



# Islamabad POST

Saturday, July 19, 2025

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**UN rights chief urges prompt probe into Syrian violence**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Tarar requests IHC to restore SRBC for employees sake**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Gilani freed from TDAP case by court**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

**Berlin says it deported 81 Afghan men**

DNA

BERLIN: Germany said on Friday it had deported 81 Afghan men convicted of crimes to their Taliban-controlled homeland, as Chancellor Friedrich Merz's government looks to signal a hard line on immigration. The interior ministry said a plane carrying the men took off Friday morning bound for Afghanistan, adding that all the deportees were under expulsion orders and were convicted by the criminal justice system. The government of Europe's top economy was forging ahead with a "policy change", said Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt, who was hosting several European counterparts for a migration meeting. "Deportations to Afghanistan must continue to be carried out safely in the future. There is no right of residence for serious criminals in our country."

**Naqvi pays tribute to police cop**

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has paid tribute to Police Constable Haider Ali, who was swept away by floodwaters while rescuing victims in Jhelum. The Interior Minister said that Constable Haider Ali of Punjab Police laid down his life while saving others, setting a remarkable example of dedication to duty. "We salute the supreme sacrifice of Martyr Constable Haider Ali," the Minister stated. "He risked and ultimately gave his life to save many others. Constable Haider Ali is a national hero who never let his duty be compromised. His bravery is exemplary, and his unforgettable sacrifice will always be remembered by the nation." Mohsin Naqvi also expressed heartfelt condolences and solidarity with the family of the martyred Constable, affirming: "We stand with the family of Martyr Constable Haider Ali."

**Punjab flood death toll rises to 63**

CM Maryam blames natural disaster, not govt failings, for deadly rain damage

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The death toll from devastating rains across Punjab has risen to 63, taking the overall death toll past 190, as heavy flooding and rain-related accidents continued to claim lives and damage property.

**ANOTHER NEWS ON BACK PAGE**

Rescue operations were underway on Friday in several districts, with dozens still awaiting aid and evacuation. In Mandi Bahauddin, a trapped family was rescued from a raging flash flood, while others were relocated to safer areas. District Jail Mandi Bahauddin was inundated, prompting authorities to transfer inmates to Hafizabad Jail. In Jhelum, some 500 people stranded due to floodwaters were successfully shifted to safety.

## Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.  
- Editor

## Gen Haftar visits GHQ

# Pak, Libya to expand defence ties

Upon his arrival at GHQ, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar laid a floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada to pay homage to the martyrs of Pakistan Army

ANSAR M BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: In a significant development aimed at enhancing bilateral defence cooperation, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Armed Forces, called on Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Thursday. The high-profile meeting marks a new chapter in the defence and security relations between Pakistan and Libya, two brotherly nations bound by historical, religious, and cultural ties. According to an official statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the meeting focused on a wide range of issues encompassing mutual interests, regional and global security dynamics, and avenues for enhanced defence collaboration. During the meeting, the two military leaders discussed contemporary security challenges being faced by both countries, especially in the backdrop of evolving geopolitical realities in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Field Marshal Asim Munir briefed his Libyan counterpart on Pakistan's contributions to regional peace, counterterrorism efforts, and the professional excellence of the Pakistan Army in modern warfare and military diplomacy. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment

to strengthening military-to-military ties through structured dialogue and practical cooperation. They agreed to explore opportunities for joint military exercises, capacity-building programs, intelligence sharing, and training exchange programs between the armed forces of the two countries. A key highlight of the discussion was a shared resolve to deepen defence industrial collaboration and facilitate the exchange of technical expertise, particularly in areas related to counterterrorism, border security, and military hardware modernization. General Saddam Khalifa Haftar appreciated the professionalism, discipline, and global peacekeeping contributions of the Pakistan Army. He also expressed Libya's interest in benefiting from Pakistan's advanced training institutions and defence production capabilities. Field Marshal Munir assured him of Pakistan's full support in strengthening the Libyan Armed Forces through capacity development and training assistance. Upon his arrival at the General Headquarters, General Haftar was accorded a warm and dignified welcome. A smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Army presented a guard of honour in recognition of the visiting dignitary's status and the strategic importance of his visit. The Libyan commander laid a floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada,

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## Terrorism bid foiled

# 5 'bombers' arrested at Pak-Afghan border

Terrorists took refuge inside mosque and surrendered without any exchange of fire, say security sources

