments speak for themselves," says US State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce

DNA

WASHINGTON: US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce has reaffirmed that President Donald Trump and senior members of his administration were actively involved in negotiations that helped secure a ceasefire between Pakistan and India in May. Apparently contradicting New Delhi's remarks, Bruce said: "So many comments speak for themselves," she said. "That's one of the good-news aspects of our modern world — people can see what's really occurring. You're not reliant on a comment to know what has really happened. President Trump has repeatedly said to have brokered Pakistan-India ceasefire, while the Indian government has consistently denied any US involvement in the process. "Everyone will have an opinion. That is an opinion. Some opinions are wrong; mine rarely are. But other people's opinions can be wrong," Bruce said while speaking at a State Department media briefing in Washington.

Continued on Page 06

Equity market retreats on weak US tariffs concerns

"Stocks under pressure on bearish global equities and weak global crude oil prices," says analyst

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The capital market closed in the red on Wednesday as the bourse came under pressure from bearish global equities, and concerns surrounding the outcome of US trade tariff decisions and tax compliance issues flagged by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index settled at 132,576.98 points, down 826.21 points or 0.62%, from the previous close of 133,403.19.

Continued on Page 06

AGP blows lid off Rs 300 billion wheat scandal

The report confirms that massive over-imports of wheat was done despite surplus stocks. The AGP found that 3.59 million metric tonnes (MMT) of wheat were imported in 2023-24, far exceeding the approved quota of 2.40 MMT, even though Pakistan recorded its highest-ever local wheat production of 31.47 MMT and carried forward a stock balance of 4.64 MMT

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) cites "malafide" intent, "completely unreliable" data, delayed federal-provincial actions and manipulation to benefit private sector at the cost of local farmers and the national treasury as reasons behind Rs300 billion 2023-24 wheat scam.

While the scandal had already attracted media and public attention, the AGP's findings now provide official confirmation and new evidence including claims of "malafide" intent, fake data, and delayed government action.

The report confirms that massive over-imports of wheat was done despite surplus stocks. The AGP found that 3.59 million metric tonnes (MMT) of wheat were imported in 2023-24, far exceeding the approved quota of 2.40 MMT, even though Pakistan recorded its highest-ever local wheat production of 31.47 MMT and carried forward a stock balance of 4.64 MMT. The report shows the justification for imports as "completely unreliable", hinting at deliberate inflation of national demand estimates. The audit observes:

"The requirement was presented (seems malafide)". Key data used to justify imports were riddled with inconsistencies, especially between opening and closing stocks over the years. The AGP noted discrepancies in wheat stock figures presented at official meetings, which were used to make major import decisions. "Overstated" or "understated stock" figures led to poor decisions like excessive imports, or delays that created shortages. The report revealed that Punjab and Sindh — two major wheat producers — released drastically lower amounts of wheat to flour mills in mid-2023, creating a false sense of shortage that pushed wheat and flour prices up. Punjab's wheat release between June and October 2023 was just 5,657 tonnes, compared to over two million tonnes in the same period of 2022. A panic was created in the local market, causing an increase in flour prices. Perhaps the most damning revelation is the intentional delay in executing public sector wheat imports through the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP). Despite the ECC and

Continued on Page 06

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KP Journalists frontline soldiers in war against terrorism: Kundi

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday said that journalists have played the role of frontline soldiers in the war against terrorism in the province and vowed to raise their concerns and represent them on every relevant forum. He expressed these views while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected cabinet of the Video Journalists Association at the Governor House Peshawar. The event was moderated by senior journalist Amjad Aziz Malik. The ceremony was attended by President of Peshawar Press Club M. Riaz, President of the Association Sheikh Ashfaq Hussain, and the organization's founder Rizwan Sheikh, who also spoke on the occasion. Governor Kundi congratulated the new cabinet on their democratic election and appreciated the continuation of constructive dialogue between the

media and the Governor's office. He said, "The Pakistan Peoples Party welcomes criticism aimed at reform. What we have started today should continue as a tradition at the Governor House." Pakistan travel guide He acknowledged the recognized status of video and photo journalism globally, highlighting the indispensable role of media workers. "The importance and role of media can never be diminished. There is an inseparable bond between media and politicians," the governor said. He emphasized that while criticism for improvement is necessary, the spread of fake news must be curbed, and media stakeholders must play their part in this effort. He called for healthy competition within the media landscape of Pakistan. Paying tribute to the sacrifices made by journalists, Governor Kundi said, "I salute the courage and contributions of media workers who have

stood firm during difficult times. Some even sacrificed their lives for the peace of this province." Pakistan travel guide He assured journalists of Peshawar that he would take up their concerns with the Federal Minister for Information and act as their advocate. In a humanitarian gesture, Governor Kundi announced that volunteers who have saved lives in Swat would be sent on Umrah. He also revealed that Red Crescent Swat will be provided with a special ambulance and five rescue boats, which will remain in contact with volunteer Hilal Khan. Earlier, Governor Kundi administered the oath to the newly elected office-bearers of the association. During the event, Association President Sheikh Ashfaq Hussain presented a vote of thanks, while Press Club President M. Riaz underlined the growing importance of video and photo journalism in today's media landscape.—DNA

PHC terms Swat tragedy a gross negligence

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) Wednesday declared the Swat tragedy a result of gross negligence and ordered a comprehensive investigation into the incident. In a written judgment on a petition filed against encroachments on rivers and the Swat incident, the court stated that the tragic event that occurred

on June 27 in the Swat River was due to the serious negligence of the concerned authorities. The judgment noted that 17 precious lives were lost due to the failure of officials, and no emergency measures such as helicopters were used to rescue tourists, terming it a clear sign of criminal negligence in

public service. The court also pointed out that illegal construction of hotels and buildings along rivers such as the Swat, Panjkora, Dir, Indus, Kabul, and Charsadda has become common, posing a severe threat to human lives. The existence of these unauthorized structures reflects the failure and silent

complicity of the relevant institutions. The court directed the investigation committee formed on the Swat tragedy to submit its preliminary findings within 7 days and a detailed report within 14 days. The Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was also instructed to clarify what steps have been taken so far to ensure public safety. This firm action by the court is seen as a landmark step towards ensuring accountability and protecting lives in the future. —APP

99 pc enrollment target achieved in Taleemi Wazaif

LAHORE: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Punjab has achieved a significant milestone by enrolling 238,673 children under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Programme during the second quarter of 2025 (April to June), successfully reaching 99 per cent of its targeted enrollment of 240,000 children. According to a BISP spokesperson on Wednesday, this achievement reflects the programme's continued commitment to promoting education among the children of underprivileged families across the province. Under the Taleemi Wazaif scheme, boys receive monthly stipends of Rs 2,000 at the primary level, Rs 3,000 at the secondary level, and Rs 4,000 at the higher secondary level. For girls, the stipends are higher — Rs 2,500, Rs 3,500, and Rs 4,500, respectively. Additionally, a graduation bonus of Rs 3,000 is awarded to girls who complete primary school, an incentive aimed at increasing female educational attainment. — APP

COURT NOTICE

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CM Bugti vows to intensify reforms for service delivery

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has reaffirmed his government's commitment to strengthen efforts for improving governance and service delivery across the province. Chairing a high-level meeting of administrative secretaries in Quetta on Wednesday, CM Bugti emphasized that far-reaching reforms are essential to restore public trust in government institutions. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Hamza Shafaqat, Additional Chief Secretary (Planning and Development) Zahid Saleem, Chairman of the Chief Minister's Inspection Team Muhammad Ali, and secretaries from all departments. Sarfraz Bugti emphasized for expediting

large-scale reforms agenda to improve governance and ensure effective service delivery in the province at all costs aimed that to rebuild public's trust in the government system. "The government is determined to move forward with reform agenda to establish effective service delivery and rebuild public confidence," the Chief Minister said, noting that every department should take ownership of its development schemes. He stressed the need for transparency and efficiency, adding that regular monitoring of both federally and internationally funded projects would be conducted. CM Bugti highlighted a key achievement from the last fiscal year including the complete and timely utilization of development funds, which helped dispel nega-

tive perceptions about mismanagement and waste in Balochistan's financial planning. "While an ideal governance framework may not be immediately achievable, the government is committed to realistic, continuous improvements based on ground realities," he said. Sarfraz directed the Chief Minister's Inspection Team and Monitoring & Evaluation units to rigorously oversee project quality and timelines, ensuring tangible benefits for the public. The Chief Minister directed all departments to ensure that 99 percent of technical approvals for proposed and approved schemes to be completed by July 25, with progress reports to be presented in the next meeting. He also called for a critical review of last year's shortcomings and stressed learning from past mistakes to improve future performance. Expressing confidence in the capabilities of government officers, CM Bugti underscored that performance-based postings would be prioritized under a policy of merit.—APP

Food adulteration declared non-bailable offence in Punjab

LAHORE :The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has declared food adulteration and forgery as non-bailable offences across Punjab, marking a decisive step in safeguarding public health. Preparations are underway to implement new legislation proposing up to five years of imprisonment and fines reaching Rs. 10 million. This announcement was made by PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid during a press briefing held at the PFA Headquarters here on Wednesday. He said that with the enforcement of the proposed law, the eradication of food adulteration would become a realistic and achievable goal. The DG revealed that enforcement actions had surged by 158 percent, with a 24 percent increase in registered cases compared to previous years. In total, 1,235,741 food points were inspected across the province, leading to the registration of 1,344 FIRs. More than 119,000 violators were fined, with penalties amounting to Rs. 1.52 billion, while 3,300 units were sealed during various operations. During the campaign, PFA discarded 686,000 kilograms of meat, 142,000 litres of oil, and 117,000 litres of substandard beverages. A record rise in milk checking activities was also reported, with 1.624 million litres of substandard milk being discarded. Asim Javaid noted that 75 percent of milk available in Punjab now meets safety standards, and the volume of milk disposal has decreased fourfold compared to previous years. As part of its broader food safety initiatives, PFA conducted medical screenings for food handlers at 2,942 food carts, mobile trucks, and roadside stalls. Under the School Nutrition Program, 10,786 students received free lunch boxes for two months. Plans are in place to expand this program to 50 more schools, alongside the accelerated rollout of the Eat Safe campaign. The Director General also highlighted the launch of several new initiatives, including the Eat Safe Women and Kids Campaigns, an Electronic Learning Management System, a Milk Traceability Program, a Meat Safety Task Force, a Paperless Inspection System, and a Business Facilitation Center to ease regulatory compliance for food businesses. DG Asim Javaid added that the PFA is fully committed to ensuring the availability of safe and quality food in line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He urged the public to support PFA's efforts and report violations via the Authority's helpline 1223.—DNA

Punajb CM to launch School van service, on-wheel montessori project

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced the introduction of a school van/ bus service for government schools and the launch of an innovative 'On-Wheel Montessori School' project across the province. She made the announcement while presiding over a high-level meeting of the School Education Department, here on Wednesday, where multiple transformative education initiatives were reviewed. For the first time, a "School of the Month" and "Teacher of the Month" award will be introduced based on discipline, classroom performance, lab standards, and the overall quality of education. The CM directed officials to prepare a comprehensive plan for the province's first reg-

ular school transportation service, aimed at facilitating access to education for children in remote areas. During the meeting, Provincial Minister for School Education Rana Sikandar Hayat presented a detailed briefing on departmental initiatives. He highlighted the success of the school outsourcing model, noting a 99 percent increase in student enrolment and a 114 percent rise in teaching staff. Over 60,000 employment opportunities have been created for educated youth as part of this initiative. Punjab now holds the record for the largest public-private partnership in education globally, with 1.3 million additional students enrolled through outsourcing within just 16 months. Another 10,500 schools are

planned for outsourcing in the next year. The first phase alone saw 40,000 applications for 5,700 government schools. Significant infrastructure improvements have been made in outsourced schools, including the construction of 413 classrooms, renovation of over 5,000 classrooms, and repair of 2,887 roofs. Over 254,000 square meters of boundary walls were constructed, and more than 50 schools were shifted to solar energy. Facilities such as 1,643 water tanks, 5,830 water coolers, and 9,303 new blackboards have also been provided. The meeting was informed that in select districts such as Faisalabad, children in outsourced schools are receiving midday meals under a self-help model. Additional-

ly, 70,977 furniture sets have been delivered to improve classroom environments. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif also launched the Punjab Education Endowment Fund (PEEF) Education Tech Schools as a pilot project and directed that similar schools be expanded to rural areas. A successful English Conversation Program, aligned with IELTS Standard-4, is underway to benefit 300,000 students within six months. So far, 10,000 classrooms for Early Childhood Education have been prepared across Punjab. The Chief Minister also directed the expansion of the Nawaz Sharif Center of Excellence, increasing its intake from 240 to 1,500 students. The School Meal Program is set to begin in Dera Ghazi Khan, Layyah,



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi chaired a high-level meeting to review railway performance, mechanical operations, and improvement measures.

