



# Islamabad POST

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## Rumours dispelled

# 'No US pressure on Pakistan to recognise Israel'

"Our policy towards Israel is consistent with Quaid-e-Azam's ideology," says Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh

### CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: Islamabad is under no pressure from Washington to recognise Israel, Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Rizwan Saeed Sheikh has said during a community event in Dallas. Addressing the gathering, the ambassador spoke on a range of national and international issues, reaffirming that Pakistan's position on Israel remains unchanged and is rooted in the vision of the country's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. "Our policy towards Israel is consistent with Quaid-e-Azam's ideology," Ambassador Sheikh said, adding that Pakistan's approach to the issue is based on longstanding principles and not influenced by external pressure. The remarks come amid ongoing speculation in international media about changing dynamics in the Muslim world's relations with Israel. Pakistan, which has no diplomatic ties with Israel, maintains that normalisation will only be possible after a just settlement of the Palestinian issue. During the recent confrontation between the Middle Eastern arch-rivals Iran and Israel, Pakistan supported Tehran on its right to defence against the Israeli aggression.

Commenting on bilateral ties, Ambassador Sheikh said Pakistan-US relations are improving, noting that both countries are working to strengthen cooperation in areas such as trade, energy and technology. In response to a question about investment opportunities, he pointed out that Pakistan has ample electricity reserves to support ventures like cryptocurrency mining – a sector gaining attention in the global digital economy. It may be noted that Pakistan officially commenced the drafting of a comprehensive regulatory framework for digital and virtual assets, signalling a significant move by the government to formally oversee the booming cryptocurrency ecosystem last month. Later, Islamabad and New York each launched dedicated Crypto Councils to promote responsible growth of the digital asset sector. Earlier this month, the federal cabinet formally approved the summary for the creation of the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA), a step towards establishing a legal and institutional framework for overseeing the country's digital assets ecosystem. As the country ramps up efforts to modernise its financial system, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)

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## Law minister Tarar meets Azerbaijan chief justice

### DNA

BAKU: A delegation led by Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law and Justice of Pakistan, visited the Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Inam Karimov, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, highlighted the fraternal relations between the two nations, rooted in shared religious, historical, and cultural values. He noted that cooperation between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, founded on mutual trust and support, continues to grow in all areas, including the legal and justice sectors. During the meeting, the guests were informed about the reforms undertaken in Azerbaijan's legal system and the progress made in building a state governed by the rule of law. Inam Karimov emphasized the significant potential for enhancing collaboration between

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## Iranian president suffered minor injuries

### NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian suffered minor leg injuries during an Israeli missile strike last month that targeted a meeting of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Fars News Agency reported on Saturday, according to Anadolu agency. The attack took place on June 17 while top Iranian officials, including leaders of the three branches of government, were gathered in a secure underground section of a building in western Tehran. Fars reported that six missiles struck the building's entry and exit points, resembling a tactic used in a previous assassination attempt on Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

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BAKU: A delegation led by Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law and Justice of Pakistan, visited the Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan and met with Inam Karimov, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. – DNA

## 'Do-or-die'

# PTI sets 90-day ultimatum for anti-govt drive

"Negotiations will be with decision-makers," says Ali Amin Gandapur quoting PTI founder Imran Khan

### ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: KHYBER Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Saturday called on state institutions to engage in dialogue with the PTI, but demanded that they hold themselves accountable. Gandapur and the PTI's top leadership are on a visit to Lahore to formally launch a movement to seek the release of party founder Imran and devise a strategy for its nationwide protest, which will reach its crescendo on August 5 – marking two years since the ex-premier was imprisoned. Since Imran's incarceration in several cases, which he claims are politically motivated, his party's relationship with the government and the establishment has turned exceedingly sour. The PTI has held several protests over the last year, most of which escalated into violence after facing state repression. Addressing a press conference flanked by PTI's Punjab leadership, CM Gandapur said: "We have to correct

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## PTI five leaders demand fresh elections

### BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's five senior leaders incarcerated in Kot Lakhpat Jail have demanded fresh, free and fair general elections in the country, while learning lessons from the 1970 debacle, otherwise India will go ahead with its nefarious designs. In an open letter on Saturday, PTI vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, former governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema, Dr Yasmin Rashid and Mian Mahmoodur Rasheed stated that Pakistan's two provinces, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan,

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## Briefs

### Indian army killed rebels in Myanmar

Camps belonging to another rebel group, People's Liberation Army, were also targeted, says ULFA

### DNA

NEW DELHI: Separatist militants in northeastern India said the Indian army carried out cross-border drone strikes on the group's camps in neighbouring Myanmar on Sunday, killing three of its leaders. Some rebel groups in northeastern India have ethnic, linguistic and cultural ties with minorities across the border in Myanmar and maintain a presence there. A top commander of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was killed and 19 others wounded in a drone attack in Myanmar near the border, the separatist group said in a series of statements. "Two more senior commanders were killed" in subsequent strikes, the ULFA said, adding: "Several other members and civilians were also wounded."

### Minister Naqvi arrives in Iran

### DNA

TEHRAN: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has arrived in Iran on an official visit. Upon his arrival at Imam Khomeini International Airport, he was warmly received by Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni. Senior officials from Iran's Ministry of Interior, Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, Consul Aftab Butt, and other diplomatic staff were also present to welcome the Pakistani minister. During his visit, Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with his Iranian counterpart. The two leaders discussed matters of mutual interest and the strengthening of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. "We warmly welcome our brother to Iran," said the Iranian Interior Minister. "Your visit will undoubtedly contribute to further enhancing the relationship between our two countries."

## Speaker order inquiry

# Rs 32 bn corruption in KP city project

According to the letter a joint venture involving a Pakistani and an unregistered foreign company was awarded contracts worth billions of rupees, which were not registered with the Federal Board of Revenue

### BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: A major financial scandal has surfaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with official documents revealing alleged irregularities worth Rs32 billion in the KP Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP), which aims to enhance urban infrastructure and municipal services in major cities of the province. The Rs97 billion urban development project is jointly funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the KP government.

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## Railway project

### DPM/FM Dar, Uzbek FM discuss progress

Travels to China to attend SCO moot

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, on Sunday,

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## IMF official praises Pakistan's 'strong' progress

Mahir Binici emphasises structural reforms key to Pakistan's long-term economic sustainability

### FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Resident Representative for Pakistan Mahir Binici said that the country's performance under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) has been "strong so far" and expressed hope that its economic growth would strengthen this year. Binici delivered a comprehensive guest lecture at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in which he shed light on the evolving economic landscape across the MENA region and Pakistan. He reaffirmed the Washington-based lender's continued support for the country's economic and climate reform agenda. Addressing economists, researchers and policy experts, Binici said that the growth across the Middle East, North Africa (MENA) region and Pakistan was expected to strengthen in 2025 and beyond. However, he cautioned that elevated trade tensions, geopolitical fragmentation and weakening global cooperation continued to generate exceptional uncertainty and weigh on the global economic outlook, underlining the urgent need for prudent and forward-looking policy actions, said a press release issued today. Focusing on Pakistan, Binici said that the country's performance under the IMF's EFF has been "strong so far", adding that the successful completion of the first review by the IMF Executive Board in May 2025 was a key milestone. "Early policy measures have helped restore macroeconomic stability and rebuild investor confidence, despite persistent external challenges," Binici remarked. He emphasised that structural reforms remain central to Pakistan's long-term economic sustainability, particularly reforms that strengthen tax equity, improve the business climate, and encourage private-sector-led investment. He also spotlighted Pakistan's progress on climate-related reforms under the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). According to Binici, the RSF is designed to help countries like Pakistan bolster resilience to climate-related vulnerabilities and meet international climate commitments. He mentioned that the key areas of reform under the RSF included enhancing public investment planning, promoting efficient and sustainable use of water resources,

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# Favoritism clouds HEC's official delegation to Germany

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is facing strong criticism over the composition of its official delegation to the upcoming FISU World University Games 2025, scheduled from 16th to 27th July in the Rhine-Ruhr region of Germany. Despite frequently citing budget limitations as a reason for curtailing academic and sports development initiatives, HEC has approved a large delegation consisting of 17 officials and 24 athletes. According to a letter issued by the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) on 2nd July 2025, the PSB has granted a formal No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the said delegation. However, the list has sparked outrage among university sports circles, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), as no official from KP has been included in the list despite the province's known contribution to national-level

sports. Sources within the university community allege that Director Sports HEC, Mr. Javed Ali Memon, has filled the list with favorites and personal associates, bypassing the university Directors of Sports, who are traditionally involved in such international representations. Even more alarming are the claims that some university owners and their spouses have been included as part of the delegation under the guise of officials. Observers note that the same HEC that claims financial crisis for holding intervarsity tournaments, sports training camps, or infrastructure development, has now found sufficient funding to send non-athlete delegates on an international trip. This contradiction has raised concerns over misuse of public funds, lack of meritocracy, and the absence of transparency in the selection process. Stakeholders are now demanding immediate accountability from HEC. "We want Mr. Javed Ali Memon to clarify the se-

lection criteria for the officials," said a university representative. "This is a clear case of favoritism and reflects the misuse of a prestigious international platform for personal networking, rather than sports promotion." The matter is now being raised for public debate on media platforms and talk shows, with calls for judicial intervention. According to concerned parties, if no action is taken, they will approach the Prime Minister, and in case of no satisfactory outcome, will pursue legal avenues, including filing for a stay order on the participation of the non-merit-based officials in the World University Games. As the games approach, many within the university sports community urge the government to take notice of this unjust practice and ensure that deserving professionals and athletes not well-connected officials represent the country on international platforms.



ISLAMABAD: Officials from Uzbekistan met with the Director General Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Saeed Ahmed Sheikh and explored avenues of bilateral cooperation. DNA

## GIFT varsity, APMA for addressing vocational needs of Mining, Marble sector

GUJRANWALA: Muhammad Bilal Khan, Chairman of the All Pakistan Marble Industries Association (APMA), recently engaged in a productive dialogue with Mr. Anwar Dar, Founder of GIFT University, and Atif Farooqi, Professor of Practice at GIFT University. The discussion focused on addressing the vocational training needs of the mining and marble sector in Pakistan. The collaboration aims to bridge the gap between industry requirements and academic offerings, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to drive growth and innovation in the sector. "We are excited to work with APMA to provide vocational training and capacity-building programs for the mining and marble sector," said Mr. Anwar Dar, Founder of GIFT University. "APMA is committed to collaborating with GIFT University to enhance the skills and competencies of our workforce, enabling the industry to compete globally," said Muhammad Bilal Khan, Chairman of APMA. "This partnership will be a game-changer for Pakistan's mining and marble industry, revolutionizing the sector by providing cutting-edge skills.—APP

# The story of ANP's struggle against terrorism in KP

WAKEEL MOHMAND  
ADVOCATE

PESHAWAR: Among Pakistan's political parties, the Awami National Party (ANP) is widely praised for its exemplary struggle against terrorism. Notably, after the rise of the Terrorists in 2006, ANP took charge of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in 2007 and worked towards eliminating these Terrorists. During that time, the Terrorists were beheading people for not having beards and beheading fe-

male teachers. The police in Swat were on the verge of surrendering. However, ANP not only spoke out against this brutality but also took practical steps to combat it. As a result of ANP's courageous leadership, peace was eventually restored in these districts, where people were forced to pay tributes to the Terrorists. This is a shining chapter in the history of Pakhtunkhwa that will always be remembered. The martyrdom of Maulana Khan Zeb has sent shockwaves across the nation. As a prominent leader of the Awami National

Party (ANP), he was known for his unwavering stance against terrorism and extremism. Maulana Khan Zeb's leadership and vision played a crucial role in promoting peace and stability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His dedication to the cause of peace and his courage will always be remembered. The ANP's struggle against terrorism is a testament to its commitment to protecting the rights and lives of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Maulana Khan Zeb's martyrdom will only strengthen the party's resolve to continue its fight against extremism.