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have arrested five suspected suicide bombers who were attempting to infiltrate from Afghanistan into Pakistan on the evening of July 17, according to security sources. The movement of a large group of terrorists belonging to the Indian-sponsored militant group 'Fitna Al Khawarij', also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), was detected on July 17 at 5:00pm, they added. At approximately 6:25pm, the security sources said that terrorists crossed into Pakistan and moved toward the areas of Azizkhel and Mandikhel. Faced with a strong security presence, they took refuge inside a mosque in the village of Besi Khel, said security sources. Security forces quickly cordoned off the area and surrounded the mosque. "After a brief standoff, the terrorists surrendered without any exchange of fire," as per the sources. All five arrested terrorists are Afghan nationals, while three of them were carrying Afghan

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## President, PM condemn attack

1 martyred, 3 injured as gunmen attack convoy

DNA

QUETTA: One Balochistan Constabulary officer was martyred and three others suffered injuries on Friday when unidentified people opened fire on their vehicle on National Highway in the Mastung district, provincial government spokesperson Shahid Rind said. In April, three policemen were martyred and at least 16 others were injured in a blast that targeted a vehicle of the Balochistan Constabulary on Mastung's Dasht Road. There has been an increase in the frequency of attacks against security forces in Balochistan in recent times.

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## Deposits include Saudi \$ 5bn

# Pakistan to repay over \$23 billion in external debt

Islamabad to repay around \$11 billion in external debt servicing to the multilateral, bilateral creditors

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will need to repay over \$23 billion in external debt during the ongoing financial year. The amount includes multilateral and bilateral loans, international bonds, and commercial borrowings. Out of the total \$23 billion in external debt servicing, there are deposits of \$12 billion in two different categories, with the expectation of securing a rollover from the 'generous' friendly countries. Islamabad will have to repay around \$11 billion in external debt servicing to the multilateral, bilateral creditors, international bondholders and commercial lenders in the current fiscal year. However, if bilateral creditors refuse to grant rollover out of the total foreign deposits, then there is a risk of its repayment. The foreign debt servicing requirement will go up and is going to require \$500 million repayment in September 2025 on account of maturity of Eurobond. The debt to GDP ratio, which has witnessed improvement owing to ballooned inflationary pressures, resulted in jacking up the nominal

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## Pakistan records \$2.1bn current account surplus

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan posted a full-year current account surplus of \$2.1 billion in fiscal year 2024-25, reversing a \$2.07 billion deficit in FY24 - its first surplus in 14 years, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) confirmed on Friday. In a statement on X, the central bank said: "Current account balance recorded a surplus of \$2.1 billion during FY25 compared to a deficit of \$2.1 billion during FY24." Meanwhile, the country's current account registered a surplus of \$328 million in June 2025, against a deficit of \$84 million last month and a deficit of \$500 million in June 2024. Khurram Schehzad, adviser to the finance ministry,

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ISLAMABAD: Commander-in-Chief of Libyan Armed Forces Lt. General Saddam Khalifa Abu Qasim Haftar calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on 18 July, 2025 in Islamabad. - DNA

## Majeed Brigade must be listed as alias of banned BLA

Move comes after US designates The Resistance Front, considered LeT offshoot, as "foreign terrorist organisation"

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Friday urged the international community to adopt non-discriminatory policies to address terrorism, demanding that terrorist organisations like Majeed Brigade must be listed as alias of Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). "As Pakistan continues to remain counter-terrorism bulwark through unparalleled sacrifices and efficacy, we urge international community to adopt objective and non-discriminatory policies to address this global menace through collective efforts," FO Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said in a statement.

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## ATC extends remand of Mahrang

Baloch Yakjehti Committee organisers now set to remain in custody until early August

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Quetta on Friday extended physical remand of Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) chief Dr Mahrang Baloch and other group organisers into police custody by 15 days. An FIR registered at Saryab Police Station cited violations of Sections 7 and 11W of the Anti-Terrorism Act, along with 16 sections of the Pakistan Penal Code. These charges cover terrorism,

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## PM Shehbaz says

# Railway project to usher in regional progress

Promotion of EVs to save billions in fuel import cost, boost local industry: Shehbaz

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that encouraging the use of electric vehicles (EVs) will help save billions of dollars in valuable foreign exchange spent on fuel, support environmental protection efforts, and promote the local industry. Chairing a meeting on encouraging usage of electric vehicles in the country, the prime minister directed to prepare a comprehensive government-level action plan to make electric vehicles accessible to the common citizen. He announced that the federal government will provide electric bikes to top-performing students of all educational boards across the country, including the federal board. He further stated that unemployed individuals will be provided with electric rickshaws and loaders on priority, to support employment generation. The prime minister instructed that concrete steps be taken to establish a complete ecosystem for the manufacturing and maintenance of electric vehicles in the country.