300-litre adulterated milk discarded

MULTAN :In a continued crackdown on food adulteration, the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) conducted large-scale inspections across Multan, Khanewal, and Vehari, penalising violators and discarding hundreds of litres of substandard products. The operations were carried out under the special directives of Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid. PFA's food safety teams inspected several food outlets, including milk shops, khoya units, soda water factories, bakeries, hotels, and ice factories. Heavy fines were imposed for violations of food safety regulations, and 300 liters of adulterated milk were confiscated and destroyed. In Multan, two ice factories located in Sikandarabad and Danday Wali Pul (Shah Rukn-e-Alam) were fined Rs. 25,000 each for poor sanitation and pest infestation in production areas.

A snacks manufacturing unit in Musa Pak colony was fined Rs. 50,000 for incomplete product labeling and lack of labeling on oil drums. Three milk shops in Gulistan Chowk, T Chowk Shalimar Colony, and Faiz Aam Chowk were fined a total of Rs. 35,000 for selling adulterated milk. At Multan road Interchange (Kabirwala), a hotel was fined Rs. 10,000 after dead flies were found in the freezer and food was stored without proper covering. In Abdul Hakeem, a milk collection unit was fined Rs. 10,000 for selling substandard milk, while a tuck shop was fined the same amount for stocking expired snacks.—APP

Azma slams PTI's Saif, calls him 'fake intellectual'

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has rebuked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif over his recent remarks, calling him a 'fake intellectual' and accusing him of misrepresenting audit figures for political propaganda. Pakistan travel guide In a statement issued on Wednesday, Azma urged Saif to "read the audit report thoroughly", asserting that the corruption figures cited by PTI pertain to the periods when Usman Buzdar and Chaudhry Parvez Elahi were chief

ministers. "Take a look at page 87 and 96 of the report — perhaps then you'll feel a little shame," she said. The minister clarified that the much-discussed Rs. 1 trillion figure refers to wheat procurement and subsidies spanning from 2018 to 2023 — years when the PTI governed Punjab. "Every citizen knows this. These were PTI's years in power," she added. Azma described PTI's four-year rule in Punjab as a "dark chapter" marked by "incompetence, systemic looting, and misgovernance," likening it to the party's 12-

year tenure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She also pointed to high-profile corruption allegations involving former first lady Bushra Bibi and Farah Gogi, labeling them as "symbols of that corrupt era." "Blinded by hatred for the Sharif family, their leader left the Prime Minister's House with just a diary in hand—and ended up in Adiala Jail," Bokhari remarked. Concluding her statement with a warning, the minister said the path of PTI leaders like Ali Amin Gandapur and Barrister Saif is becoming increasingly evident.—APP

10-year Fisheries, Aquaculture policy unveiled to revive blue economy

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has launched a comprehensive National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 2025–2035, aimed at unlocking the sector's economic potential, improving food security, and supporting climate resilience. Announced during a high-level workshop in Islamabad on Wednesday, the policy was developed by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The initiative seeks to address the long-standing underdevelopment of Pakistan's marine and inland fisheries, which currently contribute less than 0.5% to the national GDP. "This policy marks a major milestone for Pakistan's blue economy," said Federal Minister

for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, adding that the country's vast marine resources remain largely untapped. "The sector has the potential to boost exports, generate employment, and enhance food security—if managed sustainably." The minister emphasized that a central pillar of the new policy is promoting federal-provincial coordination, which has been lacking in the past. He said the Ministry will continue to lead on crucial national issues including fulfilling international obligations and improving the country's seafood export competitiveness. The 10-year framework also focuses on key cross-cutting priorities such as climate resilience, environmental protection, gender inclusion,

child and labor rights, and the use of modern technologies to support sustainable practices. Speaking at the event, Secretary for Maritime Affairs Syed Zaffar Ali Shah noted that the policy aims to tackle major issues such as overfishing, weak regulation, and limited value addition. "If managed properly, the fisheries sector could generate up to \$10 billion in value," he said. Florence Rolle, FAO Representative in Pakistan, praised the inclusive, consultative approach used to formulate the policy, which included nationwide stakeholder seminars. She highlighted Balochistan's leadership in drafting its own fisheries strategy and said sustainable practices could also attract international climate financing.—APP



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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

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July 30/Morocco National Day

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Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Canth Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Govt ads rates to be increased soon, Tarar assures APNS

The federal information minister assured that the Ministry is putting its best efforts that all dues be cleared regularly leaving no dues pending for payment. He stated that a committee of all stakeholders to weed out dummies has been formed which will benefit the economies of genuine publications

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government will shortly implement the assurance of the Prime Minister, Mian Shahbaz Sharif to increase the government advertisement rates as it believes in the promotion and development of vibrant print media to counter the fake media platforms, stated Mr. Attaullah Tarar.The Federal Information Minister was addressing members of the APNS Executive at a dinner hosted by the Information Ministry. He stated that the issues of payments faced by the newspapers industry are being addressed and the Federal government has paid over Rs.6 billions to the media towards their dues. He announced that the share of print media in the payment as well as the quantum of advertising would be increased. He assured that the Ministry is putting its best efforts that all dues be cleared regularly leaving no dues pending for payment. He stated that a committee of all stakeholders to weed out dummies has been formed which will benefit the economies of genuine publications. He advised newspapers to innovate themselves in order to brave the challenges being faced by the print media. The Minister was earlier briefed by the President APNS Senator Sarmad Ali and members of the



ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar hosted dinner in honour of the Members of the APNS Executive Committee. Tarar assured to resolve genuine issues faced by the print media industry. DNA

Executive Committee on the issues confronted by the newspaper industry. The members stated that the Prime Minister in August 2023 had announced increased in the government advertisement rates but the decision has not yet been implemented despite various assurances. They also apprised that the print media was facing acute monetary crunch due to non-payment

of their dues as the major share of the payment released was allocated to electronic media, whereas newspapers were paid less than 20% of the released payments. They also requested that a fair share in the quantum of advertisement for the print media be allocated. The members reiterated their demand that the regional PID offices be empowered to suggest media of

their region. The dinner was attended by Secretary Information, Ms. Ambreen Jan, Mr. Mubashar Hasan, PIO and officials of the Ministry. The APNS was represented by the Muhammad Athar Kazi, Secretary General, Nav ed Kashif, Finance Secretary, and other members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of All Pakistan Newspapers

Society held its meeting on July 09 at Islamabad chaired by its President, Senator Sarmad Ali. The Mr. Mohammad Athar Kazi, Secretary General announced the decisions of the meeting and stated that the members urged upon the Federal and provincial governments to expedite payments of long pending bills to help newspapers to meet the financial crunch faced by the

print industry. The members expressed their concern over the non-payment of dues by DGPR relating to previous tenures. The members also decided that a delegation led by APNS President will meet Secretary Information Sindh to press for payment of long overdue non budgeted payments. The Executive Committee approved the report of Advertising Committee and granted provisional accreditation to M/s Brand Spectrum (Pvt.) Ltd. Lahore. The meeting was attended by the following. Senator Sarmad Ali, President, Mohammad Athar Kazi, Secretary General, Naved Kashif, Finance Secretary, Mohsin Bilal, Joint Secretary, Mohsin Seyal (Aftab), Bilal Farooqi (Aghaz), Ansar Mahmood Bhatti (Monthly Centre Line), Fauzia Shaheen (M/Dastak), Najamuddin Sheikh (D/ Deyanat), Javed Mehr Shamsi (D/ Kaleem), Imtinan Shahid (D/ Khabrain), Bilal Mahamood (Nawa-e-Waqt), Rasakh Munir (D/Mashriq Peshawar), Aamir Malik (D/ Mashriq Quetta), S.M.Munir Jilani (D/Paigham), Usman Mujib Shami (D/Pakistan), Faisal Zahid Malik (D/ Pakistan Observer), Khushnood Ali Khan ,(D/ Sahafat), Humayun Gulzar (D/Sayadat), Imran Ather (D/Tijarat) and Syed Haroon Shah (D/Wahdat).

Hospitals bans mobile phone uses by staff

RAWALPINDI: Following the orders by the Punjab Government to ban the use of mobile phones in the public sector hospitals across the province, Rawalpindi hospitals have started strict compliance by directing the staff to refrain from cell phone use during duty hours. The allied hospitals have also initiated monitoring of the compliance in different premises including operation theaters, ICUs, ITCs etc. The three day deadline to implement the orders is ending on Thursday after which strict actions will be taken against the violations. Rawalpindi hospitals are in full swing to come up with the compliance of the decision. "Holy Family Hospital has already been practicing this, however strong monitoring has been placed to further eliminate any disruption in medical services particularly in OTs, ITCs, ICUs and other intensive care areas", said Dr. Ejaz Butt, Medical Suprentendent HFH in a brief interaction with APP here on Wednesday. Dr. Ejaz further informed that copies of the directives have been displayed on the key areas of the hospital. " No negligence will be tolerated in this regard", he said when asked about the possible actions on violations of the decision. The Punjab government sought a compliance report to be submitted to the department within three days. Dr. Ejaz informed that himself was directly supervising the cell phone ban-drive. Similarly DHQ Teaching Hospital and Benazir Bhutto Hospital have also taken steps to follow the government's orders. To enhance patient care and maintain professionalism in public sector hospitals, the Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department of Punjab government has banned the use of mobile phones by hospital staff during duty hours. The decision addressed the staff below BPS-18 in critical areas such as Emergencies, ICUs, NICUs, and Operation Theaters, with exceptions made for those in administrative roles. A spokesman of DHQ Teaching Hospital told APP that all measures were being taken by the hospital management in this regard. "We have communicated with the staff directly and by displaying the notification on the main doors of all required premises", he said. To facilitate communication, the government has ordered the use of pager systems for critical alerts, such as Code Blue and Code Red, to ensure swift and uninterrupted responses. Violations of the ban may lead to disciplinary action under the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline, and Accountability (PEEDA) Act, including potential termination. Dr Yousaf Khan, a classified Neuro Surgeon at DHQ Hospital said that excessive use of mobile by hospital staff is dangerous during the duty hours, particularly at sensitive areas. He informed that the hospital was completely observing the Punjab government directives.—DNA

Ministers join forces to blend heritage preservation with innovation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to bridge Pakistan's cultural legacy with future-oriented learning, Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magi and Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb

Khan Khichi Wednesday convened a high-level meeting aimed at deepening collaboration between their ministries. The meeting focused on leveraging modern scientific tools to protect and promote Pakistan's diverse cultural and historical assets, while fostering educational programs that integrate science,

history, and the arts. Both ministers underscored the role of heritage not just as a remnant of the past, but as a living foundation for national identity and youth empowerment. Aurangzeb Khichi emphasized that educating the younger generation about Pakistan's rich cultural roots is vital for nurturing uni-

ty and pride. Khalid Magi echoed the sentiment, stressing the need for interdisciplinary innovation that ties technology with tradition. As a concrete step forward, the two ministries agreed to form a joint working group tasked with designing actionable projects, facilitating regular coordination, and implementing integrated educational and heritage initiatives. The collaboration signifies a broader vision of the government to build a progressive and informed society grounded in its historical depth and scientific advancement.