# Efforts afoot for improving law, order, promoting tourism: Saif

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, said here Sunday that the provincial government was utilizing all possible resources to ensure law and order in the province, curb extremism in tribal districts, protect journalists, rehabilitate victims of the Swat tragedy, and implement effective measures at tourist sites. He expressed these views while responding to questions from host Fazal Khaliq Khan during the program "Haal Ahwal" on Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 98 Swat. Although, the law and order situation in recent months has been con-

cerning, the government has significantly increased the budget to enhance the capacity of the police, CTD and other institutions, he said. He said that intelligence sharing was being improved in tribal districts, and efforts are underway to establish lasting peace by taking local elders into confidence. The government is also in contact with federal authorities for modern weapons, vehicles and training, he expressed. On the question of the Swat River tragedy, he admitted that initially, the performance of the local administration and rescue agencies was not satisfactory. The government has received

the inquiry report of the incident, and action was being taken against those responsible. Financial assistance has been provided to the affected families, and action was ongoing against hotel owners and illegal constructions. In terms of safety measures at tourist sites, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif said that the government was considering giving legal status to tourism guidelines, in order to establish a coordinated system between local administration, hotel owners, and tourists. New equipment, a mobile app, and training workshops are being introduced to enhance the capabilities of Rescue 1122.—APP

## Call for implementation of River Swat's tragedy inquiry report

PESHAWAR: The civil society including politicians and general public here Sunday demanded swift implementation of the inquiry report of the River Swat tragedy that claimed lives of 18 tourists on a broad day light. Misal Khan, a former Govt servant said that Swat tragedy that saddened all, has badly exposed the serious negligence of the concerned officials especially the district administration and Rescue 1122 and strict disciplinary action against them may heal wounds of the victims families. He expressed the hope that inquiry report of Provincial Inspection Team (PIT) will not be placed in cold storage and implemented swiftly to avert such gory incidents in future. As the shock of the Swat tragedy still ripples through the province, public attention has now turned to a critical question: Will the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government ensure accountability for the officials whose alleged negligence led to the loss of 18 innocent lives? The tragic incident, which unfolded last month along the picturesque

banks of the Swat River, saw a group of tourists washed away in a sudden surge of flood water. Videos of the heartbreaking scene, where the victims were seen clinging to rocks and screaming for help, circulated widely, igniting outrage and grief across the country. In the aftermath, the provincial government tasked the Provincial Inspection Team (PIT) with investigating the incident. Last Friday, the PIT presented its detailed 63-page inquiry report to Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, identifying systemic failures and individual negligence by key departments including Rescue 1122, district administration, irrigation, and local government. The inquiry lays bare a host of institutional and operational failings. Among the most glaring were ineffective enforcement of safety advisories issued by PDMA and district officials, poor coordination among departments like police, rescue, irrigation, and tourism, malfunctioning of early warning systems, delays in Rescue 1122's response and a shortage of trained person-

nel and equipment. Similarly, negligence by hotel owners, who failed to alert guests to potential flood risks and ambiguous regulatory mechanisms and violations in riverside constructions has also contributed to the tragedy. The PIT report doesn't just stop at identifying these failures; it also recommends disciplinary action against specific government officers and proposes urgent reforms. Chief Minister Gandapur has reportedly approved these recommendations, promising that legal and administrative proceedings will be completed within 60 days. For many, however, promises are not enough and speedy action is demanded. Hamza Khan, PML-N KP Nowshera President, said while speaking to APP, "The victims waited for hours for help that never came. Now their families await justice. Officials responsible must be punished, or such tragedies will continue." Zahur Khalil, former Secretary of Environment KP, echoed similar concerns, calling this a "test case" for the current government.

## AJK SCBA condemns barbaric terrorist attack in Balochistan

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir Supreme Court Bar Association here on Saturday strongly condemned the horrific and inhumane act of terrorism in the Sardhaka area of District Loralai, Balochistan, where terrorists affiliated with Fitna-al-Hindistan abducted nine innocent passengers from Punjab and brutally martyred them after identifying their regional and religious identity. While expressing deep grief and heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, Advocate Javid Najam-us-Saqib, President of the Azad Jammu & Kashmir Supreme Court Bar Association, in a statement here, termed the heinous act as a manifestation of barbarity and a grave violation of all humanitarian, religious, and constitutional values. He stated that such cowardly attacks aim to foment sectarian and ethnic hatred, destabilize national unity, and are part of a larger conspiracy by hostile external elements to weaken Pakistan from within. He echoed the serious concerns raised by the Pakistan Bar Council leadership and affirmed that the entire legal fraternity of Azad Kashmir stands in solidarity with the people of Balochistan and the families of the victims. The legal community demands immediate and decisive action against all terrorist elements and facilitators involved in this crime against humanity. Mr. Saqib emphasized that this is a time for unity, collective resolve, and unyielding commitment to the rule of law and national security. He urged the federal and provincial governments, political leadership, security institutions, and civil society to act in unison and eliminate the menace of terrorism through unwavering determination and mutual cooperation. He also offered prayers for the elevation of the souls of the martyrs and strength to the bereaved families to endure this irreparable loss with patience and courage.\_APP

# Society's reaction to change - Newton's third law

TANVEER HUSSAIN



Mr Isaac Newton was a 17th century's English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and chemist, considered one of the most significant figures in history. Newton's three laws gained worldwide recognition and are still commonly known today. Newton's famous third law states that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. This law also applies to real life. A simple example of this is the violence towards children in educational institutions. Until a while ago, corporal punishment was a common practice in schools. It was normal to impose severe punishment for minor mistakes. When the teacher would raise a stick and look angrily at the children, they would become terrified. Many children would leave school just because of this

violence. However, times changed, and awareness about violence started spreading among parents and children, leading to voices being raised against it. A solution to this problem was found at the governmental level. Now, corporal punishment in schools has been completely banned. However, religious institutions are fully exempt from this rule. While corporal punishment was banned in schools, the outcome turned out to be even more alarming. The new generation has stopped taking teachers and education seriously. At the college level, the status of teachers has become devalued. Now, teachers must conform to the students' desires and preferences. Teachers making sarcastic remarks, engaging in violence, and going on strikes have become common practices. Now, the sole purpose of education is to obtain a degree with higher marks, whether through recommendations, cheating, or financial means. This is just as wrong as the previous culture was. However, all of this is a response to

the strict discipline of past teachers, in accordance with Newton's law. Another example is the distancing of youth from religion. In our everyday lives, religion has the most influence, but unfortunately, religious leaders and scholars have failed to introduce people to the teachings of Islam. Everyone emphasizes beliefs and various types of dua (prayers), but no one teaches moral values. Asking questions about religious matters is even considered taboo. When a young person looks at Western societies, where people, despite being far from religion, still respect each other's rights—where unnecessary honking, loudspeakers, and tape recorders are not heard in the streets or parks, where deception and adulteration are rare, and food and medicine are pure—he wonders how, despite being far from religion, they maintain such moral values. Meanwhile, we, as religious people, are deprived of these qualities. In our society, religion is often used for hatred, violence, and politics. Seeing these circumstances, a large num-

ber of young people are drifting away from religion and preferring Western culture instead. Recently, the tragic death of a famous actress and TikTok influencer, and the discovery of her body after eight months, has raised many questions. What happened that a daughter, a sister, left her parents and siblings to create her own world? The dazzling lights of the camera, the lure of followers and likes, and the race for ratings left religion, Eastern culture, and parental respect behind. Under the guise of gender freedom and rights, some people have targeted the minds of the younger generation for their selfish purposes. This is an illusion that appears very beautiful from a distance but is hollow and baseless from within. It is true that women faced many injustices in the past. They were denied the rights that Islam granted them as mothers, sisters, and daughters. Many customs and traditions in society violate women's rights. Practices like Wani and Kari are among the most horrific, where only women suffer. In many communities, marriage outside the family is prohibited. These

mismatched marriages lead to domestic violence, discord, and divorce. The disdain with which divorced women are viewed in society severely harms their self-respect. The differential treatment between sons and daughters, forced marriages, deprivation from inheritance, blackmail under the name of dowry, and violence from in-laws all add to these issues. Although such incidents are rare, they certainly do happen. Women's rights NGOs take full advantage of these customs. They particularly target women who are victims of domestic violence. These organizations play a significant role in the destruction of the family system, encouraging women to run away and marry, as well as promoting moral degradation. Many educated people, especially women, become part of this campaign after being influenced by attractive advertisements and catchy slogans. TV channels and social media are at the forefront of this campaign. TV anchors and journalists, to present themselves as liberals, become strong spokespersons for these NGOs, which contribute to the breakdown of the family system.

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# CDA chairman, officials from Azerbaijan visit Saidpur village

Chairman CDA appreciated the work of Baku’s team of architects and horticulture experts regarding the uplift and beautification of Saidpur Village.

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, along with Member Environment Esfandiyar Baloch, DG Environment, Deputy DG Enforcement, Director DMA and Baku team visited Saidpur Model Village and reviewed the ongoing uplift and beautification work in detail. On this occasion, Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa was given a detailed briefing on the progress made so far under the uplift project in Saidpur Model Village. During the briefing, Chairman CDA was informed that the uplift and beautification work in Saidpur Model Village is progressing rapidly, with architects and horticulture experts from Baku providing special assistance. Chairman CDA appreciated the work of Baku’s team of architects and horticulture experts regarding the uplift and beautification of Saidpur Village. He expressed hope that soon, Islamabad would



be introduced to the world as a beautiful and modern capital city equipped with tourism and recreational facilities. He stated that the uplift and beautification of Saidpur Village would not only enhance the city’s beauty but also make it an attractive recreational spot for citizens. He directed the utilization of all available resources to transform Saidpur Village into a state-of-the-art model in line with international standards. Chairman CDA said that this project would make Saidpur Model Village an excellent tourist destination, ensuring top-notch arrangements and recreational facilities for visitors. On this occasion, he directed the early completion of the uplift and beautification work in Saidpur Model Village. He emphasized that all resources should be utilized to make Saidpur Village a premier tourist and recreational spot. During the briefing, Chairman CDA was informed that a successful operation against illegal settlements in the Margalla Hills National Park area had resulted in the recovery of 23 kanals of precious land. The

legal residents of Saidpur appreciated the action of CDA and DMA against illegal settlements. The briefing revealed that the operation led to the demolition of 13 illegal houses within the national park’s boundaries and approximately 23 kanals of valuable government land were retrieved from illegal occupants. The recovered land has been handed over to the Environment Wing to preserve the natural beauty and environment of the national park. On this occasion, Chairman CDA reaffirmed his commitment, stating that all possible measures would be taken to protect the natural beauty of Islamabad. He said that no encroachments or illegal occupations would be tolerated in any area, including Margalla Hills National Park and no one would be allowed to compromise the natural beauty of Islamabad. He emphasized that no compromises would be made in this regard as action illegal encroachments is the top most priority of CDA in line with the direction of Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi.

## Court upholds cancellation of e-parking contract with AJCL

ISLAMABAD, Jul 13 (DNA):A lower court in Islamabad has upheld the decision by the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) to cancel the e-parking contract awarded to AJCL company, terming the termination fully legal and in accordance with administrative procedures. The court dismissed AJCL’s appeal, reinforcing the government’s commitment to transparency, legal supremacy, and public interest. Senior advocate Nazir Jawad, representing CDA and DMA, presented what the court described as “solid legal evidence” to defend the cancellation of the contract. The contract with AJCL was officially revoked in June 2025 after the company was found to be in serious breach of multiple clauses, including financial irregularities and failure to implement a cashless system for parking. The CDA spokesperson told that, multiple First Information Reports (FIRs) were also filed by both the DMA and concerned citizens at local police stations against the company. AJCL subsequently challenged the contract termination, requesting that parking sites not be reclaimed and that the proposed re-auctioning of smart parking sites be halted. However, the court rejected all such claims, declaring them baseless and upholding the DMA’s actions as legally sound and procedurally proper. Legal experts and civic stakeholders alike have praised the decision, calling it a major step toward enforcing transparency, upholding the rule of law, and improving urban services in Islamabad. “This judgment empowers us to take stronger, more effective steps for enhancing public amenities,” said a senior CDA official. “This verdict is a testament to our commitment to good governance, transparency, and merit-based decisions,” said Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa in a statement on Sunday. The verdict has been hailed by CDA officials as a precedent-setting move under the leadership of Member Administration Talat Mahmood and Deputy DG Enforcement and Director DMA Dr. Anam Fatima. The CDA reiterated its commitment to modernizing urban infrastructure, promising that no lapses in governance or public service delivery would be tolerated. “All future projects, especially smart parking systems, will be executed with utmost transparency and accountability,” the CDA said in an official statement.—DNA

## Pakistan-Afghanistan relations Experts urge strategic shift to overcome trust deficit

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Addressing the persistent trust deficit between Pakistan and Afghanistan is essential to strengthening the core of their bilateral relationship and setting it on a stable and sustainable path. Confidence-building measures that incorporate long-term, people-centric engagement and a coherent, integrated framework are crucial for both nations and the stability of the region. In this context, a strategic shift toward a ‘4P’ approach – prioritization, partnership, participation, and persistence – is a viable path forward. This was discussed by former ambassadors, scholars, and researchers during a session on “Evolving Political

Dynamics of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations” at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The session featured insights from Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain, vice-chairman IPS, Amina Khan, director CAMEA, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, Ambassador (r) Ayaz Wazir, Brig (r) Said Nazir, defense analyst, Ambassador (r) Nasrullah Khan, Brig (r) Khurshid Khan, IPS associate, Tahir Khan, senior journalist, Dr Lutfur Rehman, author and researcher, Brig (r) Tughrul Yamin, IPS associate, Dr Azhar Ahmad, IPS associate, Amanullah Khan, former member, RCCI, Sheharyar Khan, executive director, National Dialogue Forum, and Dr Sadia Sulaiman, assistant professor Quaidi-Azam Uni-



versity. Speakers emphasized that foundational tensions continue to strain bilateral ties. While the Taliban’s return to power in 2021 initially sparked hope for a more stable western border, this expectation was dampened by a surge in cross-border attacks by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Speakers noted that