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## Libyan army chief meets PM Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Abu Qasim Haftar, Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Armed Forces, along with his delegation, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif today at the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad. The Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Libyan Commander-in-Chief and his delegation to Pakistan. During the meeting, discussions were held on enhancing cooperation between the two countries in various sectors. The Libyan Commander-in-Chief expressed

Continued on Page 06





## Governor vows to end poverty from province

QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhel on Friday said that we are keen to enhance government initiatives and promote partnerships with international organizations to reach those living below the poverty line. He expressed these views while talking to Mr. Xu Weilbing, Country Director of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Pakistan called on him at the Governor House Quetta. The Governor said that humanity is the commonality that unites people around the world, therefore, humanitarianism transcends borders and other barriers, we believe in universal principles regarding the service of humanity. He said that our goal is to provide health, education and clean water facilities directly to the doorsteps of the small but scattered population of Balochistan. The Governor said that given the challenges of basic amenities to the scattered population of the province, we urgently need the support and guidance of international organizations and humanitarian workers. He said that in the context of Balochistan, education would be the cornerstone of our efforts, which could guide the people of Balochistan to build a bright future for themselves and their communities. He also appreciated the important services of SF in providing medical facilities to the local population as well as Afghan refugees in Chaman and Kuchlag districts. With both government initiatives and the support of international organizations, we can bring constructive changes in the lives of the people of Balochistan, he said.—APP

## Agriculture varsity recommends Rs 2.025b budget

MULTAN: Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture (MNSUA) Multan on Friday recommended Rs 2.025 billion annual budget detailing running expenses and development needs for the fiscal year 2025-26. The approval to recommendations was given in the 17th meeting of MNSUA's Finance and Planning Committee held under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali. The committee approved the revised budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 amounting to Rs. 1.015 billion and the proposed budget for 2025-26 totaling Rs. 1.275 billion, says an official release. In addition, the committee also recommended revised development budgets of Rs. 350 million for 2024-25 and Rs. 750 million for 2025-26. The minutes of the 16th meeting were also endorsed. Treasurer Muhammad Rafiq Farooqi told APP that the budget recommendations of the finance and planning committee would be finally approved by the university syndicate that is likely to meet within or after a fortnight. Committee members appreciated the university's ongoing development and financial transparency. Notable participants included Ms. Sadia from the Agriculture Department, Muhammad Arif from the Finance Department, Suhail Humayun from the Higher Education Commission, and senior faculty members including Prof. Dr. Shafiqat Saeed, Prof. Dr. Asif Raza, Prof. Dr. Umar Farooq, Prof. Dr. Irfan Ahmed Baig, and Prof. Dr. Nasir Nadeem. Registrar Samia Ambreen, Treasurer Muhammad Rafiq Farooqi, Additional Treasurer Muhammad Asif Nawaz, Deputy Treasurers Shakeel Ahmad, Rana Ali Zia, Rana Inaamullah, Assistant Treasurers Sher Zaman and Adnan Nabi also attended.—APP

# CASS holds seminar to explore artificial intelligence

DNA

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Artificial Intelligence, Electronic Warfare & Cyber Warfare, and Unmanned Aerial Systems: A New Paradigm of Next-Generation Aerial War" on 17 July 2025. The event was widely attended by academics, students, intellectuals, and domain experts. In his introductory remarks, Air Commodore (Retd) Dr Naveed Khaliq Ansaree, Director - CASS Lahore, noted that advancements in emerging technologies mark a seismic shift in the character of warfare. Their impact, he stressed, is critical to the future operational readiness and strategic posture of the Pakistan Air Force. Pakistan travel packages