Gwadar & Lyari highways be completed soon: Aleem

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has endorsed a stern directive to officers of the National Highway Authority (NHA), urging them to accelerate work on all ongoing projects and ensure their completion without further delays. Emphasizing that no more relaxation and time will be given, he declared this as the final notice for the officers, asking that severe disciplinary action will be taken in cases of negligence, inefficiency or unwarranted delays. Chairing a high-level meeting at the NHA Headquarters, Aleem Khan stressed the need to swiftly complete construction, repair and expansion projects related to Highways and Motorways. He directed that the main highway connecting Gwadar Port must be completed by March

2026 while also calling for expedited work on the strategic Hoshab-Awaran-Nal Highway in Balochistan, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

In Karachi, the minister instructed for the early completion of the Lyari Expressway, ensuring high construction standards, development of green areas and tree plantation along the vacant land of NHA. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he ordered faster progress on the Mansehra-Naran-Jalkhad Expressway. Abdul Aleem Khan further directed NHA to initiate indiscriminate operations to eliminate encroachments along Highways and present him an implementation report in this regard. He emphasized that the prime minister himself will inaugurate the major projects of NHA therefore they must be fully completed in all respects. Based on his recent field visits, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan instructed the development of well-equipped rest

areas along the Islamabad Murree dual carriage Expressway to cater to tourist needs including family washrooms and refreshment facilities. He also called for a nationwide survey of existing roadside spaces along NHA Highways and ordered their reallocation through new contracts, aligned with regional requirements.

During the meeting, Aleem Khan was briefed on NHA's revenue streams and other key matters. He directed that all NHA projects like toll plazas should be offered through open bidding, ensuring transparent participation for all citizens. He also instructed to launch a public awareness campaign to promote this initiative. The meeting was attended by the Federal Secretary for Communications, CEO of NHA and senior officers from Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar via video link who briefed the minister on the current status of projects within their respective zones.

IHC orders father to take daughter Poland for meeting with mother

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday ordered a citizen to take his daughter to Poland for meeting with her mother there in a case regarding the custody dispute of the young girl. The court also sought record on next hearing regarding the online meeting of the girl with her mother. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani heard the case filed by girl's Polish mother Anna Monica for the extradition of her daughter. The petitioner's lawyer said that the concerned party is using excuses but is not cooperating, the girl's mother tried to meet her on WhatsApp or other online sites, the father did not arrange a meeting. The girl's father's lawyer, while giving arguments, said that the trial court had dismissed the petitioner's application for custody of the girl. The court directed that the girl should meet her mother, so arrange a meeting. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked that we want to keep this case balanced. The lawyer said that due to the court order, my client cannot go anywhere, my client's name is included in the no-fly list. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked that if the girl stays with her mother for some time, she will adjust something. The court directed the father to take the girl to abroad to meet her mother and the FIA not to stop the girl's father from going Poland. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked that the girl's father can go anywhere he wants but he cannot deceive the court. One case is going on here and the other is in Poland. —APP

Anti-dengue awareness camp setup

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) organised a camp on Wednesday in the Dhoke Khabba area, Union Council 43, to raise awareness among the masses about the importance of cleanliness and the prevention of dengue. According to a RWMC spokesman, the RWMC's communication and social mobilisation team distributed pamphlets emphasizing the importance and effectiveness of cleanliness, as well as the hazards of dengue. The spokesman called upon the residents to leave no place wet or with stagnant water, as the present spell of rains had increased the threat of dengue larvae breeding. Furthermore, he appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the sanitation staff to keep.—APP



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Briefs

ANF arrests 3 suspects with over 240 kgs of drugs

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting 4 operations across the country, recovered as many as 240.915 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 18.6 million and arrested 3 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Wednesday. He informed that 365 grams of Ice were recovered from tennis balls, concealed in a parcel destined for Portugal via a courier office in Gulberg, Lahore. As many as 2 kgs of Ice and 150 grams of weed were recovered from a vehicle near Data Darbar, Lahore and 2 suspects were arrested. In another operation, 3.6 kgs of hashish were recovered from the possession of a suspect at Wazirabad Road near Samrial, Sialkot. Similarly, 234.8 kgs of hashish, concealed for smuggling drives, were recovered from Mir Jatt, a remote region in Gwadar. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.—APP

NPO to organize webinar

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar titled "Stress Management for Wellness" on July 10 (Thursday). The workshop will provide information on the definition of stress, signs of both good and bad stress, methods for assessing personal stress levels, different levels of stress, common triggers of stress, and the concept of the "circle of safety," according to the NPO document shared here on Wednesday. The workshop challenges the popular belief that stress is bad for health and helps participants use it to their better advantage. The workshop enables participants to assess their stress levels and suggests strategies to alleviate their stress-related problems.—APP

Workers' remittances increase

ISLAMABAD: The workers' remittances increased by 26.6 percent during the fiscal year 2025 as compared to the corresponding period of last year, said the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday. The remittances reached to US\$ 38.3 billion during July-June 2024-25 as against the remittances of US\$ 30.3 billion received during July-June 2023-24. Similarly, on a year-on-year basis, the worker's remittance went up by 7.9 per cent in June 2025 to \$3,406 billion from \$3,158 billion during the same month last year. Remittances inflows during June 2025 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$823.2 million), United Arab Emirates (\$717.2 million), United Kingdom (\$537.6 million) and United States of America (\$281.2 million).—APP

Pak-Indonesia possess huge potential in bilateral ties: Envoy

Chairman REIT Zahid Latif Khan also spoke on the occasion. Ambassadors of Jordan and Morocco also attended the event

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday said that economic diplomacy and diversification of markets is need of hour. It's a timely and important effort to recognize individuals who are quietly but powerfully shaping Pakistan's image, both here and abroad, he said. Salik said that these stories matter because they inspire others, and they remind us that change is possible when good people come together with clear intent. The Chargé D'Affaires (CDA) of the Indonesian embassy in Islamabad, Rahmat Hindiarta Kasuma, on Wednesday said that Pakistan and Indonesia have huge potential in bilateral economic and trade ties, and both countries can work on different avenues of the economy. My conclusion is indeed, Pakistan has huge potentials, immense people, amazing landscapes, magnificent



hospitality, talented youth, and finally appetizing foods, the Chargé D'Affaires (CDA), of Indonesian embassy in Islamabad Rahmat Hindiarta Kasuma said the other day. Chairman REIT Zahid Latif Khan also spoke on the occasion. Ambassadors of Jordan and Morocco also attended the event. The Chargé D'Affaires (CDA), of Indonesia said that doing economic diplomacy in Pakistan is not only about discussing busi-

ness, investment, trade, and tourism, but it should be accompanied by speaking on a positive image. Rehmat said that this Club maintains optimistic spirits amid challenges. He let us strengthen our "Look East" Vision by further engagement with the Indonesian economy and the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economy. During 1.5 years of my term as the Indonesian Charge d'Affaires, my team

and I have set up the very high target of priority areas of diplomacy in economic relations and People-to-People contact." "We double even triple the Indonesian Embassy's engagement with the broader business community in various cities in Pakistan, from Islamabad and Rawalpindi, to Lahore, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Karachi and Multan, and then furthermore to Peshawar, Quetta and "we do not forget oth-



er regions like Skardu, and Hunza." Based on our experience, selling in Indonesia in Pakistan is challenging. Vice versa, selling Pakistan in Indonesia is also not easy, he said. The great stories of the relations between President Sukarno and Quid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, mutual support during the 1960s, he said. Indonesia CDA said that for the first time in the history of "Trade Expo Indonesia," Pakistan ranked 9th of the

countries sending the biggest delegation, and it was also impactful for further economic cooperation. He said that after that, there have been reciprocal visits by business communities between the two brotherly countries, from Jakarta to Lahore last April and also from Lahore to Jakarta last June. He said that the bilateral trade volume has increased in 2024 to \$ 4 billion from \$ 3, 36 billion in 2023,

which is considered a huge surplus on the Indonesian side. Pakistani exports to Indonesia increased in 2024 to around \$ 5 million from around \$ 3 million in 2023. According to IIPC (the Indonesian Investment Promotion Centre), in the first quarter of 2025, Pakistan's investment realisation in Indonesia reached \$ 10.09 million in only marking an exponential rise compared to 2024 of \$ 9.5 million.

Cotton collapse threatens economy as output hits record low

It has become a national economic crisis that demands immediate and serious attention from all relevant authorities," Shahid Rasheed Butt concluded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned economic expert and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Shahid Rasheed Butt, warned on Wednesday that the ongoing decline in cotton production poses a serious threat to Pakistan's economy. He welcomed Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's recent attention to the problems of farmers and the textile sector but stressed that announcements alone are not enough. Without urgent, coordinated, and practical actions, the cotton sector cannot be revived. In a statement issued today, he said that setting the support price of cotton at Rs 8,500 per 40 kg and forming a high-level committee are positive steps. However, these measures will be ineffective unless implemented

immediately. Shahid Rasheed Butt revealed that Pakistan's cotton production has decreased by more than 60 percent over the past decade. Once, the country produced 14 million bales, but that has now dropped to just 5.5 million bales. This sharp decline has made Pakistan heavily dependent on imported cotton, draining valuable foreign exchange and weakening export competitiveness. It is estimated that Pakistan will import 5.4 million bales of cotton in the 2024-25 fiscal year at a cost of around \$1.9 billion. This will further strain the current account and foreign exchange reserves, putting pressure on the local currency. The business leader noted that cotton and textiles account for nearly 60 percent of Pakistan's total exports and approximately 11 percent of its GDP. A crisis in this sector not only damag-

es the broader economy but also impacts millions of farmers, laborers, and industrialists. Due to declining production, over 60 percent of the country's spinning factories have shut down, resulting in increased unemployment. He identified poor seed quality, climate change, high production costs, the expansion of sugarcane cultivation, and inconsistent policy as the primary reasons behind the decline of the cotton sector. He also criticized agricultural research institutions for failing to provide farmers with high-quality seeds. Despite current challenges, Butt sees hope in recent hybrid cotton experiments in both public and private sectors. He urges the government to focus on improving seed quality and boosting agricultural research. His suggestions include measures to help farmers lower input costs and establishing

designated cotton zones with strict enforcement. These are more than suggestions—they are a roadmap to a brighter future for the cotton industry. Mr. Butt envisions a future of modernization for the cotton sector. He proposes reviving ginning and spinning factories through targeted incentives and subsidies. He also emphasizes the importance of increasing textile exports through practical support. Furthermore, he sees potential in introducing innovative farming tools, mobile apps, and drone technology to equip farmers with advanced techniques, boost productivity, and usher in a new era for the industry. "This is no longer just an agricultural issue. It has become a national economic crisis that demands immediate and serious attention from all relevant authorities," Shahid Rasheed Butt concluded.