## ITP uses drone technology to enforce traffic laws

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has penalized over 300 drivers and educated more than 350 citizens during recent operations carried out using drone technology to monitor traffic violations on major highways, including the Expressway and Srinagar Highway. An official told on Sunday that under the leadership of Chief Traffic Officer Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider, the initiative aims to ensure strict enforcement of traffic rules through real-time monitoring. He said the drones are being used to identify violations such as lane discipline breaches, overloading, one-wheeling, and other hazardous driving behaviors. He said more than 300 drivers have already been penalized through legal action based on footage captured by drone cameras. In addition to enforcement, he said over 350 citizens have been educated about traffic laws as part of the campaign. He said several vehicles involved in serious violations have also been impounded and shifted to local police stations. “Using drone footage, violations are being identified, challans are being issued on the spot, and in some cases, vehicles are being taken into custody,” said CTO Zeeshan. He said in the next phase, drone monitoring will be expanded to include all sectors and additional major roads across the city. Zeeshan added that drones are also being utilized to detect congested points on roads, enabling rapid deployment of special teams to address traffic build-up and ensure smooth flow.—APP

## Islamabad trails Rawalpindi in food safety infrastructure

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) faces serious operational challenges in carrying out effective food safety enforcement, hampered by limited staff, minimal infrastructure, and the absence of essential testing facilities. In sharp contrast, the Rawalpindi Food Authority (RFA) operates with significantly better resources, including more vehicles, trained personnel and fully equipped labs, enabling it to enforce food safety regulations more efficiently across the district. Both the Islamabad and Rawalpindi Food Authorities are tasked with regulating an estimated 30,000 food businesses each. However, the difference in their capacity to enforce food safety standards is striking. The IFA operates with just one field vehicle and 10 technical staff members. It lacks a food testing laboratory, training institute, mobile food labs, and a designated public relations officer. While the number of non-technical staff is reported to range between 20 and 50, the authority’s limited technical expertise and lack of mobility severely restrict its operational reach. In contrast, the RFA is equipped with 10 vehicles, 30 technical staff, a dedicated food testing lab, training school, and two mobile testing labs—allowing for routine field inspections and on-the-spot sampling. Speaking to this reporter, an official of IFA, acknowledged the constraints: “Our team covers the city as best as possible with the available resources. We’re committed to ensuring food safety despite the limitations.” However, food vendors in various parts of Islamabad, particularly Farooqia Market (F-6), say that in addition to operational shortages, the licensing process is being disrupted by external interference. Multiple shopkeepers alleged that Khalid Chaudhry, identified as a former member of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, discourages businesses from obtaining food licenses. They claim he uses the name of the Chief Commissioner to apply pressure and has reportedly misbehaved with inspection teams. “His interference delays the process and affects everyone,” said a local trader. “He’s making it difficult for us to comply with the law.—DNA

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## Briefs

## Glowing tribute paid to Kashmiri martyrs

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has paid glowing tribute to the brave Kashmiri martyrs who sacrificed their lives on July 13, 1931. He saluted the ultimate sacrifice of the 22 martyrs who faced bullets with courage and dignity in reverence of the call to prayer (Azaan). He stated that July 13, 1931, was the harbinger of free conscience against a system that sought to silence the oppressed. He added that the guns of the Dogra regime and the violence of the Indian state are different forms of the same oppression. Mohsin Naqvi emphasized that the suppression of belief, identity, opinion, and resistance through state power in Indian Illegal occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIO-JK) is a mockery of human dignity. He said that the Modi Government, like the Dogra regime, is carrying out oppressive actions against Kashmiris and the Indian State's policies — including the genocide of Kashmiri youth, extrajudicial killings.—APP

## Court Notice

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

Application for permission to obtain passports for minors Zainab Omar and Muhammad Arham

Case title: Sundus Ali vs. Public at Large Against: 1-Public at Large 2- Ali Raza son of Zafar Iqbal, resident of shmali Mohallah Jhelum, currently residing in Dubai, Al Khalid Road, Al-Saif Street, Al Abbas Tower

. As there is not possible to call the Public at Large/ respondent through Summons in the instant Application so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the court on 15.07.2025 at 08:00 AM., otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

.....

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

suit For Dissolution of Marriage Basis of Khulah

Case title: Areeb Qaiser, Osama Ali Tariq, son of Tariq Mahmood, residing at Fazal Haq Street, Mir Dina Locality, District Jhelum, currently residing in Dubai.

. As there is not possible to call the defendant through Summons in the instant suit so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the court on 23.07.2025 at 08:00 AM., otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

.....

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

Application Guardian Case title: Ayesha Kainat vs Public at Large etc Against: Muhammad Asif Razzak son of Muhammad Razzak residing in Noor Mohalla Dina Tehsil Dina District Jhelum currently residing in England.

. As there is not possible to call the respondent through Summons in the instant Application so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the court on 18.07.2025 at 08:00 AM., otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

## Pak, China fosters SME education collaboration

Chinese Universities sign LOIs for promoting digital education in Pakistan

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Gansu Finance and Trade Professional College (GFTPC) held China-Pakistan SME entrepreneurship vocational education conference in Lanzhou, capital of China's Gansu province, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

The conference marked the launch of China-Pakistan SME Entrepreneurship and Management Vocational Education Branch of the China-Pakistan Digital Education Alliance. It also unveiled the GFTPC Overseas Training Base and SME Entrepreneurship and Management Pakistan Train-

ing Centre. The event brought together education leaders, institutional partners, and technical experts from both countries, UNI Int'l said. This milestone followed the Letter of Cooperation signed between KP TEVTA and the GFTPC in December 2024, facilitated by UNI Int'l, it added. The SME Vocational Education Branch will focus on developing vocational programs, promoting SME education, and enhancing bilateral academic exchange. Additionally, a dedicated training centre for Pakistani professionals has been set up, hosted by the GFTPC, which will provide hands-on training in digital and entrepreneurial skills

to support cross-border capacity building. The branch and training centre will be located under KP TEVTA jurisdiction, Yasser Shaakor, Director Operations and Business Development, UNI Int'l Pakistan, told Gwadar Pro. Meanwhile, The University of Sargodha has signed two separate Letters of Intent (LOIs) with Chinese universities to expand cooperation in research, faculty and student exchange, and digital education. In the latest development, UoS signed an LOI with Nankai University, one of China's leading institutions, during a

meeting held on the sidelines of the 2025 SCO Digital Economy Forum in Tianjin, China, on Friday. The agreement was formalized during the meeting of Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas, Vice Chancellor of UoS, and Prof. Dr. Chen Yulu, President of Nankai University. According to a statement issued by the UoS, the two sides committed to joint efforts in research collaboration, faculty exchange, and digital education. Both officials also exchanged souvenirs, "symbolizing a shared commitment to strengthening educational ties." In another development, Pakistan Insti-

tute of China Studies at UoS signed Intent of Cooperation (IOC) with the Centre for Pakistan Study at Jiangxi University of Science and Technology on Friday. This IOC was signed by Prof. Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, Director of the Pakistan Institute of China Studies, and Prof. Cheng Yuan, Director of the Centre for Pakistan Study in Jiangxi. This partnership aims to promote academic and cultural collaboration, including joint research, faculty and student exchange programs, and collaborative projects focused on Pakistan-China relations, according to an official statement, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

## Food contamination linked to sharp rise in 'Youth Cancer'

ISLAMABAD: On Sunday, a cancer specialist highlighted a worrying increase in colorectal, liver, oral cancer cases among young people, pointing to plastic use, food contamination, environmental factors as major causes, calling for timely detection to ensure successful treatment. A leading Oncologist Dr. Muhammad Ali Memon, while speaking to a local news channel, highlighted that these cancers have seen a 79% rise in the last two decades, underscoring the urgent need for awareness and prevention. He described this sharp rise as a significant public health concern, emphasizing the urgent need for increased awareness, early screening and preventive measures among the younger population. He further explained that chemical preservatives used in processed foods, consumption of frozen and contaminated items and the presence of plastic in soil and the food chain are major contributing factors. According to him, these elements disrupt bodily functions and reproductive health, increasing the risk of developing serious cancers at a younger age. —APP

## PBM restores hearing aid for 1,944 children

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) has so far facilitated 1,944 cochlear implant surgeries for hearing-impaired children from low-income families turning silence into sound through early intervention before age five—a step toward restoring dignity and hope for children who deserve every chance to thrive, said Managing Director Senator Captain Shaheen Khalid Butt. Speaking to APP, the Managing Director reaffirmed PBM's commitment to inclusive healthcare and child empowerment as the organization continues to spearhead efforts in collaboration with partners to ensure no child is deprived of essential treatment due to financial constraints. "These children represent our future—some will become doctors, others scientists, engineers, and leaders. Their restored ability to hear is a powerful step towards a more inclusive and prosperous society," the MD said.—APP

## CDA retrieves 1.5 acres of encroached land

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has successfully reclaimed over 1.5 acres of encroached land in the Trail 3 area of the Margalla Hills National Park, adjacent to Margalla Road. The operation, overseen by the Enforcement Directorate of CDA & ICT Magistrate resulted in the peaceful evacuation and demolition of nearly 15 illegally constructed houses and animal sheds. All structures were removed after prior issuance of legal notices to the encroachers. Following the clearance, the reclaimed land has been handed over to the Environment Directorate. Restoration efforts are now underway to rehabilitate the site and recover the green cover lost due to unauthorized construction. This operation reflects CDA's continued commitment to environmental preservation and strict enforcement of land use regulations within protected areas of the capital.—DNA

## 10 MW provided to Gwadar Port, South Free Zone

ISLAMABAD: In a mega development, 10 MW has finally been made available for Gwadar Port and Gwadar South Free Zone, spreading over 60 acres of land from the national grid station. Significant advancement came into being after Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) initiated the project on May 8th by putting in place infrastructure, power cables and poles on the site. QESCO official told Gwadar Port that two independent feeders with each 5 megawatts have started providing electricity to Gwadar Port and Gwadar South Free Zone smoothly and seamlessly. The project serves as a catalyst for robust economic activities and the acceleration of industrialization in Gwadar Port, and Gwadar Free Zones. QESCO has already provided 10MW electricity in Gwadar North Free Zone last year, a shot in the arm for investors and companies desperately seeking power supply. Electricity tariff varies between Rs. 35 to Rs. 45 for industrial purpose as per normal and peak hours with uninterrupted supply. Earlier, Gwadar Port was using expensive electricity being produced by 8.5 MW diesel-powered generator, which had taken a heavy toll on the financial bill.—APP

## Islamabad nursery to become world-class horticulture hub

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, visited the CDA Model Nursery on Park Road, Saidpur Village, and Melody Food Street, accompanied by Member Environment Esfandiyar Baloch, architects and horticulture experts from the Baku team, DG Environment and other relevant officers. The Baku team's architects and horticulture experts briefed Chairman CDA on the progress of upgradation and renovation of the CDA Model Nursery into a "Gardenia Hub," as well as ongoing uplift and renovation of the Saidpur Village and Melody Food Street projects. They briefed Chairman CDA that work is progressing rapidly on transforming the nursery into the Gardenia Hub, with Baku's architects and horticulture experts providing specialized support. The briefing highlighted that the upgraded nursery will include flower shops, a training and research center and unique, state-of-the-art controlled-ventilation greenhouses designed to optimize plant growth and support research. Chairman CDA was further briefed that a modern tissue culture center will also be established at the nursery to propagate new plant varieties using advanced techniques. Chairman CDA Randhawa said that the Model Nursery is being developed as a world-class, state-of-the-art facility. He emphasized that all staff working at the nursery will receive specialized training to ensure efficient functioning and maintenance of the nursery. He praised the Baku team's work on the Gardenia Hub project and other developmental initiatives, expressing hope that the upgraded nursery will meet the horticultural needs of Islamabad's residents in the future. Chairman CDA highlighted that the primary goal of upgrading the nursery is to position Islamabad as a key hub in horticulture. He directed the swift completion of modern and aesthetically pleasing flower shops, which will not only enhance the city's beauty but also serve as an attractive recreational spot for citizens. A dedicated space will be allocated for showcasing seasonal and year-round flowers, and a digital app will be developed to enable cashless online purchases of plants. Chairman CDA Randhawa added that the project's comprehensive design reflects CDA's commitment to improving green spaces in Islamabad while promoting environmental sustainability. Transforming the nursery into the Gardenia Hub is a significant step toward making the Capital greener and more beautiful. He instructed the utilization of all available resources to ensure the nursery meets global standards, creating new employment opportunities in horticulture. —DNA

## Iran-Israel conflict signals strategic realignments in region

## MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The experts at a high-level seminar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) have said that the Iran-Israel conflict is driving significant strategic realignments across the Middle East and South Asia. The panel of former diplomats, military analysts, and academics highlighted the enduring resilience of Iran's regime, emerging geopolitical partnerships, and the implications for Pakistan's foreign policy amid rising tensions, said a press release issued here on Saturday. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem remarked that Israel's strike aimed to weaken Iran's regime and nuclear infrastructure. He said that despite systemic damage, Iran preserved its nuclear capability and demonstrated resilience against the technologically superior