Prof Dr Yasser Ayaz, Chairman of the National Centre of Artificial Intelligence (NCIAI), while delivering the keynote address, stated that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will bring a transformational change and represents the biggest revolution in military affairs since the advent of gunpowder and nuclear weapons. He added that air forces have the greatest scope for AI application, particularly in refining the OODA loop and enhancing command centres. Citing the United States' Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2) system, he emphasised the need for armed forces to adopt a unified, cross-domain approach to AI. Group Captain Farhan Ahmed, expert on Cyber operations, noted that warfare has



evolved from platform-versus-platform to systems-versus-systems, with cyber serving as a critical enabler of network-centric operations. He stressed that integration of sensors, shooters, and decision-makers is essential for modern warfare, and that the Pakistan Air Force has already integrated around 25,000 assets under the ambit of cyber security. While discussing Operation Zarb-e-Karar, he mentioned that the PAF cyber force targeted 100 adversarial organisations with 4,400 ICT elements, achieving an ICT destruction score of 67-0. This resulted in physical ramifications, including disruption in the energy, transport, and communication sectors. Air Commodore (Retd) Raza Haider, Director CASS - Islamabad, observed that in fifth-generation warfare, the state that masters cutting-edge technologies inevitably commands greater economic and military power. He warned that the world is drifting towards a "tech-polar" order, with countries such as Pakistan, Türkiye, and Iran striving for full technological sovereignty, particularly in drone and electronic warfare, to reduce strategic dependence. Pakistan travel packages Islamabad tourism

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman, President of CASS Lahore, stated that modern conflict has transitioned from visible destruction to silent disruption. Three imperatives have emerged: technological sovereignty through indigenous systems, cross-domain jointness for synchronised response, and agility to adapt in real time. He added that Operation Zarb-e-Karar signalled Pakistan's resolve to shape and secure the digital battlespace of the future through multi-domain operations. Spearheaded by Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, the operation demonstrated seamless integration of artificial intelligence, cyber and electronic warfare

systems, and unmanned aerial platforms. Through pinpoint UAV strikes, strategic electronic disruption of enemy radars, and cyber-attacks that crippled the Indian Air Force's air tasking cycle, Pakistan showcased not only operational precision but cognitive dominance. The war highlighted the power of systems over firepower, where speed, resilience, and intelligent decision-making now define victory. The interactive session emphasised the imperative of tri-service synergy to harness AI, cyber-electronic warfare, and unmanned systems for effective execution of multi-domain operations.

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## Weekly inflation decelerates by 1.61%

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) for the combined consumption group decreased by 1.61 percent on year-on-year basis during the week ending on July 17 as compared to the corresponding week of last year (2024). However, on week-on-week basis, the SPI for the group increased by 0.38 percent during the week compared to last week, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 316.23 points as compared to 315.03 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed a decrease of 1.61 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed an increase of 0.13 per cent and going up to 305.19 points this week from last week's 304.79 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732 to 22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 0.22 percent, 0.26 percent, 0.34 percent and 0.46 percent respectively.—APP

## Reko Diq project to devolve Balochistan

QUETTA: Country Manager of Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC), Zarrar Jamali said that the Reko Diq project is among the world's largest copper and gold mines and, once in production, would mark a new chapter of progress for both Balochistan and Pakistan. He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held in honor of the young engineers from the International Graduate Development Program (IGDP), who recently returned after completing an 18-month on-the-job training at Barrick's Veladero mine in Argentina. He said that these engineers belong to various districts of Balochistan and were awarded shields upon completing their training. He noted that under the leadership of Barrick Mining Corporation, RDMC

had been providing the nearby local communities with access to clean drinking water, healthcare, and education, the company aimed to commence production by the end of 2028. RDMC's Head of HR, Hanno Staden, stated that the IGDP was a significant initiative to equip young engineers from Balochistan with world-class training and integrate them into the mining sector. Under the program, 18 more youth were sent to Zambia and Argentina in 2024, hailing from 11 districts of Balochistan. He further noted that 75 percent of RDMC's permanent workforce was from Balochistan, with 65 percent from Chagai district, and that 14 percent of the employees were women. Communications Manager Samia Shah shared project

details, stating that the Reko Diq project is a joint venture between Barrick Mining Corporation and Pakistan. Barrick holds 50 percent of the ownership, while the remaining 50 percent included 25 percent is held by three federal entities and 25 percent by the Government of Balochistan, which include a 10 percent free carried interest. She added that the Reko Diq Project had a minimum mine life of 37 years, during which 7,500 jobs were expected to be created in the construction phase and 3,500 long-term jobs after production. Additionally, the project is estimated to generate over 25,000 indirect employment opportunities. According to her, 90 percent of the value addition from the extracted minerals would take place within Balochistan.