OGRA launches second phase of digitizing Pak oil supply chain

ISLAMABAD: In continued drive toward digital transformation, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has launched the second phase of its flagship initiative – Digitizing Pakistan's Oil Supply Chain. Building on the successful deployment of its online licensing system and the first phase of digitization, OGRA has now initiated a comprehensive Track & Trace system in collaboration with the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB). This next phase aims to enhance transparency, operational efficiency, and safety across the country's downstream oil sector. Following the earlier launch of the Raahguzar mobile application – developed in partnership with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAC) – which allows consumers to locate licensed fuel stations through GIS mapping, OGRA's latest move expands the scope of digital oversight to the entire supply chain. This phase will digitize the end-to-end movement of petroleum products from refineries and import terminals to storage depots, tank lorries, and retail outlets. The new system integrates ERP platforms, GPS tracking, and centralized dashboards to provide real-time monitoring, deter illegal decanting and smuggling, and support more effective enforcement. Currently, over 29 Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are operating with ERP systems, and approximately 15,000 tank lorries are already equipped with GPS tracking devices. These developments form a solid foundation for the nationwide rollout of the Track & Trace system. "The initiative represents a major step toward a modern, transparent, and secure oil supply chain in Pakistan," said Masroor Khan, Chairman OGRA. "It reflects OGRA's commitment to leveraging technology for improved governance, public safety, and consumer confidence." With this landmark initiative, OGRA continues to position itself as a forward-looking regulator driving digital innovation for national progress.—DNA



Police rescue six, including kids, from flash flood

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Shahzad Town Police Station team and specialized divers successfully rescued a family of six, including three young children, who were trapped in floodwaters on Wednesday. An official told APP that heavy flooding in the Korang Nullah led to water entering nearby residential homes, endangering the lives of residents. Among those trapped in one house were two men, a woman, and three children identified as Muhammad Zulqarnain, Muhammad Zulkifl, and Muhammad Zoran. Upon receiving a distress call via Rescue 15, Islamabad Police's diving unit and Shahzad Town personnel immediately responded to the scene and safely evacuated all six individuals. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi lauded the timely response and bravery of the police personnel involved in the rescue operation and announced commendations and rewards in recognition of their dedication.—APP

Excise dept sets new tax collection record with Rs 21.34b

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Excise and Taxation Department has set a new benchmark in revenue collection, surpassing previous records by a significant margin, collecting Rs 21.34 billion in tax revenue during the financial year 2024-25. The department attributes this achievement to digital reforms, door-to-door services, and strong administrative

support. Talking to APP, Director Excise Bilal Azam said that the department collected Rs 21.34 billion in tax revenue during the financial year 2024-25, marking its highest-ever annual collection. He stated that this amount reflects a major increase compared to the previous fiscal year's total of Rs 17.23 billion. This year's revenue marks

a Rs 4.11 billion increase from last year's collection. Bilal Azam said that the department's success is the result of policies introduced under the guidance of Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa, and the administrative support of Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon. The Excise Director also noted that tax collection has seen significant growth over the past five years, crediting this rise to the introduction of digital solutions and citizen-focused services. He said the department's focus on public convenience played a central role in boosting collections.

PM for sustainable agricultural reforms strategy

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to formulate a comprehensive strategy for sustainable agricultural reforms in collaboration with provinces, to significantly increase production and reduce production costs. The prime minister, chairing a review meeting on the development of the agriculture sector, said that the agricultural reforms would commence with the provision of easy loans to farmers, for which a public-private partnership model would be adopted. He directed urgent reforms in the Zarai Taraqqiati Bank for a transparent provision of easy loans to farmers. He said that the upcoming Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) will

prioritize agricultural projects, focusing on mechanization, digitization, easy access to loans for farmers, and creating a business-friendly environment. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the sustainable agricultural reforms would further boost the national economy and reiterated the government's commitment to an enhanced focus on reforming the livestock sector alongside agricultural commodities. He said that the federal and provincial governments would fully cooperate to implement agricultural reforms and called for proposals for short-term and long-term strategies to enhance storage capacity for agricultural commodities. The prime minister said

that the agricultural development would primarily benefit farmers and rural areas and also emphasised collaboration among experts to develop the sector on modern lines. He directed to utilize agricultural zoning and value chain strategies to boost agricultural exports and introducing agricultural technology tailored to the needs of small landholdings, besides using integrated digital platforms to provide farmers with access to new agricultural information. During the meeting, proposals were presented to the prime minister regarding agricultural reforms, particularly focusing on increasing agricultural production, improving infrastructure, establishing simple and

sustainable regulations for a business-friendly environment, and ensuring easy access to loans for farmers. It was told that National Agriculture Innovation and Growth Action Plan focused on increasing farmers' income, enhancing production, and implementing reforms in the right direction. The prime minister was told that the measures were being taken to establish secure storage facilities for agricultural commodities and that a program for easy loans to farmers would be launched soon. Like other countries, Pakistan can also support farmers financially by creating a simple and transparent loan system, and artificial intelligence can be used to effectively increase per acre yield.—APP

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Balancing national security and freedom of expression in Pakistan

THE recent government decision to ban 27 YouTube channels on charges of spreading “anti-state narratives” has reignited a critical debate about the limits of state authority in regulating media and the fundamental right to freedom of expression in a democracy. While national security concerns cannot be dismissed outright, the opaque nature of these bans—particularly when some targeted channels appear to be affiliated with the opposition PTI—raises troubling questions about political victimization disguised as counter-propaganda measures. No government can afford to ignore genuine threats to national stability. In an era of digital misinformation, foreign-backed hybrid warfare, and politically motivated fake news, states must have mechanisms to counter narratives that incite violence, spread sedition, or destabilize society. If the banned YouTube channels were indeed involved in such activities—such as promoting extremism, spreading false information to incite unrest, or operating on behalf of hostile foreign actors—then the state’s intervention is justified. However, the problem arises when the definition of “anti-state” becomes overly broad and politically charged. Governments worldwide, including in mature democracies, have occasionally weaponized national security rhetoric to suppress dissent. The lack of transparency in the current bans—without clear, publicly available evidence—fuels suspicions that the move is less about safeguarding national interests and more about silencing opposition voices. A functioning democracy thrives on criticism, accountability, and political opposition. The government of the day is not synonymous with the state itself, and conflating opposition narratives with “anti-state” rhetoric is a dangerous precedent. If criticizing government policies, exposing corruption, or advocating for political change is labeled as treasonous, then democracy is reduced to mere majoritarianism, where the ruling party equates its survival with national interest. Some of the banned channels were known for their pro-PTI stance, which suggests that their real “crime” may have been their political alignment rather than any genuine threat to national security. If this is the case, the bans represent a worrying erosion of democratic

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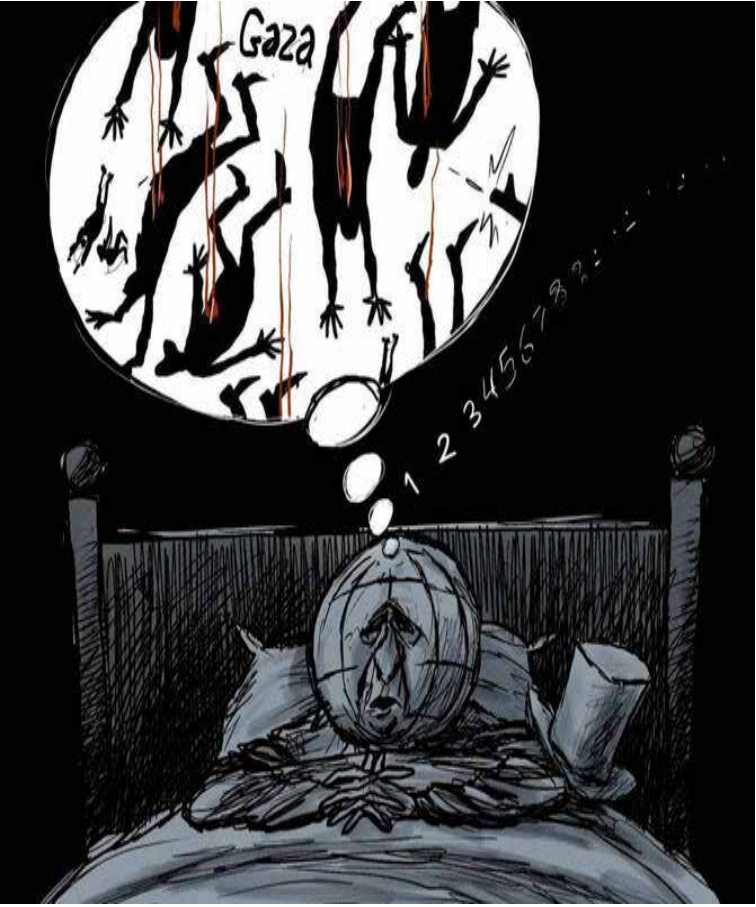
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norms. The absence of clear guidelines or judicial oversight in such decisions further deepens concerns about arbitrary censorship. History has shown that unchecked state censorship, even when initially justified on security grounds, often expands to suppress legitimate discourse. Governments may start with extreme cases but gradually extend restrictions to milder critics, creating a chilling effect where independent voices self-censor to avoid repercussions. Moreover, the lack of due process in these bans—no warnings, no right to appeal, no public disclosure of evidence—undermines the rule of law. If channels are banned without transparent reasoning, what stops future governments from using the same tactics against today’s ruling party when it becomes the opposition? Democratic governance requires consistency; the same laws used against opponents today could be weaponized against you tomorrow. Freedom of expression is not absolute, and reasonable restrictions exist in all democracies. However, such restrictions must be: Clearly Defined – Vague terms like “anti-state” must be legally precise to prevent misuse. Evidence-Based – The public deserves to know what specific content warranted a ban. Judicially Reviewed – Independent courts, not executive authorities alone, should assess the necessity of such actions. Proportionate – Complete bans should be a last resort; less restrictive measures (like demonetization or warnings) should be considered first. Unfortunately, the current approach appears to lack these safeguards. Instead of fostering trust, the bans have fueled accusations of political engineering, further polarizing an already divided media landscape. The government must recognize that heavy-handed censorship often backfires. Silencing critics does not eliminate dissent; it merely pushes it underground, where misinformation can flourish unchecked. A better approach would involve: Establishing transparent regulatory frameworks for digital media, with input from journalists, civil society, and opposition stakeholders. A nation’s strength lies in its ability to tolerate diverse opinions while safeguarding its stability. While Pakistan faces genuine security challenges, the solution is not to indiscriminately muzzle media but to distinguish between malicious actors and legitimate critics. The government must tread carefully—today’s suppression of opponents sets a precedent that may haunt them in the future. True democracy is not measured by how effectively a government silences its critics, but by how confidently it engages with them. If Pakistan is to uphold its democratic ideals, it must protect free expression while combating genuine threats—without letting political vendettas dictate the boundaries of acceptable speech.