US-Israel nexus. He emphasized that, like Iraq episode, regime change is not feasible without ground presence. Amb Jauhar noted that while Israel systematically succeeded in weakening Iran's proxy partners, its limited demographic size raised questions about its ability to withstand a prolonged Iranian retaliation. Dr. Vida Yaghouti, Professor at Islamic Azad University, described the India-Israel partnership as a full spectrum strategic alliance shaped by extremist ideologies of Hindutva and Zionism. Cooperation spans drones, missile defence, and surveillance which is used to manage long-term rivalries with Pakistan rather than border threats, Dr Vida observed. She noted that India's use of water infrastructure as a non-conventional strategic tool was a destabilising factor for the region. Viewing Iran as both a geopolitical

rival and ideological adversary, India and Israel were aligned against Tehran's Islamic identity and regional ambitions, she highlighted. On Iran-Pakistan ties, Dr. Yaghouti stressed their strategic nature that was focused on border stability and countering militancy. Lt Gen (R) Khalid Naeem Lodhi framed the conflict within Clausewitz's "trinity of war"—people's will, leadership rationale, and war's unpredictability. He noted that Israel's decapitating strike was possibly a trap under diplomatic guise. Iran's missile strikes overwhelmed Israeli defences, showing tactical depth and deterrence, he analyzed. Furthermore, arguing about the impact of Israel strikes, Lt. Gen (R) Lodhi said that Iran's regime survived and its nuclear assets were likely relocated and hence sustained little damage. He predicted that Iran might now

pursue nuclear weapons as the rationality dictates. Lt. Gen (R) Lodhi urged solidarity between Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, to present a unified group of Muslim World. Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi outlined Israel's goals which were to sabotage nuclear talks, damage infrastructure, and weaken the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). While the nuclear program was disrupted, regime stability and IRGC endurance prevailed, mentioned Amb Naqvi. He cited that growing unity in Iran and backlash against Indian operatives in Chabahar has now become a new geopolitical reality which provides Pakistan with an opportunity to engage more with Iran. Addressing the Pak-Iran Relations, Amb Naqvi highlighted that both the countries have no outstanding issues. The only issue is the poor border management that can be resolved mutually.

## ICCI vows pro-business advocacy

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has reaffirmed the business community's unwavering commitment to national development, stating that despite various challenges, entrepreneurs remain determined to serve the country. He emphasized that ICCI is fully dedicated to its advocacy role, serving as a bridge between the government and the private sector to facilitate ease of doing business and promote economic progress. He expressed these views while addressing a delegation of the Builders Association, which visited the Chamber House under the leadership of its President Sardar Khurshid Ahmed Khan to discuss mutual cooperation and highlight sector-specific concerns. President Qureshi assured the visiting delegation that ICCI will proactively take up the issues facing the builders community with the relevant au-

thorities, including the Capital Development Authority (CDA), to ensure their timely resolution and to help create a more congenial and supportive environment for builders and developers to operate efficiently. Earlier, Sardar Khurshid Ahmed Khan, President of the Builders Association (H-13), briefed the Chamber leadership on the pressing challenges confronting the builders' sector, particularly those related to regulatory matters with CDA. He reaffirmed the Association's readiness to fully comply with all standard operating procedures (SOPs) and to cooperate with the CDA for the creation of a streamlined and transparent working environment. On this occasion, Senior Vice President ICCI Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry apprised the delegation of various initiatives taken by ICCI under the leadership of President Qureshi for the facilitation of the business community.—APP

## A Nation on the Frontlines of Climate Breakdown

FAIZA RIASAT



PAKISTAN is experiencing its hottest and most extreme summer of the decade, with temperatures soaring close to 50°C across multiple areas of the country. Entire cities have transformed into scorching heat zones, triggering widespread health emergencies, straining energy infrastructure, and deepening water scarcity.

This crisis is not a natural occurrence, but the result of years of unchecked environmental degradation that have pushed the climate system to a breaking point. What was once considered an anomaly is now becoming an alarming new norm. In the first half of 2025 alone, Pakistan has been struck by two major climate-related disasters: an extreme heatwave in Sindh and a devastating glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) in Gilgit-Baltistan. The heatwave pushed temperatures in Jacobabad beyond 52°C, while the GLOF wiped out entire communities in Hunza Valley, displacing thousands. Since April 2025, a series of intense heatwaves have struck Pakistan, with June bringing the most brutal temperatures. Dera Ghazi Khan recorded highs of 50°C, while Lahore, Sargodha, and other

urban centers soared around 47°C to 49°C. Even regions like Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, historically known cooler zones, have reported unseasonably high temperatures. Countless factors contribute to the single, predominant challenge of climate change. While Pakistan battles record-breaking heatwaves and growing climate instability, it's important to acknowledge a harsh truth: the country is suffering the consequences of a crisis it did not create. Despite contributing less than 1% to global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan faces some of the most devastating impacts of climate change. Pakistan's climate change vulnerability is deeply linked to its geography. Pakistan lies at the crossroads of melting glaciers, arid zones, and low-lying coastal areas. The Intergovernmental Pan-

el on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021) places Pakistan among the ten most climate-vulnerable countries. Global warming, which is driven largely by industrialized nations, has raised baseline temperatures around the world, setting the stage for more frequent and intense heat events. Shifts in atmospheric patterns, including high-pressure systems that trap heat, further exacerbate the problem. In Pakistan's rapidly expanding cities, heat is magnified by the urban heat island effect, as concrete structures and reduced green cover retain and radiate warmth. Meanwhile, widespread deforestation and soil degradation leave the land dry and unable to cool naturally. Adding to the crisis is a fragile and overburdened power system that often fails during the hottest parts of the day, cutting off electricity

to millions. Without reliable power, many households are left without fans, air coolers, or even access to clean drinking water when they need it most. The human cost of the heatwave is staggering. Hospitals in Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan have reported surges in cases of dehydration, heatstroke, and heat-induced miscarriages. Outdoor laborers, street vendors, and elderly residents are at high risk, with minimal access to cooling centers or relief services. In 2024, over 568 heat-related deaths were recorded during a similar period, and current trends suggest a repeat of that grim statistic. In response to the intensifying heat, authorities and humanitarian organizations have set up over 1,000 heat relief camps in high-risk areas, offering water, shade, and first aid.

Public advisories encourage people to stay indoors during peak heat hours, while hospitals have opened dedicated heatstroke counters. Despite these efforts, gaps in access, medical supplies, and public awareness remain, particularly in low-income and remote communities. While emergency responses provide short-term relief, long-term resilience depends on integrating sustainable urban planning, efficient water and energy management, and climate-conscious infrastructure. Expanding green spaces, strengthening early warning systems, adopting heat-resilient building designs, and ensuring social protections for vulnerable groups are critical to reducing future risks. These measures, combined with international support and climate finance, are essential for Pakistan to adapt to a hotter,

more unpredictable future. The climate catastrophe facing Pakistan is no longer hypothetical; it is a present-day emergency. The events of 2025 should erase any remaining doubts about the urgency of the crisis. Heatwaves, glacial floods, and displacement are not rare events; they are becoming the new normal. Pakistan's battle with deadly heatwaves is a stark reminder that climate change knows no borders and demands urgent, unified action before survival becomes the exception, not the norm. If Pakistan fails to act decisively now, it risks spiraling into a future of perpetual recovery, where every season brings devastation, and every year resets developmental progress. The era for preparedness must begin today. The writer is the Student of NUST, Environmental Engineering IESE



## PTI girds up loins against the Government: Will it succeed?

THE Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is once again gearing up for a decisive showdown with the federal government, signaling the start of what could become a significant political movement. While the party's chances of immediate success appear slim given the current power dynamics, its efforts may lay the groundwork for a larger, more sustained campaign in the future. At the very least, PTI's mobilization will keep the ruling coalition under pressure, exposing the growing fissures within the government and testing the establishment's tolerance for political instability. Reports suggest that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), a key ally in the ruling coalition, is increasingly frustrated with its partners. Initially, the PPP was reportedly promised the prime minister's office after two and a half years as part of a power-sharing arrangement. However, the current leadership, particularly the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), shows no intention of relinquishing power. This has left the PPP disillusioned, raising questions about the longevity of this uneasy alliance. If the PPP decides to distance itself from the government—either by withdrawing support or publicly criticizing its coalition partners—it could create an opening for PTI to exploit. A divided ruling bloc weakens the government's ability to counter opposition movements effectively, giving PTI more room to maneuver. The role of the establishment remains pivotal. Historically, Pakistan's power dynamics have been shaped by the military's preference for a controlled political environment. There are indications that the establishment may allow—or even subtly encourage—political turbulence to keep the civilian government in check. By letting PTI protest and exert pressure, the establishment could remind the ruling coalition of its dependence on institutional support. However, the establishment is unlikely to let the situation spiral into chaos. Its primary concern is stability, and any movement that threatens to destabilize the country excessively will likely be reined in. PTI's challenge, therefore, is to maintain momentum without crossing red lines that could trigger a harsh crackdown. Another factor that could energize PTI's movement is the possible return of Imran Khan's sons, Qasim Khan and Sulaiman Khan, to Pakistan. If they choose to join the political fray, their presence could galvanize PTI supporters, adding emotional and symbolic weight to the movement. Given their father's incarceration and the party's narrative of victimization, their involvement could attract greater public sympathy and media attention. However, their influence will depend on how they engage with politics. If they take a prominent role in rallies and public mobilization, they could become rallying points for PTI loyalists. Conversely, if they remain passive or are sidelined by more experienced party leaders, their impact may be limited. In the short term, PTI faces significant hurdles. The government still holds the levers of state power, including control over law enforcement agencies. Moreover, the judiciary's recent rulings have not favored PTI, and the party remains fractured due to crackdowns on its leadership. Without a clear, unified strategy, PTI may struggle to force early elections or secure Imran Khan's release.



## PSB's failures threaten the future of sports in Pakistan

THE Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), once envisioned as the guardian and promoter of sports in the country, has sadly become a symbol of failure, mismanagement, and neglect. In what can only be termed as an alarming decline, sports in Pakistan—particularly hockey, our national game—are reportedly being stifled under the weight of corruption, nepotism, and ill-conceived policies. The PSB, instead of nurturing talent and encouraging athletic excellence, has turned into a bureaucratic hub of incompetence and favoritism. The latest controversies surrounding the PSB paint a grim picture. An official allegedly imported from the Capital Development Authority (CDA), with little or no sports background, has further exacerbated the crisis. Under his tenure, policies that run counter to the development of sports have been implemented. The most outrageous among them is the reported hike in ground fees for hockey—a sport that is already struggling to stay afloat. This move has made it nearly impossible for aspiring players, many of whom come from underprivileged backgrounds, to access training facilities. In a country where hockey once brought glory on the world stage, this is nothing short of a tragedy. Hockey, the pride of Pakistan's sporting legacy, has been abandoned to the fringes. The country that once ruled the world in field hockey is now barely able to field competitive teams. Our stadiums are empty, infrastructure crumbling, and the morale of players at an all-time low. Rather than provide support, the PSB seems determined to drive the final nail into the coffin of our national game. Increasing ground fees in a country where youth struggle for access to quality sports infrastructure is akin to penalizing them for wanting to play. Unfortunately, the decay is not limited to hockey. Other sports federations are equally mired in misgovernance, rife with internal politics, favoritism, and rampant corruption. Positions in federations are often filled not on merit, but on connections and affiliations. Funding meant for athlete development is allegedly siphoned off, and transparency is nowhere to be seen. Talented athletes are forced to either abandon their dreams or seek opportunities abroad. The root cause of this rot lies in the absence of vision, accountability, and professionalism within the PSB. Instead of appointing experienced sports administrators, positions are handed to individuals with little understanding of the dynamics of modern sports. Their priorities are contracts, perks, and influence—not the players, the facilities, or the sport itself. It is imperative that the Prime Minister, as the patron-in-chief of sports in Pakistan, takes urgent notice. Hockey, in particular, needs immediate intervention. A comprehensive inquiry into the affairs of the PSB must be launched, especially regarding recent policy decisions that have alienated young athletes. There must also be a reassessment of who is entrusted with leading sports institutions. Saving sports in Pakistan is not just about medals or trophies—it is about giving the youth hope, discipline, and an outlet for their talents. If the current state of affairs continues, we risk losing a generation of athletes and the pride of our sporting identity.

# The U.S. Sanctions on Francesca Backfired

Qamar Bashir



But behind this vague allegation lies a disturbing truth: Albanese's real "offense" was exposing the industrial economy of genocide—one fueled not just by the Israeli government but by a vast network of corporations, hedge funds, niversities, and pension systems across the West. Her latest report, "The Economy of Genocide," and a subsequent viral interview laid bare the machinery of death behind the war on Gaza.