## Junaid reviews proposals for Gwadar-Gulf ferry services

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry held a telephonic conversation with the Chief Minister of Balochistan to discuss the scope and strategic importance of launching a ferry service from Gwadar to Gulf region. The conversation took place during a high-level meeting chaired by the Minister to review the progress on the proposed ferry service, said a press release issued here on Friday. The chief minister assured full cooperation from the Balochistan government, highlighting the potential socio-economic benefits for the province and beyond. The meeting also reviewed proposals submitted by five private ferry operators. These proposals outlined the technical, operational.—APP

## Senate briefed on EOBI data, merit-based hiring

ISLAMABAD: The Senate was informed on Friday that a total of 11,448,517 workers were registered with the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), and registration cards had been issued to all. During the Question Hour, Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik, responding on behalf of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, said that although the EOBI website does not update registration in real-time, steps were being taken to ensure automatic online data integration. The number of insured workers had since risen to approximately 11.6 million. In reply to a supplementary question from Senator Danesh Kumar, the minister said details regarding insurance entitlements, affiliated companies, hospital access, and posthumous benefits would be furnished in writing. To another question by Senator Shahadat Awan, he clarified that mine workers were included in the EOBI system

and their registration was being handled through provincial setups. He also stated that a special committee, constituted on the directives of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, was actively working to register domestic workers across the country. Barrister Aqeel Malik further stated that a 15% increase in EOBI pensions had recently been approved by the federal government. Responding to a query from Senator Masroor Ahsan regarding EOBI-owned properties, the minister informed the House that the institution currently holds 49 buildings nationwide: Punjab (24), Sindh (14), Islamabad (5), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (4), and Balochistan (2). He added that 40 buildings were being used as rented spaces for regional and field offices. Senator Zameer Hussain Ghumro raised the issue of EOBI devolution to the provinces. The minister responded that the matter would be placed before the Council of Common Interests (CCI) and resolved in accordance with constitutional provisions.

Senator Masroor Ahsan pointed out that the data did not include plots owned by EOBI despite contributions made by both employers and employees. He suggested that the issue be referred to a relevant Senate committee. The minister responded that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision for workers' welfare was reflected in initiatives like the reactivation of the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC) to expedite dispute resolution. He said details regarding EOBI plots would also be submitted shortly. In a separate question, Senator Abdul Shakoor Khan asked how the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis had made appointments during a general hiring ban. Barrister Aqeel Malik clarified that 37 appointments were made (34 through an addendum and 3 through original advertisement) under an Office Memorandum issued by the Finance Division on September 6, 2024, which allowed recruitment.—APP

## KP cabinet takes several key decisions for law, order

PESHAWAR: The 35th meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cabinet was held here on Friday, with Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the Chair. Cabinet members, Additional Chief Secretaries, the Senior Member Board of Revenue, Administrative Secretaries, and the Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attended the meeting. Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information and Public Relations, while explaining the details of the decisions taken in the Cabinet meeting, said that Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur announced that an All Parties Conference would be convened next week to take all political parties into confidence and formulate a joint strategy for a sustainable peace solution in terrorism-prone areas. The chief minister stated that the restoration of peace in District Kurram was the result of the government's sincere efforts and that peace in other areas can also be achieved through consultations with local jirgas and tribal elders, Barrister Dr. Saif said. The Advisor further informed that the meeting also discussed proposed reforms to 3MPO (Maintenance of Public Order) law. "It was decided that the implementation of this law would be subject to prior approval from the Home Department to prevent its misuse. The chief minister remarked that the 3MPO is a law similar to the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), which is often misused". Speaking on incidents of natural disasters across the country, the chief minister emphasized that such tragedies should not be politicized and reaffirmed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is always ready to assist other provinces in times of need, he added. Barrister Dr. Saif said that the Cabinet approved financial assistance of Rs. 5 million each for the families of martyrs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who lost their lives due to Indian aggression. Additionally, Rs. 10 million in compensation was approved for the family of Maulana Khanzeb Shaheed, who was martyred in a terrorist attack. Explaining other important decisions of the Cabinet meeting, he said that the Cabinet approved the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Agriculture Income Tax Rules, 2025, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Environmental Audit Rules, 2025, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Environmental Protection (Sealing or Seizing) Rules, 2025. The Cabinet formed a cabinet committee on the agenda item related to the removal of the death penalty provision from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 2019. The Cabinet Committee will submit its recommendations to the Cabinet.—DNA