Israel’s Failure to Defeat Hamas: A Strategic Paradox

Qamar Bashir



A third explanation, far less discussed but gaining traction among international observers, is that neither Israel nor Hamas seeks total victory. The war may now serve as a kind of controlled chaos—a strategic stalemate that benefits both power structures. For Israel, the ongoing conflict ensures domestic political unity in the face of deep internal fractures. Prime Minister Netanyahu’s coalition government, under pressure from both moderate centrists and radical settlers, uses the war as a shield to deflect judicial corruption charges, economic decline, and growing anti-war protests within Tel Aviv and Jerusalem

ON October 7, 2023, I warned in my first article that the Hamas attack on Israel—both brutal and calculated—would trigger a retaliation that would be overwhelming, unrelenting, and catastrophic for the people of Gaza. That grim prophecy has become reality. What followed was not just another military operation—it was a campaign of sustained annihilation, carried out by one of the most sophisticated military powers in the world, backed fully by the might of the United States. Israel, with access to the world’s most advanced drones, artificial intelligence-driven surveillance, satellite imagery, cyber-intelligence, and real-time data support from Washington, unleashed hell upon Gaza. By the end of 2024, over 39,000 Palestinians were reported dead, nearly 70% of them women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. And yet, despite this two-year-long war, a paradox stands tall and unshaken: Why has Israel still failed to defeat Hamas? This is not a rhetorical inquiry, nor a philosophical one—it is a fundamental question that casts doubt on the stated goals of the war. A movement so heavily besieged, cut off from food, water, electricity, and fuel, its leadership hunted down by Israeli precision strikes, somehow continues to function. Hamas still negotiates. It still holds hostages. It still strikes military targets. In a region under total aerial surveillance and technological lockdown, this endurance defies not just military expectations but the very laws of modern warfare. One explanation is that Hamas may, in fact, have already been dismantled as a conventional military force, but Israel continues the war to fulfill deeper, unspoken objectives. This would suggest that the real aim is not security, but territorial transformation. The idea of a “Greater Israel,” whispered in ultra-nationalist circles and championed by some in the ruling coalition, involves permanently erasing Palestinian political claims and turning temporary occupation into irreversible annexation. Israeli policy analyst Gideon Levy warned in Haaretz in early 2025 that “the war is no longer about eliminating Hamas; it is about eliminating Palestinian geography.” In this scenario, Hamas served as the pretext, but the end goal is demographic—evacuation, resettlement, and colonization under the guise of national defense. Still, another possibility may be more unsettling: that Hamas was never fully eliminated

and has instead adapted, evolved, and outmaneuvered Israel’s conventional military superiority. Hamas now operates more like a decentralized resistance force—cell-based, secretive, and ideologically driven. Leaders are replaced seamlessly. Communications may be carried out using human couriers and analog systems. Even more confounding to Israel’s war planners is how Hamas continues to replenish weapons and munitions. U.N. reports have frequently documented suspicions of illicit supply lines through southern Gaza tunnels and across the Sinai desert. Reuters, in a 2025 exposé, cited Egyptian intelligence sources admitting that “some border guards have been compromised, and material support slips through in exchange for bribes.” Black-market suppliers, cryptocurrency transactions, and even 3D-printed drone parts have all been speculated as sources. But supply alone does not explain resilience. The human intelligence network within Gaza—its people—plays a crucial role. Entire neighborhoods have become extensions of Hamas’s operational framework. Fighters blend into the civilian population, and Israeli surveillance struggles to differentiate between a doctor and a militant. When hospitals are struck and schools are bombed, Hamas does not wither; it gains sympathy and ideological power. In a 2024 speech, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh declared, “Each Israeli missile builds another brick in the wall of resistance.” Whether one sees this as propaganda or strategic truth, the reality is clear: Hamas survives not just through weapons, but through narrative strength. A third explanation, far less discussed but gaining traction among international observers, is that neither Israel nor Hamas seeks total victory. The war may now serve as a kind of controlled chaos—a strategic stalemate that benefits both power structures. For Israel, the ongoing conflict ensures domestic political unity in the face of deep internal fractures. Prime Minister Netanyahu’s coalition government, under pressure from both moderate centrists and radical settlers, uses the war as a shield to deflect judicial corruption charges, economic decline, and growing anti-war protests within Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Hamas uses the war to maintain its symbolic leadership over the Palestinian resistance, sidelining rivals like Fatah and presenting itself as the only credible voice of defiance.

This cynical arrangement creates a spectacle of endless suffering—where each side performs its role to keep its base intact. In this brutal theater, the people of Gaza are reduced to pawns. Ceasefires are negotiated only to be broken. Aid convoys are discussed only to be delayed. Civilians die in the thousands, while leaders speak in abstractions of deterrence, legitimacy, and survival. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both described this war as a “calibrated humanitarian disaster”—a term which, chillingly, suggests calculation, not chaos. So where does this leave us? After two years of war, the world must confront the possibility that the war is no longer about defeating Hamas—it may never have been. Instead, it may be about redefining the borders of morality and sovereignty, about how far a state can go when backed unconditionally by the world’s superpower. The real failure, then, may not be military—it may be ethical. Israel’s inability or unwillingness to end the war reveals more about its strategic ambitions than about Hamas’s operational capacity. In 2025, The Guardian published an op-ed noting, “Israel has won every battle but lost the war for legitimacy.” That legitimacy is eroding faster than bombs can fall. From campus protests in the U.S. to international court cases at The Hague, Israel is losing ground where it matters most: in the court of global conscience. History may not remember who won the last airstrike, or who negotiated the next ceasefire. But it will remember that a nation with unmatched power failed to silence a besieged resistance—and in doing so, may have exposed the limits of violence as a strategy. If Hamas still exists, what sustains it? If it no longer does, then why is Gaza still being reduced to rubble? Perhaps the most disturbing answer is that Israel does not want peace—at least not yet. And in that delay, the West becomes not just an enabler, but an accomplice. Victory has been replaced by vengeance. Strategy has been eclipsed by spectacle. And the end, if it ever comes, will not be a declaration of peace—but a realization of what was lost when war became a permanent state of being.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC
Macomb, Michigan, USA

Promoting and Protecting Pakistan’s global narrative

Ghazala Anbreen

Overall, prioritizing cultural, narrative management and national unity and leveraging the soft power of Pakistan for strengthening its global standing will eventually be of great benefit for uplifting the image of Pakistan abroad. There can be efforts to establish a Counter Narrative Response (CNR) Unit in each major mission to detect and rebut disinformation campaigns. Coordinating with friendly media, think tanks, and diaspora experts for providing fact-based perspectives on Pakistan’s...

IN an era of increased global competition, when there is a need to learn from global innovations, keeping in view Pakistan’s urgency and challenges, especially the disinformation factor, Pakistan can be showcased as a progressive, peaceful, and forward-looking country. There is a strong need to adopt a proactive strategic approach for shaping its global image. Cultural diplomacy and diaspora engagement are powerful tools for this purpose. It is also important for projecting a soft image of Pakistan and for building narrative resilience. All this requires a concerted effort involving all the ministries, departments, missions abroad, media, and civil society for safeguarding Pakistan’s national interests and its global standing. There must be determined, coordinated efforts across ministries, embassies, media, and civil society, both domestically and internationally, for protecting, projecting, and promoting Pakistan’s national interests, diplomacy, and diaspora mobilization. Global and local media can be partnered for promoting Pakistan’s positive stories and may be used to project soft power. Attaining the goal of positive projection can be developed by focusing on art, youth, sports, culture, and innovation. A digital cultural portal can also be launched, showcasing Pakistani heritage, documentaries, and creative industries. Diver-

sive overseas engagement must be avoided by maintaining a strict non-engagement with ethnic, sectarian, and toxic political groups in diaspora communities. It is all the more necessary to promote inclusive, apolitical events focused on national unity, shared identity, and constructive engagement. Facilitating interfaith harmony and cross-cultural programs abroad to celebrate diversity and harmony within the Pakistani narrative is also an essential ingredient of a good strategy. There must be official support and recognition for diaspora groups that uphold unbiased, peaceful, and culturally positive messaging. Overall, prioritizing cultural, narrative management and national unity and leveraging the soft power of Pakistan for strengthening its global standing will eventually be of great benefit for uplifting the image of Pakistan abroad. There can be efforts to establish a Counter Narrative Response (CNR) Unit in each major mission to detect and rebut disinformation campaigns. Coordinating with friendly media, think tanks, and diaspora experts for providing fact-based perspectives on Pakistan’s politics will also yield good results. Other measures include deploying embassy-level media desks for monitoring international press and issuing timely clarifications and narrative corrections, utilizing verified accounts, infographics, video explainers, and diaspora experts for providing fact-based perspectives

can greatly lead to enhancing the image of the country. Launching a Global Discover Pakistan Campaign through embassies, exhibiting the country’s tourism, arts, hospitality, and Sufi heritage, is equally important in this context. Partnering with international forums to feature Pakistani artists, writers, sports stars, and entrepreneurs as soft power ambassadors will be of much value and will present Pakistan’s stance with authenticity. Organizing regular Pakistani culture weeks abroad with a focus on classical and contemporary music, cuisine, art, poetry, and Sufi heritage, and highlighting Pakistan’s peacekeeping, climate resilience, and humanitarian contributions in international forums are immensely helpful. Effective soft power utilization is also essential, along with counter-narrative development, while mobilizing overseas assets and avoiding partisan politics. It can be seen that through investing in cultural projection, inclusive diaspora mobility, and management of national narrative, the global image of Pakistan can be reshaped. A soft power strategy, which is deeply embedded in national unity and constructive engagement, will be helpful for countering the debilitating hostile propaganda and helpful towards engendering goodwill, partnerships, and lending Pakistan an international authenticity. The time is ripe to act, with a coherent vision and clarity, coordination, and cultural confidence.

Briefs

Pak, Turkiye pledge to boost...

FROM PAGE 01

that the bilateral relations between the two countries would attain further momentum, leading to bolstering of cooperation in multifaceted areas. While reiterating the commitment of the both countries to continue their strong and unwavering support for each other's core interests, the Prime Minister emphasized upon the need for closer co-ordination between the two sides amidst the fast evolving regional and global environment, particularly in the context of Gaza and Iran. He once again expressed his deepest gratitude to the Turkish nation and leadership for their steadfast support to Pakistan during the recent Indian aggression. The Prime Minister stressed upon the need for concerted efforts by both sides to enhance bilateral trade to the attain the mutually agreed target of USD 5 billion. Highlighting Pakistan's investor-friendly policies, he invited Turkish companies to expand their investment footprint in Pakistan and invited Turkish side to share its expertise to assist in Pakistan's structural reforms, economic growth and development efforts.

Pakistan to launch pilot for digital...

FROM PAGE 01

controlled pilot programmes. At the Reuters NEXT Asia summit in Singapore, Ahmad said Pakistan was "building up our capacity on the central bank digital currency" and hoped to roll out a pilot soon. He was speaking on a panel alongside Sri Lanka's central bank governor, P Nandalal Weerasinghe, with both discussing monetary policy challenges in South Asia. Ahmad said a new law would "lay down the foundations for the licensing and regulation" of the virtual assets sector and that the central bank was in touch with some tech partners. The move builds on efforts by the government-backed Pakistan Crypto Council, set up in March to drive virtual asset adoption. The PCC is exploring bitcoin mining using surplus energy, has appointed Binance founder Changpeng Zhao as a strategic adviser and plans to establish a state-run bitcoin reserve.

US on India's denial of Trump's...

FROM PAGE 01

She further highlighted the rapid technological advances that allow news consumption on smartphones and other devices, enabling greater clarity and understanding of global affairs. "The exponential speed of technology change... reminds many of us how quickly things will change, how much information we can get, and the seriousness of making up our own minds when it comes to the things the world puts upon us," she added. "Donald Trump is here to make that easier and help us to make things clear. In May this year, Pakistan and India engaged in the military confrontation triggered by April's Pahalgam attack in IIOJK."

'Bully India' using trans-national...

FROM PAGE 01

people of Pakistan but India does not want it to materialise. He said that India wants the power differential between the two countries keep on increasing so that the it can act as "a regional hegemon and a bully" who can dictate its own terms. This is the biggest strategy New Delhi has, he added. The DG ISPR said that there was not one face of Indian terrorism. "Indian terrorism in Pakistan has multiple faces," he added. Highlighting the forms of Indian-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan, the general accentuated the transnational killings carried out by New Delhi and pointed out towards Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) operatives and handler.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, held a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkiya, Hakan Fidan and the Minister of National Defence of Turkiya, Yasar Guler, co-chair of Joint Ministerial Commission at FoFA. – DNA

President Approves virtual assets act, 2025

The legislation also incorporates a framework for responsible innovation by establishing a regulatory sandbox, allowing emerging technologies and business models to be tested under supervisory oversight

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has formally approved the "Virtual Assets Act, 2025," following endorsements from the Federal Cabinet, the Prime Minister, and the President of Pakistan. The law establishes the Pakistan Virtual Asset Regulatory Authority (PVARA), an autonomous federal body empowered to license, regulate, and supervise entities dealing in virtual assets. The Authority has been granted comprehensive powers to ensure transparency, compliance, financial integrity, and the prevention of illicit activities, in alignment with international standards including those of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The Board of the Authority will include key government stakeholders, such as the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Secretaries of Finance, Law and Justice, and Information Technology and Telecommunications, as well as the Chairpersons of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and the Digital Pakistan Authority. Additionally, two independent directors with expertise in virtual assets, law, finance, or technology will be appointed by the Federal Government. The Chairperson, appointed on the basis of demonstrated experience in finance, law, technology, or regulatory affairs, will oversee the Authority's functions. Under the Act, any person or company intending to offer virtual as-

set services in or from Pakistan must be licensed by the Authority. A structured licensing regime will be introduced, with specific requirements for incorporation, operational capacity, compliance frameworks, and reporting obligations. The legislation also incorporates a framework for responsible innovation by establishing a regulatory sandbox, allowing emerging technologies and business models to be tested under supervisory oversight. In addition, the Authority may issue no-action relief letters under defined conditions to facilitate experimentation while preserving regulatory accountability. To ensure compatibility with Islamic finance principles, the law mandates the formation of a Shariah Advisory Com-

mittee, which will advise the Authority on matters related to the Shariah compliance of virtual asset products and services. Licensed entities offering Islamic financial products will be bound by the rulings issued by the Committee. The Act also provides for the establishment of a Virtual Assets Appellate Tribunal to hear appeals against regulatory decisions. The Tribunal will function with judicial independence and a specialized bench comprising experts in law, finance, and technology. With this forward-looking legislation, Pakistan takes a major step in shaping a secure, inclusive, and innovation-friendly digital financial ecosystem—ensuring that technological progress is matched with institutional readiness and public interest safeguards.