IN A jarring move that sent shockwaves across the globe, the United States imposed sanctions on Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, accusing her of "systematic demonization" of the U.S. But behind this vague allegation lies a disturbing truth: Albanese's real "offense" was exposing the industrial economy of genocide—one fueled not just by the Israeli government but by a vast network of corporations, hedge funds, universities, and pension systems across the West. Her latest report, "The Economy of Genocide," and a subsequent viral interview laid bare the machinery of death behind the war on Gaza. She revealed how weapons manufacturers, bulldozer suppliers, and construction conglomerates are not merely supporting genocide—they are profiting from it. Israeli bulldozers raze entire neighborhoods, while construction contracts to rebuild illegal settlements flow rapidly. For every bomb dropped, there's a dividend earned; for every displaced family, a new high-rise emerges. But what shocked the conscience of the global public was not merely her confirmation of genocide—it was the financial lifelines she traced. From American surveillance and cloud-computing firms to European pension funds and elite universities, Albanese exposed how deeply this war is sustained by capital flows. Norway's Government Pension Fund alone holds over \$122 billion invested in companies complicit in Israeli occupation and military operations. Similar financial trails lead to Sweden, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. Even Ivy League institutions like Harvard, Stanford, and NYU—often hailed for social justice advocacy—are enmeshed through opaque endowment investments and silent third-party fund managers. These universities, while professing solidarity with Palestine in student forums, funnel capital into firms that supply arms and equipment to Israeli forces. Francesca Albanese did not stop at the economic trail. She painted an unflinching picture of Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe. "More than 75% of those killed in Gaza and the West Bank are women and children," she said, emphasizing that these victims cannot be labeled militants by any legal or moral standard. "Their only crime is being Palestinian." This demographic devastation is not accidental. It is systematic, targeted, and genocidal. Albanese called Gaza

"a living textbook of genocide," fulfilling every criterion under international law—deliberate killings, destruction of living conditions, forced displacement, and erasure of cultural identity. She described how Israeli raids have decimated Palestine's knowledge ecosystem: universities bombed, professors assassinated, students slaughtered, libraries turned to dust. Gaza's last remaining research centers and cultural hubs have been wiped out. It is not only the bodies, but the collective memory and future of a nation being erased. Commerce and civil society lie in ruins. Shops, bakeries, factories, and schools have been obliterated. Gaza is left with no one to educate, to trade, or to heal. The goal is clear: to reduce an entire people to dependency, silence, or oblivion. And yet, this extermination campaign is not funded solely by Tel Aviv or condoned solely by Washington—it is driven by a war economy backed by multinational private contractors. Security firms, tech companies, arms manufacturers, and logistics contractors have turned Gaza into a testing ground and a profit center. These corporations operate in sync with the IDF, often surpassing state authorities in reach and precision. Private surveillance firms now work alongside Mossad, analyzing data harvested by U.S.-built platforms. Francesca Albanese warned: "This is not just a war—it's a joint venture. A business enterprise of destruction." She highlighted that decision-makers in boardrooms, not just war rooms, control this carnage. A faceless ecosystem of fund managers, politicians, and lobbyists keep the war alive. Private defense contractors mint money; lawmakers receive donations; media pundits get scripts. Israel's military policy has become a business model. And what especially rattled the U.S. and Israeli establishments was Albanese's courage in naming these links, not as bystanders but as primary beneficiaries and drivers of genocide. The sanctions on her backfired spectacularly. Francesca Albanese became an instant global icon. Her voice, once confined to UN documents, exploded across media platforms. She became a symbol of defiance, truth, and moral clarity. "I have done my job," she stated. "And for that, I was sanctioned. But if telling the truth is punishable, then justice is already dead." She revealed she had contacted 48 of the entities named in her report, offering them a right of reply. Only

15 responded—most with evasive statements. None denied the facts. None divested. "They stay in with full knowledge and full intent," she said. "That makes them complicit." In her concluding message, Albanese offered not just a diagnosis but a remedy. She called for immediate divestment from Israeli-linked corporations, a complete boycott of products manufactured or distributed by complicit companies, and full transparency from universities and public institutions on their financial entanglements. Symbolic gestures are not enough, she argued—only strategic, financial, and civic disassociation from genocide will force change. Yet, as Francesca's voice grows louder, a larger consensus is forming across the political and analytical spectrum. Experts and former officials now agree: the key to stopping the Gaza genocide rests squarely with the United States. A policy reversal by the White House—if backed by public will—could alter the tide. President trump, or his successor, must face the moral and political reckoning of this complicity. No Israeli prime minister, not even Netanyahu, can sustain such a war without uninterrupted U.S. arms, aid, and vetoes. Many now identify Netanyahu's war-mongering policies as the root cause of perpetual conflict. His government must be forced, through sanctions and international legal pressure, to abandon expansionism and militarism. But there's a third force equally dangerous: the war economy itself. Fueled by private contractors, weapon lobbies, and pro-Israel institutions like AIPAC, this machine funds lawmakers, shapes CNN and Fox coverage, and pressures legislatures globally to maintain the killing spree for profit.

The time has come for people—not governments—to act. The collective conscience of the world, including Americans, Israelis, and the global Islamic community, must rise. It is time to boycott Israeli goods, end all economic support to war profiteers, and demand democratic action from parliaments to stop the slaughter. If we remain silent now, history will not only condemn the leaders who enabled genocide—it will also judge the nations, societies, and individuals who watched, calculated, and did nothing. Francesca Albanese showed us that genocide is no longer hidden—it's televised, monetized, and outsourced. The question now is not whether we know, but whether we will act.

## Kashmir Martyrs' Day: A Legacy of Defiance and a Call for Justice

Faiza Abid

Their only rebellion was faith and the unyielding desire to speak. This day does not mark the beginning of Kashmir's struggle but symbolises a moment when oppression was met with unwavering courage, when prayers were louder than pellets, and when martyrdom became the heritage etched into the soul of the people. Kashmir bleeds again, but this time under a different guise. The uniforms may have changed, the weapons have become more modern—Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), pellet guns, digital surveillance—but the intent feels eerily familiar

Every year on 13 July, Kashmiris pause to remember a day that is not just about grief but also resistance. On this day in 1931, twenty-two unarmed Kashmiri Muslims were shot dead by the Dogra regime for giving the adhan (call to prayer) outside Srinagar Central Jail during the trial of Abdul Qadeer. They were not armed rebels. Their only rebellion was faith and the unyielding desire to speak. This day does not mark the beginning of Kashmir's struggle but symbolises a moment when oppression was met with unwavering courage, when prayers were louder than pellets, and when martyrdom became the heritage etched into the soul of the people. Kashmir bleeds again, but this time under a different guise. The uniforms may have changed, the weapons have become more modern—Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), pellet guns, digital surveillance—but the intent feels eerily familiar. It is still about silencing Kashmiri identity, erasing memory, and undermining resistance. In many ways, it echoes the events of 1931, when Dogra forces responded to dissent with gunfire. Today, it manifests in curfews, raids, and the slow suffocation of a people's will. What have we actually learned if the international community continues to remain silent, masking its inaction as neutrality? Since the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019, thousands of people, including minors, have been arrested under draconian laws such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). The region has seen intermittent internet shutdowns, disruptions to education, and limitations on access to healthcare, a humanitarian aspect frequently overlooked in the global arena. The abrogation of Article 370 enabled India to justify militarising Kashmir and stag-

ing false flag operations. The Pahalgam incident this April speaks volumes, shrouded in ambiguity and exploited by India to intensify repression and military aggression. The way India responded with "Operation Sindoor", bombarding areas in Azad Kashmir along the Line of Control (LoC) and mainland Pakistan, was anything but precise. However, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) delivered a befitting response to the Indian strikes and shot down seven Indian aircraft including three Rafales and Heron Drone. Following Pakistan's decisive retaliation, India was left no choice but to plead with the US President Donald Trump to mediate a ceasefire and seek Pakistan's cooperation to defuse tensions. Furthermore, in a tweet on the social media platform X, President Trump publicly expressed his willingness to work with both India and Pakistan toward a lasting resolution on Kashmir. He stated that even if the issue had not been formally discussed, he would "work with [India and Pakistan] to see if, after a thousand years, a solution can be arrived at concerning Kashmir". His remarks reinforced what has long been evident: Kashmir is not just a bilateral matter; it is a critical nuclear flashpoint with significant global consequences. Yet, despite diplomatic efforts, India's militarisation and suppression of Kashmiri identity persist unabated. When narratives become weaponised, it is the innocent who pay the price, and once again, Kashmir suffers. But history has a longer memory than power does. The movement that began in 1931 was not about borders, it was about dignity. That fire has not gone out. While official statements are often dismissed as rhetoric, Pakistan's solidarity with Kashmir is rooted in

something deeper than diplomacy. It is felt in the sorrow of our poets, in the prayers of our people, in the silence that follows every news bulletin from the Valley. We do not support Kashmir because it is convenient. We support it because we must. Because silence, in the face of such suffering, would make us complicit. Until Kashmiris are allowed to speak freely, live freely, and decide their own future, Pakistan's commitment cannot waver. Kashmiris have not given up. Resistance has simply changed shape. Where once it was mass protests, it is now poetry, journalism, photography, and quiet acts of resilience. Students, writers, doctors, and civil society activists are continuing the struggle, even when it is less visible to the outside world. Thus, as we mark this year's Kashmir Martyrs' Day, the question we must ask is not merely how do we remember, but how we honour. Memory is not passive; it is a political act. To remember is to take responsibility. To commemorate is to commit. The 22 martyrs of 1931 did not die to become names in history books or hashtags on social media. They died for a future they believed in—a future where the Kashmiri people could live with dignity, speak without fear, and pray without being punished. That future remains unfinished. And so, our work continues. Let us remember not only the sacrifice but also the vision. Let us not only glorify the past but fight for a just future. For in the echoes of July 13, there is not just sorrow but strength. —The writer is a research assistant at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore. She can be reached at info@casslhr.com.



## Briefs

**'No US pressure on Pakistan...'**

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Governor Jameel Ahmad also said that the central bank was preparing to launch a pilot for a digital currency and is finalising legislation to regulate virtual assets. Central banks globally are exploring the use of digital currencies as interest in block-chain-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 controlled pilot programmes.

**IMF official praises Pakistan's...**

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improving institutional coordination for disaster preparedness and financing, and expanding the availability and transparency of climate-related data. Binici stressed: "Support through the RSF will not only strengthen Pakistan's climate resilience but also help unlock green investments and foster a more climate-conscious economic trajectory." SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri welcomed the IMF representative's outreach, noting the importance of informed economic dialogue and multilateral cooperation in the country's journey toward sustainable development.

**Rs 32 bn corruption in KP city...**

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The project's objective is to enhance urban infrastructure and municipal services in five cities – Peshawar, Abbottabad, Kohat, Mardan, and Mingora. It was launched at the end of 2022 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. The irregularities prompted several provincial lawmakers – including PTI MPA Muhammad Arif, JUI-F's Sajjad Ullah, independent lawmakers Taj Muhammad, Munir Hussain Lughmani, and Muhammad Riaz – to write to the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), demanding an inquiry into the matter. According to the letter a joint venture involving a Pakistani and an unregistered foreign company was awarded contracts worth billions of rupees, which were not registered with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), KP Revenue Authority, or the Pakistan Engineering Council, asking notice of the complaints, Speaker KP Assembly and PAC Chairman Babar Saleem Swati have summoned a meeting of the committee on July 17 to discuss the matter. Officials from the Local Government and Communications & Works Departments, along with the Deputy Auditor General (North), have been directed to attend.

**PTI sets 90-day ultimatum...**

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our institutions ourselves. Come, sit together, own your mistakes and move forward." He recalled that Imran, despite his wife also being imprisoned in a graft case, had repeatedly said he was ready to talk for the sake of the country. Imran was jailed on Aug 5, 2023 in a case related to state gifts, is serving a sentence at the Adiala Jail in the £190 million graft case and faces pending trials related to the May 9, 2023 riots. In the wake of the nationwide May 9 protests, which saw important military installations come under attack, thousands of PTI workers and almost the entire top-tier leadership were rounded up, with many still facing court proceedings under serious charges. "Come and talk, acknowledge and correct your mistakes," Gandapur reiterated today, noting that it was everyone's collective responsibility to think about Pakistan's future. "The state institutions have ignored their duties which are stated in the Constitution and are instead doing other work, due to which terrorism has [risen] in the country," he said.