## Pakistan, Libya pledge stronger naval, defence coop ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. Islamabad tourism Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, Commander-in-Chief of Libyan Armed Forces was received by Chief of the Naval Staff. During the meeting, both leaders discussed matters of mutual interest, regional maritime security situation, and avenues for enhanced cooperation



in training and defence. highlighted Pakistan Navy's initiatives for ensuring maritime security and peace in the region

through Regional Maritime Security Patrols. Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar appreciated and acknowledged Pakistan Navy's contributions and unwavering commitment to collaborative maritime security efforts in the region. Both leaders pledged to further strengthen and diversify the scope of existing bilateral defence relationship. Pakistan and Libya share longstanding brotherly relations marked by close naval cooperation. The visit of Commander-in-Chief of Libyan Armed Forces is expected to further enhance bilateral collaboration between the two countries.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentine Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

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# CDA to take action against illegal housing societies

The meeting was briefed about the details of legal and illegal housing societies have been made upload- ed on CDA's website which are available for public information, convenience, allowing citizens to verify the legal status of any housing society through CDA's website or planning wing CDA before making any investments in real estate sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Rand- hawa chaired an important meet- ing at the Chief Commissioner's Office, Islamabad which was at- tended by Talat Mahmood, Mem- ber Admin and Estate, Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Planning, Syed Ma- fasat Raza, Member Engineering, CDA, Deputy Commissioner Islam- abad Irfan Nawaz Memon, Director General Planning, Director General Building Control and Housing, Di- rector General Law, Director Gen- eral Special Projects, Chief Officer, MCI, Deputy DG Enforcement and DMA, Registrar Cooperative Hous- ing Societies, ADCG and other sen- ior officers. During the briefing, Member Plan- ning CDA gave briefing about the legal actions being taken against illegal housing societies in various zones of Islamabad. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islam- abad directed that all illegal and cooperative housing societies be categorized, and a comprehensive database be prepared for all hous- ing and cooperative societies falling within the jurisdiction of CDA and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).



Complete data on layout plans, NOCs and plot allotments of soci- eties particularly for societies sell- ing more files than the land should be compiled with complete details of names of the housing and coopera- tive societies as well as their zones. Chairman CDA and Chief Com- missioner Islamabad directed the relevant wings of CDA and ICT to take indiscriminate action against illegal housing societies and co- operative housing societies in ac- cordance with law. Chairman CDA and Chief Com- missioner Islamabad said that a zero-tolerance policy would be adopted against illegal construc- tions and encroachments in Islam- abad to eliminate unauthorized occupations in residential and rural areas while preserving the city's natural beauty and envi- ronment. The meeting was briefed about the details of legal and illegal housing societies have

been made uploaded on CDA's website which are available for public information, con- venience, allowing citizens to verify the legal status of any housing society through CDA's website or planning wing CDA before making any investments in real estate sector.

## ICCI stands firm for economic justice: Nasir

### President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry stresses importance of inclusive policymaking in consultation with stakeholders especially the Chambers

ISLAMABAD – Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has emphasized the urgent need for long-term and consistent economic policies to ensure sustainable growth and stability in Pakistan. Speaking to visiting delegations of traders and industrialists at the Chamber House on Friday, alongside Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, the ICCI President said that policy consistency, rooted in national economic interests, is the only viable path to steer the country out of the ongoing crisis. He termed short-term and ad-hoc policymaking as a major cause of uncertainty, undermining investor confidence and hampering economic prosperity. "Unpredictable policies create hesitation among local and foreign investors alike," he added. Nasir Qureshi stressed the need for creating an enabling business environment, calling for the elimination of coercive measures and the adoption of facilitative mechanisms to boost trade and industrial activity. "Ease of doing business must be a priority if we are to revive economic momentum," he asserted. He further underscored the importance of inclusive policymaking, stating that it is imperative for the government to take all stakeholders, especially Chambers of Commerce, into confidence before finalizing any major economic decision. "Participation of the business community in policy formation ensures better implementation and ownership," he said. The ICCI President reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to acting as a bridge between the business community and government institutions. "We will continue to play our advocacy role to safeguard the interests of traders and industrialists and promote a business-friendly environment in the country," he concluded.