Ahmed Kundi demands immediate release of PPP district president

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Parliamentary Leader in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and Member Provincial Assembly (MPA), Ahmed Kundi, has strongly condemned the arrest of PPP District President Farhan Afzal Dhap, calling it a clear act of political victimization carried out under the guise of an anti-encroachment operation. Kundi stated that Farhan Dhap was peacefully leading a protest against what he described as an "unlawful and selective" anti-encroachment drive when the police abruptly registered a First Information Report (FIR) and arrested him. "Farhan Dhap's arrest during a lawful and peaceful demonstration is not just undemocratic—it is a calculated move to suppress opposition voices," Kundi said. "This action reflects a clear misuse of administrative authority, aimed at silencing political dissent under the pretext of enforcing law." He further criticized the provincial government's approach, stating that such retaliatory actions are a growing

sign of intolerance toward democratic expression.

"The arrest of Farhan Afzal Dhap is not only unjustified but also reflects the government's growing intolerance towards peaceful protest," he added. "This is a clear case of political revenge. The use of state machinery to suppress political opponents is condemnable and must be stopped immediately." Kundi demanded the immediate release of Dhap and called for an independent and transparent inquiry into the incident. "We demand the immediate release of Farhan Dhap and call for an independent inquiry into the incident. The PPP will not be intimidated and will continue its peaceful struggle for justice, democracy, and the rights of the people," Kundi affirmed. Meanwhile, the PPP leadership also urged human rights organizations, legal forums, and civil society to take notice of what they called an illegal and politically motivated arrest. The party has vowed to raise the issue at all relevant platforms until justice is ensured. – DNA

All Pakistan CM Balochistan Football Gold Cup to Kick Off on July 15

The inaugural game will feature a thrilling contest between Baloch Club Nushki and Afghan Club Chaman

QUETTA: Secretary for Sports and Youth Affairs Balochistan, Durra Baloch, has announced that the highly anticipated All Pakistan Chief Minister Balochistan Football Gold Cup will kick off on July 15, with the opening match scheduled for 6:30 PM at the Ayub Sports Complex Football Ground in Quetta.

The inaugural game will feature a thrilling contest between Baloch Club Nushki and Afghan Club Chaman. Speaking at a meeting convened to review preparations for the tournament, Durra Baloch emphasized that the event will provide young people with an opportunity to witness high-quality football games among the players across the country.

He said that the Balochistan government, under the direction of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Advisor for Sports Meena Majeed, is fully committed to promoting sports in the province and is utilizing all available resources to ensure the success of such events. The Gold Cup will feature participation from more than 50 football teams

from across the country. Durra Baloch highlighted that all matches during the tournament will be held day and night, ensuring a continuous display of football talent and enthusiasm throughout the competition. He further assured that the Department of Sports Balochistan will provide complete facilities for both players and spectators, stressing that no negligence or lapses in arrangements will be tolerated. The initiative aims not only to promote football but also to create a healthy and engaging environment for the youth of Balochistan. The All Pakistan CM Balochistan Football Gold Cup is expected to be one of the largest football events in the region this year. – Agencies

PMYP-Lahore Qalandars Launch Sindh Cricket Trials

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), cricket trials for Sindh's youth aiming to make their mark at the national level are set to begin today (Thursday). According to HEC Director of Sports Javed Memon, the trials—organized in collaboration with Pakistan Super League champions Lahore Qalandars—will be held for both boys and girls from various cities across Sindh. The campaign kicks off at NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi. Following the Karachi leg, trials will also be conducted in Hyderabad, Larkana, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Sukkur. The initiative aims to provide a platform for young cricketers to showcase their talent and pursue professional opportunities in cricket. The opening ceremony will also take place today at NED University, with notable attendees including Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Sindh Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Sardar Muhammad Bux Khan Mahar, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, PMYP Sindh Chapter Focal Person Fahad Shafiq, and HEC Director of Sports Javed Ali Memon.

Germany, Sweden reach Euro 2025 quarters with match to spare

BASEL: Germany and Sweden both reached the quarter-finals of Women's Euro 2025 on Tuesday after respective wins over eliminated Denmark and Poland which maintained both teams' perfect starts in Switzerland. The two teams will face off in Zurich on Saturday to decide who tops Group C, with Sweden currently leading Germany – 2-1 winners in Basel – on goal difference after beating the Poles 3-0. Lea Schueller fired Germany to victory in the 66th minute as Germany came from behind in Basel to go up to six points and qualify for the next round with a game to spare. Sjoekje Nuesken drew Germany level from the penalty spot 10 minutes before Schueller's second goal in as many games, cancelling out Amalie Vangsgaard's rocket of an opener for the Danes. – Agencies

AGP blows lid off Rs 300 billion wheat...

FROM PAGE 01

federal cabinet approving one MMT of wheat import through TCP, the MNFS&R sat on the file for over a month, finally instructing TCP to withhold procurement altogether – after private imports had already flooded the market. It is apprehended that the ministries of MNFS&R and Commerce intentionally delayed the process to favour private importers, the AGP report states.

PHC nullifies ECP's...

FROM PAGE 01

party was unconstitutional. The court directed the ECP to hear all relevant political parties again and reallocate the seats within 10 days. It also ordered that, until the new decision is made, the two women MPAs from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JULF) should not be de-notified. The development comes as the electoral body, last week, reinstated 21 reserved seats for women in KP Assembly following the Supreme Court's verdict, which declared the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) ineligible for reserved seats. Out of these 21 seats, eight were allocated to JULF, six to PML-N, and five to PPP. One seat each was also allotted to the PTI Parliamentarians (PTI-P) and the Awami National Party (ANP).

Equity market retreats...

FROM PAGE 01

During the session, the index touched an intraday high of 133,566.37 points, gaining 163.18 points or 0.12%, before plunging to a low of 132,326.17 points, reflecting a drop of 1,077.02 points, or 0.81%. "Stocks under pressure on bearish global equities and weak global crude oil prices amid fears over outcome of US trade tariff," said Ahsan Mehtani, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities. "Rupee instability, uncertainty over outcome of ADB concerns on FBR tax compliance played catalyst role in bearish activity at PSX," he added.

Meeting of ASEAN Regional...

FROM PAGE 01

and security issues affecting the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus on promoting peace, stability, and mutual cooperation through dialogue. During his visit to Kuala Lumpur, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister will also meet with his Malaysian counterpart as well as other visiting Foreign Ministers and representatives. He will also engage with the Pakistani community in Kuala Lumpur.

At least one killed in Bannu drone attack

FROM PAGE 01

adding that the incident occurred overnight, leaving one woman dead. Meanwhile, the police station was targeted in the morning resulting in some damage to the solar panels.

Pak stun China to seal fourth consecutive U-18 Asia Cup win

Pakistan lead Group A after 6-3 win over Bangladesh in high-paced clash and win over China

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's under-18 hockey side extended their unbeaten run at the U-18 Hockey Asia Cup, overpowering China. Earlier, Pakistan had beaten Bangladesh 6-3 in a pulsating Group A clash at the Dazhou National Hockey Training Centre. The first half delivered end-to-end action, with both teams locked at 3-3 by the break following an aggressive exchange of goals. But it was all Pakistan in the second half, as the Green Shirts took firm control with a flurry of attacks, netting three unanswered goals while shutting down Bangladesh's offence. The match ended 6-3 in Pakistan's favour. For Pakistan, Abdullah Awan and Hanzala Ali scored two goals each, while Atif Ali and Asim scored one goal each. With this victory, Pakistan now leads Group A with a perfect record of nine points from three matches. The team has been in formidable form, scoring a total of 23 goals while conceding only three in



the tournament so far. Earlier in the competition, Pakistan delivered two commanding performances crushing Hong Kong 8-0 and outclassing Sri Lanka with another 9-0 triumph. The U18 Hockey Asia Cup features teams from 11 nations, including China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Kazakhstan. Pakistan has been placed in Pool A alongside China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Hong Kong, while Pool B includes Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Chinese Taipei. **Squad:** Mohammad Usman, Atif Ali, Asam Junaid, Mohammad Abdullah Farooq, Abdullah Awan, Zubair Lateef, Mohammad Yaseen, Mohammad Ali Taj, Ghulam Mustafa, Ali Hamza, Ali Hamzad, Aamir Sohail, Adeel Afzal, Mohammad Zaman, Mohammad Hussain, Mohammad Shaheer, Hasan Shahbaz, Yaseen Jamsahid **Team Management:** Shafqat Malik (Manager), Mukhtar Ahmed, Touseeq Ahmed, Masood-ur-Rahman (Coaches).

Briefs

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 826 points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index witnessed bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 826.20 points, a negative change of 0.62 percent, closing at 132,576.99 points against 133,403.19 points last trading day. A total of 905,743,882 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,206,524,901 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 30,530 billion against Rs 42,028 billion on the last trading day. As many as 478 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 200 of them recorded gains and 254 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 24 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were TPL Properties with 65,908,965 shares at Rs 10.68 per share, Kohinoor Spinning with 62,445,020 shares at Rs6.65 per share and PIA Holding Company with 39,774,070 shares at Rs 23.23 per share. PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 1,964.91 per share price, closing at Rs 21,614.00, whereas the runner-up was Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs 249.85 rise in its per share price to Rs 23,488.49. —APP

Gold price dips by Rs 3,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.3,000 and was traded at Rs.351,500 on Wednesday as compared to its sale at Rs.354,500 on the last trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs2,572 to Rs.301,354 from Rs. 303,926 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went down by Rs.2,357 to Rs.276,251 from Rs. 278,608. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,841 and Rs.3,293 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$33 to \$3,292 from \$3,325, whereas that of silver remained stagnant at \$36.57, the Association reported. —APP

Rupee loses 10 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 10 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 284.46 against the previous day's closing of Rs 284.36. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 286 and Rs 287 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.18 to close at Rs 333.11 against the last day's closing of Rs 334.29, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen depreciated by 01 paisa and was traded at Rs1.93 against Rs.1.94, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.10 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 386.61 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 387.71. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paisa and 02 paisa to close at Rs 77.44 and Rs 75.84 respectively. —APP

Cities key to building closer SCO community

BEIJING: Officials from major cities tied to summits of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization stressed heightened collaboration in connectivity, digitalization and people-to-people exchanges, positioning urban co-operation as a pillar for regional integration ahead of the group's Tianjin summit. Senior city officials, media representatives and think tank leaders who convened in Tianjin for the Global Mayors Dialogue • SCO Summit Cities event underscored the strategic role of cities in building a closer SCO community with a shared future. Tianjin will host the summit in autumn, marking the fifth time that China has hosted the landmark event since the group's founding in 2001, China Daily reported. —APP