**DEFENCE MINISTRY HOSTS COSA EVENT**

**ISLAMABAD:** Defence Advisers from Australia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, the U.S. Army Attaché, as well as representatives from the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom participated in the COSA event organized by Pakistan's Ministry of Defence, at the Rawalpindi Golf Course. – DNA

# Asia World Cup Qualifiers 2025 schedule announced

DNA

ISLAMABAD" The second half of 2025 sees the EAP and Asia regions host two high stakes ICC men's and women's pathway events on the road to World Cup Qualification. The action starts with the ICC Women's T20 World Cup EAP Qualifier, which will take place from September 9 to 15, staged in Suva, Fiji. The hosts will welcome Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Japan, Samoa, Cook Islands and the Philippines, said a press release issued here Sunday. Teams will be split into two groups of four each before the semi-final and final, where the winning team will qualify for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Global Qualifier. The event will be the first time that the Philippines have played in an ICC Women's

Pathway Event. Chief Executive of Cricket Fiji, Sitiveni Rokoro said, "We are proud to host our first ICC Women's pathway event here in Suva, Fiji. This marks a major achievement for us, not only as our inaugural women's event at this level, but also as the largest ICC Qualifier ever held in the East Asia-Pacific region, with the participation of eight nations." "We are especially excited to welcome all participating teams and extend a warm "Bula vinaka" to each one of them. "A special acknowledgment goes to the Philippines women's team, who will be making their debut in an ICC pathway event. This tournament stands as a testament to the growth, inclusivity and regional collaboration that continues to drive the advancement of women's cricket across the East Asia-Pacific. "We are deeply grateful to the ICC and the

EAP Regional Team for their continued support and commitment in helping us bring this event to life." From October 8, Oman will stage the combined ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia & East Asia-Pacific Qualifier with the ultimate goal of three World Cup spots up for grabs. Sub-regional qualifiers from 2024 Kuwait, Malaysia, UAE, Qatar, Japan and Samoa will join Nepal, Papua New Guinea, and the hosts, to do battle over the 10-day event. The tournament will take place in two stages: a Group Stage from October 8 to 10, followed by a Super Six Stage from October 12 to 17. Teams are split into three groups of three, and the top two teams from each group will advance to the Super Six stage. At the end of the Super Six, the top three teams will earn their place in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, alongside

some of the biggest names in world cricket competing in India and Sri Lanka next year. Alkesh Joshi, Oman Cricket Treasurer said, "As a board, we are fully committed to providing our players with world-class preparation platforms. We also want this tournament to be a celebration for fans, that's why entry to all matches at Amerat will be free. We invite the community to turn out in their numbers and cheer for the team. "We sincerely thank the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for their unwavering support in Oman's cricketing journey. Hosting major ICC events elevates Oman's status in the global sporting arena. "This tournament is a celebration of associate cricket. Hosting it in Oman proves we are not just participants but contributors to the growth of global cricket."

**PTI five leaders demand..**

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were undergoing the worst kind of terrorism, turmoil and instability. They said both provinces were geologically important for having natural and mineral reserves, and the world was also eyeing those resources. "Those rare earth materials had become significantly important for the outside world," they highlighted.

**Law minister Tarar meets Azerbaijan...**

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the judicial authorities of both countries. He underscored the importance of sharing experiences in judicial system development, legal reforms, and the training and professional development of judges. Expressing gratitude for the warm reception, Azam Nazeer Tarar noted that strengthening legal cooperation with Azerbaijan would be mutually beneficial for the judicial systems of both nations. The meeting also addressed other issues of mutual interest.

**Iranian president suffered...**

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Officials reportedly escaped through a pre-planned emergency exit, the agency reported, noting that Pezeshkian was "injured during the evacuation but was able to exit safely." The report also said Iranian authorities suspect a possible internal leak, citing the accuracy of the strike. Fars criticised Western and Israeli-affiliated media outlets for ignoring a "blatant act of state terrorism" while condemning Iranian leaders' religious rulings against figures like US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. A 12-day armed conflict between Israel and Iran broke out on June 13 after Israel launched airstrikes on Iranian military, nuclear, and civilian targets, resulting in at least 606 deaths and 5,332 injuries, according to Iran's Health Ministry.

**DPM/FM Dar, Uzbek..**

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discussed progress on the Framework Agreement on Uzbekistan-Afghanistan –Pakistan (UAP) Railway Project. The DPM/FM spoke with the Uzbek FM on telephone. Both leaders also agreed to meet again at the sidelines of the upcoming SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Tianjin, China, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will travel to Tianjin, China, for SCO meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, state media outlet Radio Pakistan reported on Sunday.

**Club World Cup proves it is imperfect but here to stay**

EAST RUTHERFORD: The first edition of the expanded Club World Cup wraps up this weekend with FIFA president Gianni Infantino already hailing it as a huge success while the world of football faces up to the idea that an imperfect tournament is here to stay. Infantino's flagship competition – initially supposed to be launched in 2021 before the pandemic intervened – was derided by many, especially in Europe, before it kicked off. It was seen as an unnecessary addition to a crowded calendar, while there were also doubts as to whether it would win over the public. Even after it began former Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp dismissed the competition as the "worst idea ever implemented in football". However, the last month in the United States has shown that such a viewpoint is surely an exaggeration. FIFA has earned criticism for the number of empty seats at many matches, but fans have turned out, with around 2.5 million attending games across the country. South American supporters in particular helped create vibrant and colourful atmospheres, and the average crowd of almost 39,000 before Sunday's final between Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea was just below that of the English Premier League last season. "The decisive factor is if the fans like it or not, and the attendances were much higher than expected," insisted Arsene Wenger, FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development. "I don't share the opinion of Jurgen Klopp at all because I feel a real Club World Cup is needed and if you ask all the clubs who were here at this competition I am sure all of them would want to do it again." What they would prefer not to have to deal with again is the kind of temperatures that come with playing during the afternoon in a North American summer. Many matches were impacted by the heat and several faced long delays due to thunderstorm warnings. That looks set to cause major headaches for FIFA at the World Cup in North America next year. "Playing in these temperatures is very dangerous, and obviously for the spectacle... the pace of play is not the same, it slows everything down," complained Chelsea's Enzo Fernandez. That can be looked at for future tournaments, but it will surely be harder for FIFA to do anything about the dominance of Europe's leading clubs. – Agencies

**Sufian Mughal sets another Guinness World Record**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's 6-year-old martial artist Sufian Mughal, has achieved yet another Guinness World Record, solidifying his position as a record-breaking prodigy. Sufian has broken the challenging world record of 30 step-ups in 30 seconds, set by Guinness World Records, by completing 45 step-ups, said a press release. This remarkable feat shows Sufian's dedication, hard work, and exceptional talent. Notably, Sufian is already a Guinness World Record holder, having set four records at the age of six. He has previously broken two records held by India, further showcasing his impressive skills. Sufian's achievements serve as an inspiration to young athletes and martial artists around the world. His determination and passion for martial arts have earned him international recognition, and he continues to make Pakistan proud with his remarkable accomplishments. – DNA

**PMYP – LQ Karachi Trials Conclude with Squad Finalized**

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The two-day talent hunt trials, jointly organised by Lahore Qalandars and the Prime Minister's Youth Program, concluded successfully in Karachi, with the announcement of 15-member boys and girls teams. The trials took place at NED University, where thousands of aspiring cricketers participated with hopes of joining the Qalandars system. Following the trials, coaches Marina Iqbal and Riaz Afridi, along with Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana, announced the selected players in a press conference. About the trials PMYP-Lahore Qalandars trials in Karachi, Atif Rana said that the massive turnout reflects the trust of youth in Lahore Qalandars. "Our player development journey began 10 years ago, and many of today's top players emerged from this very program," he said. "Prime Minister's endorsement of our work empowered us to take this initiative nationwide." He added that nearly 15,000 male and female players came forward in Karachi, showing their faith in the Qalandars system. "From here, we will move to Hyderabad and even-

tually form five teams from Sindh," he added. Lahore Qalandars CEO further elaborated that under the program, five teams each will be formed from every province, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. These teams will participate in regional tournaments, from which the best players will qualify for the national tournament. The top national performers will be trained at the Lahore Qalandars High-Performance Center. The selected girls team (Karachi) includes Yesri Aamir, Alizeh Sabir, Arijia Haseeb, Aamna Zahid, Taskeen Fatima, Kainat Iman, Aneza Arif, Syeda Batool Fatima, Shabnam Hayat, Masooma Jafri, Ubeera Riaz, Faiqa Tariq, Arij Aamir, Maryam Ahmed, Isha Naeem. The selected boys team (Karachi) comprises Arman Shehzad, Abdullah Javed, Muhammad Siddiq, Umar Farooq, Zain Anwar, Hamza Malik, Ali Shoaib, M. Shaheer, M. Furman, Naveedullah, Syed Zain, Abdul Rauf, Muaz Shah Afridi, Abdul Jaleel, Syed Rehan Shah. The newly selected boys and girls players thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chairman of PMYP Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan for partnering with Lahore Qalandars in this landmark nationwide talent hunt that will play a pivotal role in unearthing genuine cricketing talent from every corner of the country.

# Japan outclass Pakistan to win Men's U18 Asia Cup 2025 title

*The third quarter saw Pak create multiple opportunities to level score*

DNA

DAZHOU: Japan defeated Pakistan 3-0 to claim the Men's U18 Asia Cup 2025 title at the National Hockey Training Centre on Sunday. The Japanese side remained unbeaten throughout the tournament, showcasing dominance and composure, while Pakistan's winning streak came to an end with a goalless performance in the final. Pakistan began the match with aggressive intent, immediately pressing forward to challenge the Japanese defense in search of an early breakthrough. Despite both teams attacking with intensi-

ty, the opening quarter remained goalless as neither side could find the net. In the second quarter, Japan broke the deadlock in the seventh minute through Yuma Fujiwara, who scored the opening goal to give his side a crucial lead and put Pakistan under pressure. At halftime, Japan led 1-0. The third quarter saw Pakistan create multiple opportunities to level the score. They earned a penalty corner within the first minute, but a brilliant save by the Japanese goalkeeper denied them. Moments later, another penalty corner went unconverted, as Pakistan struggled to capitalise on key moments.

Japan then doubled their lead with another clinical goal from Fujiwara, making it 2-0 and further tightening their grip on the match. Despite earning a third penalty corner, Pakistan failed once again. In the final moments of the quarter, they were awarded a fourth penalty corner but couldn't break through the Japanese defense. Heading into the final quarter trailing 2-0, Pakistan needed a strong comeback, but Japan remained resolute. In the closing minutes, skipper Tatsuki Yasui extended Japan's lead to 3-0 with a well-executed penalty corner, sealing the victory and the title. Earlier in the tournament, Pakistan show-

cased impressive form. They began their campaign with a resounding 8-0 win over Hong Kong, followed by a dominant 9-0 victory against Sri Lanka. In their third match, they defeated Bangladesh 6-3, virtually securing a place in the semifinals. In the quarterfinals, Pakistan outclassed China 2-1 with a commanding performance to book their spot in the final four. Pakistan continued their remarkable run, clinching a nail-biting 4-3 victory over Malaysia in a dramatic semifinal decided by a penalty shootout. The high-stakes clash had ended 3-3 in regulation time, forcing the contest into a tense shootout.



## Briefs

## ICCI calls for fostering business-friendly environment

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has reaffirmed the business community's unwavering commitment to national development, stating that despite various challenges, entrepreneurs remain determined to serve the country. He emphasized that ICCI is fully dedicated to its advocacy role, serving as a bridge between the government and the private sector to facilitate ease of doing business and promote economic progress. He expressed these views while addressing a delegation of the Builders Association, which visited the Chamber House under the leadership of its President Sardar Khurshid Ahmed Khan to discuss mutual co-operation and highlight sector-specific concerns. Qureshi assured the visiting delegation that ICCI will proactively take up the issues facing the builders community with the relevant authorities, including the Capital Development Authority (CDA), to ensure their timely resolution and to help create a more congenial and supportive environment for builders and developers to operate efficiently. Earlier, Sardar Khurshid Ahmed Khan, President of the Builders Association (H-13), briefed the Chamber leadership on the pressing challenges confronting the builders' sector, particularly those related to regulatory matters with CDA. He reaffirmed the Association's readiness to fully comply with all standard operating procedures (SOPs) and to cooperate with the CDA for the creation of a streamlined and transparent working environment. On this occasion, Senior Vice President ICCI Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry apprised the delegation of various initiatives taken by ICCI under the leadership of President Qureshi for the facilitation of the business community.—APP

## Syria wildfires contained after 10 days

DAMASCUS: Syria's civil defense agency on Sunday said wildfires in the country's west, which have burned vast tracts of forest and farmland and forced evacuations, had been brought under control after 10 days. In a statement on Facebook, the agency said that "with the spread of the fires halted and the fire hot-spots brought under control on all fronts" on Saturday, teams on the ground were working to cool down the affected areas while monitoring any signs of reignition. The blazes in the coastal province of Latakia broke out amid an intense heatwave across the region. The UN humanitarian agency OCHA said they destroyed about 100 square kilometers of forest and farmland. As the fires raged, Syrian emergency workers faced tough conditions including high temperatures, strong winds, rugged mountainous terrain and the danger of explosive war remnants.—APP



THE Punjab Forest Department faces significant challenges that undermine its effectiveness in managing and preserving the region's vital forest resources. Despite the department's critical role in environmental conservation, systemic issues such as absenteeism, favoritism, and corruption among senior offi-

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The much-anticipated Nai Gaj Dam project a crucial infrastructure development meant to control floods and ensure round the year water supply to transform water and agriculture landscape of region in Dadu district, is now teetering on the brink of collapse due to persistent funding delays, price escalations, and administrative bottlenecks. Nestled in the Kheerthar Range and fed by the seasonal Gaj River, the dam is being constructed under the supervision of WAPDA to address frequent flooding in the Kachho region, enhance irrigation for 28,800 acres, and provide water to Manchar Lake through a 52-kilometer pipeline. It also includes plans to generate 4.2 MW of electricity. However, according to Syed Ali Akhtar Shah, a WAPDA Water Wing official, the project's fate is increasingly uncertain due to the non-release of promised funds. He warned that further delays could nullify the years of effort and billions already invested. Initially approved by ECNEC in 2009 with a cost of Rs. 16.924



billion, the project was marred from the beginning. The lowest bid in 2012 came in at Rs. 38.792 billion, creating a funding gap and delaying the start. By 2012, a revised PCI estimated Rs. 59.414 billion, was submitted but at the cost of major cutbacks, including the powerhouse, access roads, and pipeline to Manchar Lake it was approved for Rs. 26 Billion. Despite, expectations

to finish by 2015, only 38% of the project had been completed by 2018, with Rs. 11.543 billion released. A scandal in 2018 involving a fake performance guarantee forced WAPDA to terminate the contractor, halting the project for 40 months, until the matter was resolved through Arbitration under directives of High Court of Sindh. In 2021, WAPDA submitted a second revised PCI

of Rs. 47.732 billion, restoring the key components cut earlier. The work was restarted on October 2021 with understanding to complete the Project in three years by October 2024. However progress again remained slow due to unprecedented price hike in construction inputs followed by Flood Is 2022 which caused flooding and damages of access roads and suspension of work

for about six months.