## Musadik vows govt support for carbon market uplift

ISLAMABAD: Federal Min- ister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordi- nation Dr. Musadik Malik has pledged full government support for youth-led clean energy and carbon credit ventures, calling them es- sential to Pakistan's low-car- bon future. His remarks came during a meeting in Islamabad on Friday with Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Zeb Jaffer and founders of emerging green startups. The minister met with representatives from Carbon Croft, a local car- bon advisory firm helping businesses and institutions prepare for carbon market participation. The company is working to establish frame- works for carbon trading, aiming to position Pakistan within the global carbon fi- nance ecosystem. Dr. Malik also engaged with Carbon Flora, a tech-driven startup striving to make car- bon credits accessible to in- dividuals through simplified digital platforms. The company aims to raise public awareness and pro- mote personal involvement in climate action by encour- aging everyday users to off- set their carbon footprint. "These youth-led ventures represent the kind of innova- tion we need to meet our cli- mate goals," Dr. Malik said. "The government is com- mitted to supporting the de- velopment of carbon markets in Pakistan and empowering clean energy entrepreneurs to scale their solutions." Dr. Malik emphasized the need to create enabling policies and in- stitutional support that would allow startups to thrive in the fast-evolving climate tech space. "This is about much more than just emissions," he added. "It's about building a green economy and giving our youth the tools to lead it." Stakeholders at the meeting agreed to continue working on collaborative models that ensure transparency, account- ability, and inclusivity in Pa- kistan's approach to carbon markets and clean energy in- novation. The meeting under- scored the Ministry's growing focus on climate finance and clean tech innovation as part of Pakistan's broader environ- mental strategy. With global carbon markets gaining mo- mentum under international climate agreements, Paki- stan is eyeing new opportu- nities to generate revenue through emissions reduc- tions while fostering green jobs at home.—APP

## Four bills smoothly sail thru Senate

ISLAMABAD: The senate on Friday unanimously passed four bills including the Extradition (Amend- ment) Bill, 2025, the Pakistan Citizenship (Amend- ment) Bill, 2025, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2025 and the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, 2025 as re- ported by the concerned Standing Committees. The bills were moved by Minister of State for Interior Mu- hammad Tallal Badar and Minister of State for Feder- al Education and Professional Training Wajiha Qamar in the Houses. The House passed all the bills through clause by clause readings. The Statement of objects and Reasons of the Extradition (Amendment ) Bill says that the extradition requests are received from foreign jurisdictions through diplomatic channels. The cases are processed under Extradition Act 1972 and have to forwarded to the Federal Cabinet twice which takes considerable time due to busy schedule of the cabinet official business. The statement of ob- jects and reasons the Pakistan Citizen (Amendment) bill says that a large number of Pakistani diaspora are complaining that they had to renounce their Pakistani citizenship as a condition for acquiring citizenship of a foreign country for residence or stay. When- ever such countries are entering into dual nat- ionality arrangements with government of Pakistan, there is no provision within Pakistan Citizenship Act 1951 which allows resumption of Pakistan cit- izenship. The amendment will allow Pakistani di- aspora to resume their Pakistani citizenship. The statement of objects and reasons of the Federal Board (Amendment) bill says that the act has been amended to provide a comprehensive framework for the Board to organize, regulate, conduct and overseas intermediate and secondary education in line with best practices. The proposed amendments aim to facilitate swift and flexible decision making while enabling the Board to establish international collaboration. The composition of Board has also been revised to adopt a more inclusive approach. Meanwhile, Minister of State for Law and Justice Aqeel Malik laid before the Senate the National Agri-trade and Food Safety Authority Ordinance 2025 as required by clause (2) of the Article 89 of the constitution. —DNA

## PM emphasizes plan to encourage private sector investment

ISLAMABAD: Prime Min- ister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the relevant authorities to formulate a comprehensive plan to encourage private sector investment in Pa- kistan's shipping sector. Chairing a meeting regard- ing reforms in the shipping sector here, the prime min- ister stressed that steps should be taken to establish the National Shipping Cor- poration on corporate lines. He emphasized that the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uz- bekistan railway line was set to usher in a new era of trade in the region, as trade goods from Central Asia will be transported world- wide through Pakistani ports. He said improvement in the railway and shipping sectors was crucial for trans- it trade, noting that the transportation of goods for Pakistani shipping lines was a valuable opportunity to earn precious foreign ex- change for the country. He also directed to take steps to increase the number of ships in the maritime fleet that will also help saving foreign exchange spent on Pakistan's freight. The prime minister instructed the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation to present reforms and a sus- tainable business model for the sector. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, and other senior officials.—APP