Film and Water Festival events strengthen Thai–Pakistani friendship

Highlights included friendly water fights, traditional Thai water games, and a Som Tum (papaya salad) making competition

DNA

LAHORE: The Royal Thai Embassy in Islamabad recently brought the sights, sounds, and spirit of Thailand to life in Pakistan through two major cultural events: the “Thai Movie Night” and the “Water Festival: Splashing for Happiness”, held in Islamabad and Lahore. These vibrant experiences not only delighted local audiences but also deepened cross-cultural understanding and promoted Thailand as an exciting, welcoming destination for Pakistani travelers. The Embassy hosted Thai Movie Night on 22-24 May 2025 at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad, and again on 20 June 2025 at Ali Institute of Education, Lahore, screening the beloved Thai animated film “Khan Kluey”. The film tells the story of a brave young elephant who becomes the royal war elephant of King Naresuan, embodying values of family, perseverance, and courage—virtues that resonate deeply with both Thai and Pakistani audiences. In his opening remarks, H.E. Mr. Rongvudhi Virabutr, Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan, emphasized the power of cultural storytelling: “The growing interest in Thai films, cuisine, and culture here in Pakistan – just as Pakistani culture continues to find admirers in Thailand – demonstrates how soft power can build bridges where formal diplomacy sometimes cannot. These cultural connections complement and strengthen our of-



ficial ties.” Special attention was also given to inclusive outreach, with the Embassy organizing exclusive screenings for students from Model Mashal School Islamabad, an institution dedicated to serving learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The experience of Thai cinema, culture, and hospitality offered valuable exposure and was warmly received by both students and educators. The events were further enriched by Thai music, food sampling, and cultural displays, immersing attendees in Thailand's vibrant identity and rein-

forcing its growing visibility in Pakistan. The Embassy also encouraged guests to continue exploring Thai films through Netflix Pakistan, which offers an expanding catalog of Thai dramas, thrillers, and family favorites. These film nights were made possible thanks to the Thai Subcommittee on Film, Documentary, and Animation Promotion, which generously provided screening rights at no cost.

The Thai Embassy turned up the cultural excitement once again with the “Water Festival: Splashing for Happiness” at Beaconhouse National

University (BNU), Lahore. Inspired by Thailand's Songkran Festival (Thai New Year), this lively event offered Lahore residents a chance to cool off from the summer heat while engaging in authentic Thai traditions. Highlights included friendly water fights, traditional Thai water games, and a Som Tum (papaya salad) making competition. On stage, guests enjoyed a Muay Thai performance, and watched a live Thai cooking demonstration by the Chef from the Thai Ambassador's Residence and Chef Namra, the winner of Thai Hero

Chef 2025.

Visitors also explored a vibrant array of Thai-themed stalls that showcased the country's rich cultural offerings. Two popular fried chicken booths—Five Star Chicken and Sufi—served delicious Thai-style crispy chicken, attracting eager crowds. Attendees also browsed stalls featuring Thai snacks, herbal balms, lifestyle products, and handmade souvenirs. A wellness booth offered relaxing traditional Thai massage demonstrations, while an education corner provided information about studying in Thailand. A particular highlight was the beverage tasting station, where visitors enjoyed refreshing Thai fruit drinks, including the popular Malee coconut drink, which offered a cool, tropical flavor perfect for the summer heat. These unique refreshments, alongside the vibrant cultural activities, allowed guests to experience Thailand's hospitality through taste, aroma, and tradition—making the event both lively and enriching. The event concluded on a high note with a lucky draw, where one lucky participant won a round-trip flight to Thailand, sponsored by Thai Airways, sparking further excitement about visiting the Land of Smiles. Soft Power in Action: Thailand Builds Bridges Through Culture Together, Thai Movie Night and the Water Festival exemplify Thailand's increasing use of cultural engagement and public diplomacy in Pakistan – strengthening bilateral ties not only through formal channels, but through shared experiences, storytelling, and heartfelt hospitality.

Taiwan kicks off military drills in face of China threat

TAIPEI: Taiwan kicked off its largest military drills Wednesday with regular troops joined by a record mobilization of reservists for 10 days of training aimed at defending against a Chinese invasion. The annual “Han Kuang” exercises, which are being held at the same time as civilian defense drills, will run from July 9-18 and feature newly delivered US high-tech rocket systems. The self-ruled island democracy faces the constant threat of an invasion by China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has threatened to use force to seize it. Chinese military pressure has intensified in recent years, with Beijing deploying fighter jets and warships around the island on a near-daily basis. In the lead-up to the drills Wednesday, Taiwan detected 31 sorties by Chinese military aircraft and seven warships around the island in the 24 hours to 6:00 am (2200 GMT Tuesday), according to the defense ministry. Taiwan has boosted defense spending and acquired smaller and more nimble weaponry, including drones, to enable its military to wage asymmetric warfare against its more powerful foe. Twenty-two thousand reservists – the largest ever call-up – are participating in this year's drills, having begun a training program Saturday. Reservist training includes familiarization with rifles, squad and platoon machine guns, and tactical maneuvers. “Because these reservists have been discharged and away for a long time, upon return they need to undergo specialty refresher training,” said an army officer who asked not to be named. On Wednesday, reservists wearing camouflage uniforms, helmets and boots were put through their paces, practicing cleaning, assembling and aiming 65K2 rifles and machine guns. Taipei is eager to show the world, especially its key security backer Washington, that it is serious about boosting its military capability. The drills will “let the international community know that we are determined to defend ourselves, and to pass on to China that the nation's military has the confidence and ability to defend a free and democratic life,” Taiwanese Defense Minister Wellington Koo said recently. This year's drills have been extended to 10 days and nine nights, from five days and four nights last year. The Han Kuang began in 1984 when the island was still under martial law. Troops will simulate various scenarios including “grey zone harassment” – tactics that fall short of an act of war – as well as “long-range precision strikes” to combat a Chinese invasion in 2027, defense officials have said. —Agencies

Iraq's Kurdistan enjoys all-day state electricity

IRBIL: More than 30 percent of Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region now has 24-hour state electricity, authorities said Thursday, with plans to extend full coverage by the end of 2026. The northern region of Kurdistan has long promoted itself as a haven of relative stability in an otherwise volatile country. Despite Iraq's vast oil wealth, the national grid struggles to meet demand, leaving most areas reliant on imported energy and subject to frequent power cuts. “Today, two million people across the Kurdistan region enjoy 24-hour electricity... that's 30 percent of the population,” including the cities of Irbil, Duhok and Sulaimaniyah, said regional prime minister Masrour Barzani. In 2024, the Kurdistan Regional Government launched “Project Runaki” to deliver round-the-clock power in a region where, like much of Iraq, residents often turn to costly and polluting private generators. The region's electricity minister, Kamal Mohammed, said residents were now enjoying “uninterrupted, cleaner, and more affordable electricity.” —APP

Palestinian family in Gaza ask UK court for help to join relative

LONDON: A Palestinian family of six who are stuck in Gaza despite having permission to join a relative in Britain asked London's High Court on Wednesday to make officials reconsider their refusal to ask Israel for help to leave the enclave. Lawyers representing a Palestinian couple and their four children said the family were given leave to enter the United Kingdom to join the family member, who is a British citizen. A London tribunal ruled earlier this year that the family should be permitted to enter the UK, in a decision which was publicly criticized by Prime Minister Keir Starmer and opposition leader Kemi Badenoch in February. But the family's lawyers say Britain's foreign ministry is refusing to provide assistance because it will not ask Israel whether the family can leave Gaza to provide the biometric data needed to travel to Britain, as there is no operating visa center in Gaza. Tim Owen, a lawyer representing the family, said they were asking the High Court to order the foreign office to reconsider its decision. Owen said in court filings that three of the family's four children had recently been fired upon when attempting to access aid, with one of the children also having been struck in the wrist by shrapnel from a tank shell. —APP

Israel army says launched ‘special, targeted operations’ in south Lebanon

JERUSALEM: Israel's military said Wednesday its troops entered southern Lebanon as part of targeted operations to dismantle infrastructure belonging to the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah. “Following intelligence information and the identification of Hezbollah weapons and terrorist infrastructure in several areas of southern Lebanon, the soldiers launched special, targeted operations to dismantle them and prevent Hezbollah from reestablishing itself in the area,” an army statement said. The military did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment on whether this was the first time Israeli troops had operated on the ground in Lebanon since a November ceasefire. But the army shared a video captioned “footage from a targeted nighttime operation of the 9th Brigade in southern Lebanon,” showing troops walking on the ground. AFP was unable to verify the footage, the time or location it was shot. The army statement said the 9th Brigade was in the Labbounh area, just over the border. Troops from the 300th Brigade operated in the Jabal Blat area further west, also within sight of the frontier. —APP

Armenia, Azerbaijan to meet for peace talks in UAE today

BAKU: The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan will meet on Thursday in the United Arab Emirates for peace talks, two days after the US expressed hope for a swift deal. Baku and Yerevan fought two wars over the disputed Karabakh region, which Azerbaijan recaptured from Armenian forces in a lightning offensive in 2023, prompting the exodus of more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians. The arch foes agreed on the text of a comprehensive peace deal in March, but Baku has since outlined a host of demands – including amendments to Armenia's constitution to drop its territorial claims for the Karabakh – before signing the document. On Wednesday, the Armenian government said Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev will meet the following day in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi, “within the framework of the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.” The Azerbaijani presidency issued an identical statement. —APP



Baku: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq shaking hand with the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Ali Asadov at Cabinet of Ministers.

How a Muslim woman from Sulu made history as a Philippine Air Force pilot

The first Filipino Muslim woman in such a role, she tries not to see her achievements as anything extraordinary. “I always keep my feet grounded,” she said. “If you have a dream, then you have to persevere and find ways to attain (it)

CLARK AIR BASE, PAMPANGA: In 1998, when she sat in the cockpit for the first time, Rosemawattee Remo was not just fulfilling her dream – she was also making history by becoming the first female Muslim pilot in the Philippine Air Force. Born and raised in Sulu, in the predominantly Muslim southern Philippines, Remo grew up in a traditional household where male and female roles were clearly defined. Her decision to join the military, travel some 1,000 km away from home and fly aircraft was not initially welcomed. “My father was a (school) principal then and he wanted me to follow in his footsteps,” she told Arab News. “The day before my departure to Manila, I told him that I had a scheduled flight and he told me: ‘You're way ahead of your brothers ... we're still alive and you're

already making decisions on your own.” But she did not feel discouraged: “Those words keep ringing in my ears every time I'm at my lowest,” she said. (“They remind me that I can't give up.” Holding the rank of colonel and currently serving as deputy wing commander of the PAF's 410th Maintenance Wing, Remo started her military career in 1992 with the Women's Auxiliary Corps under the Armed Forces. A year later, she enrolled in the Officer Candidate School. Her graduation in 1994 coincided with the implementation of a landmark law that for the first time allowed women to hold combat and leadership roles in the army, navy, air force and police – positions previously exclusively for men. “We were nearing our graduation. We were told to draw lots and, fortunately, I

took the Philippine Air Force,” Remo said. Four years later, she started her training as a pilot and soon specialized in helicopter rescue missions. Assigned to the PAF 505th Search and Rescue Group, she flew Bell 205 and Huey helicopters for disaster response and served as a co-pilot aboard a larger Sikorsky or Black Hawk for military transport and relief missions. Married to a fellow PAF pilot, she has three children and has always found ways to balance her military service with motherhood – and even make them complement each other. In the aftermath of deadly Typhoon Frank in 2008, when she flew relief operations in Central Mindanao in conditions suitable for flight, she had two major motivations that kept her going: the distressed people on the

ground suddenly filling with hope as they heard the chugging sound of helicopter blades, and her own kids waiting for her at home. “I always brought them along with me in the deployment area, so every time I got out of the aircraft I saw my kids waiting for me,” she said. “I needed to go back home right after the mission ... I had to do everything to survive.” Col. Remo has flown more than 2,000 hours on critical missions – search and rescue, relief, rehabilitation. She also took part in skydiving exhibitions between 1999 and 2014. The first Filipino Muslim woman in such a role, she tries not to see her achievements as anything extraordinary. “I always keep my feet grounded,” she said. “If you have a dream, then you have to persevere and find ways to attain (it).” — Agencies

Briefs

Pilot killed
as Indian
fighter jet
crashes in
Rajasthan

Jaguar fighter jet
crashes near Bhanuda
village in Churu district

DNA

NEW DELHI: An Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot was killed after a Jaguar fighter jet crashed near Bhanuda village in the Churu district of Rajasthan, according to Indian media reports. The aircraft had taken off from the Suratgarh airbase. The Jaguar is a twin-engine fighter bomber, available in single and twin-seat variants, and is widely used by the IAF. First inducted in the late 1970s, it has undergone significant upgrades over the years. On March 7, another IAF Jaguar crashed in Ambala following a system malfunction. The pilot steered the aircraft away from residential areas before ejecting safely.