Even after a 2023 agreement to unfreeze the price escalation clause under judgement of Sindh High Court in November 2022 WAPDA faced fresh difficulties in payment to the Contractor.

In FY 2024-25, the federal government allocated Rs. 5 billion, but released only Rs. 3 billion, insufficient to maintain momentum but this financial year 2025-26, the total 500 million rupees were allocated which caused more disturbance in the completing of work of the project as contractor halted work site. By March 1, 2025, work was suspended once again due to non-release of further funds. Rafiq Ahmed Jamali, PPP MNA from Dadu, told this Correspondent that chronic underfunding has made it impossible for the project to meet targets. He emphasized the importance of resuming and sustaining progress. Former federal minister Liaquat Ali Jatui warned that the contractor may terminate the contract entirely if dues are not cleared promptly. "This would mean a total waste of over Rs. 23.231 billion already

invested," he said, urging immediate intervention by both federal and provincial governments.

Ahmed Waheed Bhatti, the project manager, confirmed that 1,500 staff members were demobilized after WAPDA failed to clear Rs. 4.2 billion in dues, blaming the Ministry of Water Resources for the hold-up. Pir Babar local inhabitant of Nai Gaaj Dam said that the Nai Gaaj Dam, once hailed as a game-changer for water security and flood protection in the region, now stands as a stark example of bureaucratic paralysis and financial mismanagement. The renowned environmentalist Nasir Panhwar told this correspondent that if funding remains inconsistent, experts warn, not only could the dam remain incomplete, but the Kachho region may also continue to suffer seasonal devastation, water shortages, and agricultural decline. He said that without immediate corrective steps, this critical project risks joining the long list of abandoned public-sector infrastructure dreams in Pakistan.

## BMP warns of severe backlash as FBR refuses to roll back controversial law

Anjum Nisar warns entire business community gearing up for a nationwide agitation

ISLAMABAD: Mounting anger is sweeping through Pakistan's industrial and trade sectors as the Businessmen Panel (BMP) of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) sharply criticized the Federal Board of Revenue's refusal to withdraw controversial tax measures, particularly the arrest powers granted under new income tax laws. In a forceful statement on Sunday, BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar warned that the entire business community, backed by all major chambers and associations, is gearing up for a nationwide agitation if the government fails to reverse the "anti-business" steps and continued enforcement of e-invoicing and harsh cash transaction penalties. He said that the authorities have chosen a confrontational path at a time when the economy is still recovering from years of instability, high inflation, currency depreciation, and shrinking purchasing power. According to him, empowering the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to arrest taxpayers on mere allegations of fraud, without due judicial process, violates the fundamental principles of justice and commercial trust. Mian Anjum warned that if these draconian powers are not repealed, it will become nearly impossible for the business community to cooperate with the tax administration. The use of coercive instruments to force compliance will only lead to distrust, fear, and ultimately the collapse of whatever formal economic activity remains. He said the entire industry, including textile, retail, manufacturing, services, and even the export sector, is disturbed by the growing interference of tax authorities in day-to-day operations, particularly the mandatory deployment of FBR staff in factories, the compulsion of e-invoicing, and restrictions on cash dealings. He emphasized that businessmen across the country are not against documentation or reform, but such changes must be introduced through consultation, confidence-building, and reasonable timelines. Forcing compliance through fear will not only hurt genuine tax filers but will also discourage new entrants into the tax net, which is contrary to the stated goals of broadening the base. He echoed similar concerns, stating that the new rules introduced under Section 21 of the Income Tax Ordinance are impractical and insensitive to ground realities. He pointed out that small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of Pakistan's economy, often rely on partial cash dealings due to supplier terms, payment cycles, or banking limitations in remote areas. Penalizing 50% of such expenses by treating them as income is an unfair and illogical step that could wipe out profitability for small businesses and retailers. He added that the inclusion of provisions that disallow purchases from suppliers not registered under the National Tax Number system further complicates supply chains and encourages informal transactions rather than reducing them. He warned that such clauses will backfire, leading to evasion, under-invoicing, and a surge in informal trade rather than promoting transparency. He said that the business community has made repeated attempts to engage the government with workable proposals. However, the response from tax policymakers remains rigid and unaccommodating. He said the Finance Bill was passed without adequately addressing industry's core concerns, and if the government continues to ignore the voice of the business community, they will have no option but to take the protest route. He warned that a nationwide agitation cannot be ruled out if the authorities continue on the same path.—DNA

## Pakistan-UK trade ties set for new milestone

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, has embarked on a pivotal official visit to the United Kingdom from July 14 to 20, 2025, accompanied by Secretary Commerce Mr. Jawad Paul. This high-level engagement aims to deepen bilateral commercial ties, strengthen institutional frameworks, and open new avenues for trade and investment between Pakistan and the UK, said a release issued here on Sunday. One of the central moments of the visit will be the signing of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Pakistan-UK Trade Dialogue. This formalization marks a significant step toward institutionalizing bilateral trade cooperation, injecting greater standardization, transparency, and predictability into the economic relationship between the two countries. The Minister is also scheduled to meet with members of the All Parties Parliamentary Group (APPG), where he will advocate for stronger political support in enhancing trade and investment flows. These discussions will aim to align parliamentary efforts with Pakistan's broader economic diplomacy goals and strengthen long-term partnerships. During the visit, the Minister will hold engagements with major Chambers of Commerce in London and Birmingham, promoting the active role of private stakeholders in advancing bilateral trade.—APP

## Dar talks to UN secy General

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar received a call tonight from the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres @antonio-guterres. As Pakistan holds the Presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of July, the DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to international peace and security, and to the pacific settlement of disputes. He also highlighted the Signature Events being convened by Pakistan during its Presidency to advance these objectives.

## Punjab Finance Minister meets CAP delegation

LAHORE: Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman held a meeting with a delegation of Chainstore Association of Pakistan (CAP) at here Civil Secretariat on Saturday. The meeting was convened in response to CAP's concerns regarding the recent imposition of 16 percent sales tax on commercial property rent by Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA). The delegation formally requested a review of the decision, citing its potential impact on the organized retail sector. During the meeting, the Finance Minister briefed the delegation about the provincial government's fiscal policies, tax reforms, and budgetary priorities. He clarified that no new taxes have been introduced in the provincial budget over the past two years. Instead, the government's focus remains on ensuring the effective enforcement and collection of already applicable taxes in line with the broader reform agenda. Mujtaba highlighted that PRA is working to broaden the tax base and enhance provincial revenue collection capacity to achieve greater fiscal autonomy. The Minister noted that while most taxes, including income tax, fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, the PRA is responsible for collecting sales tax on services within the province. To improve clarity and transparency in tax policy, the PRA is currently developing a "negative list" — a comprehensive list of services that will be exempt from sales tax. This initiative aims to simplify compliance and create a business-friendly tax environment. Acknowledging the concerns raised by the business community, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting businesses, promoting ease of doing business, creating employment opportunities, and fostering economic growth. He assured the delegation that their recommendations would be thoroughly reviewed and that the government would extend relief where feasible. Finance Minister also urged traders to fulfill their tax obligations responsibly and play their role in supporting the province's economic progress. The delegation included CAP's Patron-in-Chief Rana Tariq Mehmood and Chairman Mr. Asfanyar Farrukh. The representatives appreciated the Punjab Government's reform initiatives and assured their full cooperation in efforts aimed at strengthening the provincial economy.—APP

## Ahsan reviews implementation of sectoral action plan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday chaired a high-level meeting to review the implementation and finalization of the sectoral action plan based on the Chinese Experts' Report. The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Awais Manzur Sumra, Vice Chancellor PIDE, Chief Economist, Project Director CPEC Secretariat and senior officials from various ministries and divisions, said a press release. The report shared by the Chinese Embassy was prepared by Chinese Working Teams following their visit to Pakistan to assess potential areas of enhanced economic cooperation. The report outlined key observations and recommendations in different sectors such as connectivity, the development of a national agricultural plan, Gwadar Port linkages, IT collaboration, and other strategic areas. The ministries were requested to review the report and provide feedback. In line with the directions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, 10 federal focal groups were constituted to develop sector-specific action plans in response to the technical assessments presented by the Chinese expert teams. Since then, the Ministry of Planning under the chairmanship of Minister Ahsan Iqbal, has held multiple rounds of meetings to shape the final action plan and has consistently encouraged the ministries to align their inputs with Chinese recommendations and outline a clear path forward. Today during the meeting, all relevant ministries discussed the sectoral suggestions made by the Chinese teams and presented updates on their respective projects. Minister Ahsan Iqbal directed that each ministry must prepare a comprehensive response based on the Chinese Experts' Report so that the CPEC Secretariat can compile and submit a unified, detailed reply to the Chinese side.—APP

## Pak-Vietnam explores renewal of bilateral banking coop framework

HANOI: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan held a meeting to-day with Dr Hoang Trung, Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV), to discuss avenues for enhanced financial co-operation between Pakistan and Vietnam.

Both sides recalled the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2004 between the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and SBV, and welcomed the proposal to renew and modernize the agreement in view of evolving financial landscapes and growing bilateral trade, said a release issued here on Saturday.

It was acknowledged that a renewed MoU could serve as a foundational framework to support banking cooperation, promote cross-border investment, and facilitate regulatory collaboration. In particular, both parties recognized the importance of incorporating emerging areas such as digital transactions, QR code-based payment systems, and financial inclusion into the future scope of cooperation. The Minister appreciated Vietnam's advancements in digital banking and expressed interest in leveraging Vietnam's experience to support Pakistan's financial innovation efforts. Both sides reaffirmed the role of central banks in enabling an environment conducive to economic and commercial engagement.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to maintain institutional linkages through the SBP's International Relations Department for structured follow-up.—APP

## Are CF Gujranwala and DFO Changa Manga more powerful than the Punjab government?

Hollow claims and slogans will not suffice; the Punjab government must demonstrate its resolve through concrete steps

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



THE Punjab Forest Department faces significant challenges that undermine its effectiveness in managing and preserving the region's vital forest resources. Despite the department's critical role in environmental conservation, systemic issues such as absenteeism, favoritism, and corruption among senior offi-

cials, coupled with inadequate accountability measures, have hindered progress. To restore the department's integrity and functionality, the Punjab government must prioritize practical reforms over empty promises, including transparent investigations, forensic audits, and stricter tenure policies for forest officers. One of the primary concerns is the absenteeism and misuse of authority by senior forest officers. For instance, Forest Officer Mazhar, previously the Deputy Project Director of UGPP and now Conservator in Gujranwala, exemplifies this issue. Reports indicate that he rarely attends his office in Gujranwala, instead spending most of his time in Lahore to curry favor with senior officials, such as the Secretary Forest. He visits his post only during meetings or inspections.

Mazhar allegedly claims allowances for fictitious field visits, exploiting the system for personal gain. Can Mazhar's posting be limited to Lahore and its surrounding areas, rather than South Punjab, since he resides in Lahore?