Rubio
imposter
used AI to
message

WASHINGTON: An imposter posing as US Secretary of State Marco Rubio sent AI-generated voice and text messages to high-level officials and foreign ministers, reports said Tuesday, the latest American official to be targeted by impersonators. A cable from the top US diplomat's office said the unidentified culprit was likely seeking to manipulate powerful officials "with the goal of gaining access to information or accounts," the Washington Post and other US media reported. The imposter contacted at least three foreign ministers, a US state governor, and a member of Congress using both text messaging and the encrypted messaging app Signal, according to the cable dated July 3. — Agencies

PKK
disarmament
to happen
'swiftly'

ISTANBUL: The process of PKK militants disarming will happen quickly, the group's founder Abdullah Ocalan who is jailed in Turkey, said two days before a first ceremony to lay down weapons. The PKK on Friday will hold an event in Iraqi Kurdistan to start destroying a first tranche of weapons, formally starting a disarmament process that is likely to unfold over the coming months. "The details of disarmament will be determined and implemented swiftly. Establishing a disarmament mechanism will advance the process," Ocalan said in a video message. "This represents a voluntary transition from the phase of armed conflict to the phase of democratic politics and law," he said, stressing that the peace process had reached a "historic" point. — APP

Pak-Türkiye ties solidified

Turkish defence team
visits air headquarters

The Turkish Minister of Defence expressed sincere gratitude to the Air Chief for the warm reception and gracious hospitality extended by Pakistan Air Force

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation led by Mr Yaşar Güler, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Türkiye, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force during a visit to Air Headquarters, Islamabad. The meeting encompassed discussions on evolving regional security dynamics, progress of ongoing defence cooperation and prospects for future collaboration in emerging domains of warfare. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the enduring brotherly ties between Pakistan and Türkiye, emphasizing the common aspirations and strategic convergence that bind the two nations. He reaffirmed PAF's steadfast resolve to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in the domains of advanced training and aerospace technologies. Both dignitaries also agreed on the establishment of dedicated joint working groups to streamline and accelerate progress across various sectors of mutual interest.

The Turkish Minister of Defence expressed sincere gratitude to the Air Chief for the warm reception and gracious hospitality extended by Pakistan Air Force. He lauded PAF's exceptional performance under the insightful leadership of Air Chief in the recent conflict with India, commending its operational preparedness and resolute de-



fence of national sovereignty. Highlighting the longstanding fraternal ties between Türkiye and Pakistan, Mr. Yaşar Güler conveyed Türkiye's earnest desire to bolster bilateral defence relations through deeper industry-to-industry collaboration. He particularly emphasized the need to explore joint ventures in cutting-edge domains, including niche disruptive technologies, advanced avionics and

unmanned aerial systems. The Turkish Defence Minister also expressed his appreciation for PAF's continued support in the pilot exchange programme, which he termed as a vital initiative for fostering professional growth and operational understanding between the two Air Forces. Both dignitaries concurred on finalizing the modalities for enhanced training collaboration and

reaffirmed their strong commitment to expanding the scale and scope of joint bilateral and multilateral air exercises. The visit of Turkish Minister of Defence to Air Headquarters, Islamabad reflects the shared commitment of both the brotherly nations to enhance strategic cooperation, solidify defence ties and promote lasting institutional linkages between the Armed Forces of Pakistan and Türkiye.

UAE denies rumours
of lifetime Golden
Visa for certain
nationalities

Indian media claimed that individuals
from India, Bangladesh can avail
Golden Visa by paying AED 100,000

CENTRELINE REPORT

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates has officially denied reports claiming the country is offering lifetime Golden Visas to individuals from specific nationalities, calling such claims misleading and baseless, reported Emirates News Agency-WAM. In a statement released by the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security (ICP), authorities said some local and international media outlets and websites have falsely reported that UAE Golden Visas can be obtained for life by paying a one-time fee or through foreign consultancy offices.

The clarification follows several Indian news outlets including The Times of India, The Hindu, and Press Trust of India (PTI) reporting on a "nomination-based" Golden Visa pilot programme. According to these reports, individuals from India and Bangladesh can now obtain lifetime Golden Visas without property or business investment by paying a one-time fee of AED 100,000. However, the ICP clarified that all rules governing the Golden Visa scheme — including eligible categories, conditions, and application procedures — are clearly defined by UAE legislation. These visas can only be applied for through official government channels, and no private internal or external entity is authorised to process or guarantee applications. The statement follows the circulation of articles by a consultancy firm based outside the UAE, claiming to facilitate lifetime Golden Visas for foreign nationals under relaxed requirements. The ICP said these reports were made without coordination with UAE authorities and have no legal validity. The Authority has reaffirmed its commitment to a transparent and secure application system available only through official digital platforms such as the ICP website and mobile app. It also warned the public against falling for false promises and cautioned individuals not to share personal documents or pay any fees to unverified third parties.

Remittances surge over 26%
to record \$38.3bn in FY25

"FY25 marks the highest ever annual remittances received
by Pakistan," says Topline Securities

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Workers' remittances to Pakistan reached a record high of \$38.3 billion in fiscal year 2025, reflecting a 26.6% year-on-year increase from \$30.3 billion in FY24, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said on Monday. In June 2025 alone, remittances stood at \$3.4 billion, marking a 7.9% increase compared to the same month last year. According to Topline Securities, "Pakistan's remittances came at US\$3.4bn in Jun 2025, up 8% year-on-year. This takes FY25 remittances to \$38.3bn, up 27% YoY. FY25 marks the highest ever annual remittances received by Pakistan." Remittances have been on the rise, peaking at a record-breaking \$4.1 billion in March, the highest single-month inflow ever recorded. Analysts attributed this sharp rise to a combination of factors including economic recovery, stability in the exchange rate, and incentives introduced by both the government and the central bank. "The country received a record \$38.3 billion in remit-

tances in FY25 — up 27%," said Mohammed Sohail, CEO of Topline Securities.

According to the SBP, Saudi Arabia remained the largest source of remittances in June 2025, contributing \$823.2 million, followed by the United Arab Emirates with \$717.2 million, the United Kingdom with \$537.6 million, and the United States with \$281.2 million. Analysts attribute the growth to multiple factors: ongoing economic recovery supported by the International Monetary Fund's loan programme, exchange rate stability, targeted remittance incentives, and improvements in Pakistan's banking and financial infrastructure, which have encouraged greater use of formal channels by overseas Pakistanis. Earlier this year, SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad had projected annual remittances would approach \$38 billion in FY25, up from \$30.3 billion in FY24. The government has now set a remittance target of \$39.4 billion for FY26. In addition, the government has projected a current account deficit of \$2.1 billion, or 0.5% of GDP, for FY26 — revised from an expected \$1.5 billion surplus, or 0.4% of GDP, for FY25.

PML-N, PPP accused
of 'violating' Charter
of Democracy

*"Democracy can only progress
when there is civil supremacy,"
say incarcerated leaders*

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have accused the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) of "violating" the Charter of Democracy (CoD), a political agreement signed in 2006 between

former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. In a joint statement issued from jail, senior PTI leaders, including Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Dr Yasmin Rashid, Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, and Umar Sarfaraz Cheema alleged that the two major political parties had "systematically dismantled" the democratic framework outlined in the CoD, The News reported. They maintained the two parties took a U-turn and destroyed democracy, leaving it in shambles. "The lust for power was too big a temptation, and Imran Khan had become a major obstruction in that path. Democracy can only progress when there is civil supremacy," they said. The 1973 Constitution spelled it out for the people of Pakistan, they said, adding in the CoD, both parties had committed about it. The PTI leadership said the PML-N and PPP went back on their words and went for a regime change. "Today, we have a government which is proud to call itself a 'hybrid regime'. The most vocal proponent of this regime is Khawaja Asif, the defence minister. We wonder where is Nawaz Sharif going to support it."

JUI-F
leader calls
on PM
Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) and former federal minister Maulana Asad Mehmood Wednesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters of mutual interests. During the meeting they discussed the overall political situation of the country. Maulana Asad Mehmood also paid tribute to the prime minister for achieving economic stability in the country.

Texas flood's
death toll
rises to 110,
161 missing

TEXAS: More than 100 people are confirmed dead and at least 161 are missing as search and rescue operations in central Texas entered a fifth day Tuesday after heavy rainfall overwhelmed the Guadalupe River, sending floodwaters roaring through homes and area summer camps. The death toll rose to 110, including at least 27 children and counselors from the beloved Camp Mystic, a storied Christian girls camp in Kerr County, where flooding hit the hardest beginning July 4. At least 30 children were among those killed in the county, Sheriff Larry Leitha said in an update Tuesday morning.

In an afternoon news conference, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott confirmed the 110 fatalities and said 161 people are known to be missing in Kerr County alone. That second figure is much larger than previously believed. Five Mystic campers and one counselor remain unaccounted for, said Leitha, who updated the county's death toll to 87, up from 84 the previous day. Officials in Kendall County also said Tuesday that the death toll there rose to seven, up from six. — APP

Aurangzeb for
consultative
policy
framework

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, here on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to maintaining an inclusive and ongoing consultative process with key stakeholders in the business community. During a meeting with PBC delegation, led by its outgoing CEO Ehsan Malik and the incoming CEO Javed Kureish, the minister appreciated the council's constructive, particularly acknowledging the value of its policy input, research, and the extensive sectoral data regularly shared with the government. According to press release issued by finance division, the minister welcomed transition in leadership at the PBC and extended his full support to the incoming team.

Dubai-based bank
arranges \$1 billion
financing facility

5-year financing arrangement facilitated
through consortium of international
investors, says finance ministry

NEWS DESIK

DUBAI: A Dubai-based bank has successfully arranged a \$1 billion syndicated term-finance facility for Pakistan, the Ministry of Finance said in a statement on Wednesday. The five-year financing arrangement has been facilitated through a consortium of international investors, reflecting growing confidence in the country's economic reform programme. The financing is backed by a Policy-Based Guarantee from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), marking the first such transaction by the ADB for Pakistan. The facility, structured under Islamic principles, includes an 89% share compliant with Shariah law. According to the finance ministry, other banks based in the United

Arab Emirates also partnered in the arrangement, further strengthening regional financial collaboration. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb called the deal a significant step in the country's efforts to secure ethical and innovative funding solutions. "This landmark financing arrangement underscores the strong confidence of regional and international institutions in Pakistan's economic trajectory," he said. He added that the success in securing Shariah-compliant financing highlights Pakistan's commitment to broadening its financial base while aligning with Islamic finance principles. The ministry described the agreement as a reflection of international investors' trust in Pakistan's economy and a boost to ongoing macroeconomic stabilisation efforts.

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