This behavior sets a poor example for junior staff, who are unlikely to maintain discipline or commitment when their leadership is absent or disengaged. Such absenteeism undermines the department's operational efficiency and erodes public trust. The mismanagement of Changa Manga, one of Punjab's most significant forests, further highlights the department's challenges. Illegal logging and timber theft have plagued this forest, with investigations in 2011-2012 exposing widespread corruption. The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) registered cases against

27 forest department officials for timber theft, and in June 2012, then-Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif took decisive action by designating the Chief Conservator and Conservator as Officers on Special Duty (OSD) due to their negligence. The Chief Minister ordered a comprehensive inquiry by the Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment and the Chief Minister's Inspection Team (CMIT) into all Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs), Sub-Divisional Forest Officers (SDFOs), Block Officers, and Forest Guards posted in Changa Manga since 1990. These efforts failed to deliver meaningful results, as no significant punishments were enforced, allowing corrupt practices to persist. A striking example of ongoing issues is the repeated posting of Agha Hussain as both DFO and SDFO in Changa Manga. Despite the forest's history of

mismanagement, Agha Hussain's recurring appointments raise questions about favoritism and political influence within the department. The consistent placement of certain officers in key positions, particularly those backed by political figures or senior officials, suggests a lack of merit-based assignments. This practice not only stifles accountability but also enables the continuation of exploitative activities, such as illegal logging, under the protection of influential networks. To address these systemic issues, the Punjab government must adopt practical and transparent measures. First, it should immediately remove officers like Mazhar and Agha Hussain from their current posts and conduct a thorough, impartial investigation into their conduct. A forensic audit of their offices,

focusing on financial records and attendance, would provide clarity on the extent of their absenteeism and potential financial impropriety. Second, the government should enforce a policy limiting the tenure of forest officers to three years in any single post, preventing entrenched networks of corruption from forming. Officers who have served beyond this period should be reassigned to ensure fresh perspectives and accountability. A special audit of the Kasur Forest Division, which includes Changa Manga, should be conducted for the past decade to uncover any irregularities in management and resource allocation. This audit must be transparent, with findings made public to restore trust in the department. The government should also strengthen the implemen-

tation of past directives, such as the 2012 inquiry ordered by the Chief Minister, ensuring that those found guilty of negligence or corruption face appropriate consequences. The Punjab Forest Department's challenges are not insurmountable, but they require decisive action and a commitment to reform. Hollow claims and slogans will not suffice; the government must demonstrate its resolve through concrete steps. By addressing absenteeism, curbing favoritism, and enforcing accountability, the Punjab government can revitalize the department and protect the region's forests for future generations. The question remains whether the government will rise to the occasion or continue to rely on rhetoric without action.



## Briefs

## Israeli strikes kill at least 27

GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli air strikes on Sunday killed at least 27 Palestinians, including six near a water distribution point. Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that Gaza City was hit by several strikes overnight and in the early morning, killing eight people "including children and women" and wounding others. An Israeli air strike hit a family home near Nuseirat refugee camp, south of Gaza City, resulting in "10 martyrs and several injured", Bassal said. Another strike "hit a potable water distribution point... in an area for displaced people west of the Nuseirat camp", Bassal added, reporting "six martyrs and several injured". In the territory's south, three people were killed when Israeli jets hit a tent sheltering displaced Palestinians in the coastal Al-Mawasi area, according to the civil defence spokesman. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military, which has recently intensified its operations across Gaza, more than 21 months into the war triggered by Hamas's October 2023 attack. — Agencies

## No change in electricity peak hours

Peak hours refer strictly to evening and night timeframe, says energy ministry

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Power Division has refuted reports claiming an increase in electricity peak hours, reaffirming that no changes have been made to the existing schedule. The specified four-hour window is standard, as electricity demand surges after sunset due to increased lighting and air-conditioning usage, especially in urban commercial centres that remain open late into the evening. This pattern adjusts seasonally based on sunset timings and has been consistently followed for years. To meet the high demand, several power plants — including expensive ones not operated during normal or low load conditions — must be run.

## 5 European envoys departing upon completion of tenure

Ambassador Kionka of the EU and her Danish counterpart are leaving behind visible legacies. Both envoys were highly active and accessible, often engaging with civil society, media, and government stakeholders. Ambassador Kionka's Europe Day celebrations became a hallmark of her tenure, consistently drawing large and diverse audience

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: A significant diplomatic reshuffle is underway as five European ambassadors prepare to conclude their tenures in Pakistan. Among them is the German Ambassador Alfred Grannas, whose departure marks the end of an active and engaging chapter in Pakistan-Germany relations. His exit will be followed in August by the ambassadors of the European Union (EU), Denmark, Austria, and the Netherlands, indicating a substantial transition in Pakistan's diplomatic landscape. Notably, EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka and Austrian Ambassador Andrea Wicke — both prominent female diplomats — will be succeeded by male envoys, marking a shift in gender representation among key diplomatic postings in Islamabad. In addition to these changes, ambassadors from Hungary and South Korea, Iraq have already concluded their assignments. Hungarian Ambassador Bela Fazekas, in particular, completed two terms in Pakistan, reflecting his longstanding engagement with the country. During his tenure, Ambassador Grannas focused on enhancing trade, investment, and development cooperation



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors standing in the first row from left to right, Ambassadors of Germany, the Netherlands, EU, Austria and Denmark are set to leave Pakistan. — DNA

between Germany and Pakistan. His successor is expected to build upon these foundations and maintain the momentum of bilateral collaboration. Ambassador Kionka of the EU and her Danish counterpart are leaving behind visible legacies. Both envoys were highly active and accessible, often engaging with civil society, media, and government stakeholders. Ambassador Kionka's Europe Day celebrations became a hallmark of her tenure, consistently drawing large and diverse audiences. While the scale and nature of these events sparked debate in some quarters, they undeniably generated considerable public interest and goodwill. Conversely, the ambassadors of Austria and the Netherlands maintained a relatively low profile. Their limited public engagement, even at official levels, led to minimal visibility and modest progress in bilateral ties during their respective terms. The incoming ambassadors will be tasked with navigating a complex set of priorities — ranging from trade and investment to human rights and regional security — at a time of evolving geopolitical dynamics. Their ability to connect meaningfully with Pakistani stakeholders will be key in determining the future course of relations between Pakistan and their respective countries.

## Macron to raise French defence targets, citing Russia threat

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron is on Sunday to set new French defence targets in the face of a menacing Russia and a potential United States disengagement from Europe, his office said. "Defence efforts" must be made in the face of mounting threats and a disintegrating world order, Elysee officials said ahead of the president's 7:00 pm (1700 GMT) speech to the armed forces, traditionally held on the eve of France's national Bastille Day holiday. Despite France's difficult budgetary situation, the president's announcements will be "major", they said. French military and security officials have been warning of global threats weighing on France, with Defence Chief of Staff Thierry Burkhard saying on Friday that Russia posed a "durable" threat to Europe and that the "rank of European countries in tomorrow's world" was being decided in Ukraine, invaded by Russia in 2022. Russia currently views France as its "main adversary in Europe", Burkhard said. He also warned of the consequences of a diminished US commitment to Europe, along with cyber threats, disinformation campaigns and the risk of terror attacks. — Agencies

## Audit reveals financial irregularities in PCB

AGP raises concerns about governance, transparency and financial controls within cricketing body

## NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Auditor General of Pakistan has flagged serious financial irregularities in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for the fiscal year 2023-24, revealing unauthorised payments, irregular appointments and questionable contract awards amounting to over Rs6 billion. The audit report raises concerns about governance, transparency and financial controls within the country's top cricketing body. Following are the highlights of the Auditor General's report on PCB for the financial year 2023-24: The PCB management, however, replied to the audit that these expenditures are not in violation of the law — Federal Ministers and Ministers of State (Salaries, Allowances and Privileges) Act, 1975. The PCB argued that the law does not mention that, in case of additional responsibilities, benefits cannot be extended. "Chairman PCB is authorised for utility expense as per bye-laws," the audit report quoted the PCB management as saying. However, the audit did not accept the PCB's stance. Audit recommended that the amount may be recovered and the record be produced to audit for verification. Irregular appointment of Director Media — Rs8.1 million. The PCB, in October 2023, appointed a Director Media for two years with gross pay of Rs900,000 per month. Audit pointed out that the post was advertised on August 17, while the candidate submitted the application for the post on October 2, 2023 — the day of appointment. The day of application, approval of appointment, issuance of appointment letter, signing of agreement, and even joining the office was the same — October 2, 2023.

## Kim offers Russia full support on Ukraine

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un offered Moscow his full support for their war in Ukraine during talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Pyongyang state media said Sunday. Lavrov's visit to North Korea was the latest in a series of high-profile trips by top Moscow officials as both countries deepen military and political ties amid Russia's offensive against Kyiv. Pyongyang sent thousands of troops to Russia's Kursk region to oust Ukrainian forces and has also provided the Russian army with artillery shells and missiles. Kim and Lavrov met on Saturday in "an atmosphere full of warm comradely trust", North Korea's official KCNA news agency reported. Russia's foreign ministry posted a video on Telegram of the two men shaking hands and greeting each other with a hug. It said the talks were held in Wonsan, a city on North Korea's east coast where a massive resort was opened earlier this month — one of leader Kim's pet projects. Kim told Lavrov that Pyongyang was "ready to unconditionally support and encourage all the measures taken by the Russian leadership as regards the tackling of the root cause of the Ukrainian crisis", KCNA said. The North Korean leader also expressed a "firm belief that the Russian army and people would surely win victory in accomplishing the sacred cause of defending the dignity and basic interests of the country". He lauded Putin's "outstanding leadership", the report said. The two men otherwise discussed "important matters for faithfully implementing the agreements made at the historic DPRK-Russia summit talks in June 2024", KCNA said, referring to North Korea by its official name. Lavrov told Kim that Putin "hopes for continued direct contacts in the very near future", according to the Russian state-owned news agency TASS. — DNA

## Four members of woman's family killed by husband

## DNA

PESHAWAR: Four members of a woman's family were shot dead on Saturday in the Tatar area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Nowshera district, allegedly by her husband and in-laws over a domestic dispute, police said. Nowshera police spokesperson, Turk Ali Shah, told Dawn.com that a first information report (FIR) has been lodged at the Akbarpura police station under section 302 (Punishment for Qatl-i-amd) and section 324 (Attempt to commit murder) of the Pakistan Penal Code on the complaint of the woman, whose parents, brother, and uncle were killed in the attack allegedly by her husband, his brothers and father. According to the FIR, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, the complainant, a mother of two, said she married her husband a few years ago, but since then had been facing domestic issues and was living with her parents for the last four months. She stated that she had been pursuing a court case seeking a separate residence from her husband, refusing to continue living with her in-laws. "The court recently asked my husband for a patch-up with me on the issue. He came to my parents' home for reconciliation but started arguing with my family," she said in the report. The complainant said her brother-in-law, whose was standing outside her parents' house armed with weapons, came inside and opened fire at her parents and brother, killing them instantly. Police spokesperson Shah said, "Efforts were underway to arrest the suspects who had fled the scene after the incidents."

## NDMA Spokesperson calls for public caution

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: NDMA Tech Team Lead & Spokesperson Dr. Tayyab Shah Sunday urged citizens to avoid crossing bridges, streams or inundated roads during periods of high water flow and called for enhanced inter-agency cooperation to ensure effective emergency response and public safety. Talking to a local news channel, Spokesperson said that according to the latest weather predictions by the Meteorological Department, the third spell of monsoon is expected to begin on Monday. He warned that this could lead to heavy rainfall in several regions, increasing the risk of urban and flash flooding in vulnerable areas.

## Farm worker dies after US immigration raid

Trump campaigned for the presidency on a harsh anti-immigration platform, likening undocumented migrants to "animals" and "monsters," and since taking office he has delivered on promises to conduct a massive deportation drive

## DNA

WASHINGTON: DA farm worker has died after being injured during a raid by US immigration agents on a legal cannabis farm in California, his family said on Saturday. Raids on agricultural sites on Thursday resulted in the arrests of 200 undocumented migrants, as part of US President Donald Trump's wide-ranging anti-immigration crackdown, and clashes between law enforcement officials and protesters. The farm worker's family had started a page on the fundraising platform GoFundMe to help support his relatives in Mexico. On Saturday, the page posted an update to say he had "passed away." Trump campaigned for the presidency on a harsh anti-immigration platform, likening undocumented migrants to "animals" and "monsters," and since taking office he has delivered on promises to conduct a massive deportation drive. On Friday, he called demonstrators involved in attacks on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents "slimeballs" and said they should be arrested. The chaotic raid on the cannabis plantation in Ventura County, about 90 kilometres from Los Angeles, saw the worker who later died being chased by ICE agents, his family said. "My uncle Jaime was just a hard-working, innocent farmer," said a post on the GoFundMe page. "He was chased by ICE agents, and we were told he fell 30ft (9 meters)." The page described his injuries as "catastrophic." Tricia McLaughlin, a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spokeswoman, said he was never in custody. "Although he was not being pursued by law enforcement, this individual climbed up to the roof of a green house and fell 30 feet," McLaughlin said. "(Customs and Border Patrol) immediately called a medevac to the scene to get him care as quickly as possible." DHS said 200 undocumented migrants were arrested during raids on marijuana growing sites in Carpinteria and Camarillo on Thursday and 10 children were rescued "from potential exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking." Glass House Brands, which owns the farms, said in a statement that it has "never knowingly violated applicable hiring practices and does not have and never employed minors." DHS said more than 500 "rioters" had attempted to disrupt the operation and four US citizens are facing charges for assaulting or resisting officers. Tear gas was used against the protesters, some of whom were seen in television footage throwing projectiles at law enforcement vehicles.

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