## 19th July resolution more relevant today than ever before

ISLAMABAD: Working Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir National Front, Altaf Hussain Wani, has said that the 19th July 1947 Resolution, which called for the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan, holds even greater relevance to- day in light of current polit- ical developments in India. In a statement issued here today, Wani emphasized that the decision made by the Kashmiri leadership over seven decades ago was not only pragmatic but pro- foundly visionary. Citing the rise in intolerance, xen- ophobia, and the system- atic persecution of religious minorities in India, Wani argued that the apprehen- sions the Kashmiri lead- ership had in 1947 about Hindu domination and cul- tural erasure were entirely justified. "The revocation of Article 370, the in- troduction of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), and the implementation of the National Register of Cit- izens (NRC) have only rein- forced those early fears," he said. He described the 19th July Resolution as a historic declaration that showcased the Kashmiri leadership's resolve to protect the iden- tity, culture, and political fu- ture of the region's majority population.—APP

## Portugal-Pakistan 2025 Chess Tournament today

The tournament is aimed to promote cultural ties through sports diplomacy and will conclude the celebrations in Pakistan of the National Day of Portugal, also marking the 75th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomat- ic relations between Portugal and Pakistan

DNA

Islamabad: The Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad, in collaboration with the Chess Federation of Pa- kistan and Serena Hotels Islamabad, organizes this today (Saturday), the first Portugal-Pakistan Chess Tournament, taking place at the Kehkashan Hall I of Serena Hotel in Islamabad, starting at 10.30 am. The tournament is aimed to promote cultural ties

through sports diplomacy and will conclude the cele- brations in Pakistan of the National Day of Portugal, also marking the 75th an- niversary of the establish- ment of bilateral diplomatic relations between Portugal and Pakistan. This event will bring to- gether a diverse group of 40 chess players, including seasoned professionals and emerging talents of all ages, in a friendly yet intellectu- ally stimulating competition. It will serve as a platform

for fostering mutual under- standing, dialogue, and peo- ple-to-people connectivity through the shared ap- preciation of strategic thinking and personality dynamics. Besides the inscribed play- ers, the venue will be freely accessible to anyone from official entities, Diplomatic corps and Islamabad soci- ety in general, including families, who would be interested in enjoying the unique atmosphere of this celebration of the univer- sal Chess game magic.

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## Briefs

## Naqvi orders improved coordination among depts

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed all departments under the Ministry of Interior to improve coordination for better service delivery and performance.

Chairing a high-level meeting in Islamabad, the minister said there is a serious lack of coordination among the ministry's subordinate institutions, which must be addressed on an emergency basis. He asked all departments to submit proposals within three days suggesting changes to rules and other necessary recommendations. A comprehensive plan is to be finalized and presented by the Federal Secretary of the Interior. Naqvi emphasized the need for teamwork and stronger cooperation between departments. "We need to fully benefit from each other's strengths to improve institutional performance," he said. The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, senior ministry officials, and heads of various departments including FIA, NADRA, Islamabad Police, Passport and Immigration, Cyber Crime Investigation, and others. The minister said that better coordination will ultimately benefit the public and ensure more efficient service delivery.—APP

## Water level being monitored closely

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad is witnessing uninterrupted rainfall, pushing the water level in Rawal Dam closer to its maximum limit and the district administration has increased monitoring to manage the situation. The federal capital continues to experience persistent rainfall, which has significantly raised the water level in Rawal Dam. According to a spokesperson, the maximum water capacity of the dam is recorded at 1,752 feet. The spokesperson further informed that the current water level in the dam has reached 1,747 feet. This marks a critical point as the dam approaches its full capacity. Officials from the district administration are actively monitoring the water level. They have intensified surveillance around the dam to ensure timely actions if the water level rises further. The administration is coordinating with the relevant authorities to manage potential overflow risks. They are also keeping an eye on the catchment areas that feed water into the dam, which could lead to further rise in water levels if rainfall continues. The continuous rain in Islamabad has not only affected the dam but also caused water accumulation in several low-lying areas of the city. Sanitation teams remain on alert to address drainage issues and prevent urban flooding. Authorities have urged residents living near streams and nullahs to stay cautious as the water flow in these areas may increase due to ongoing rains. The Meteorological Department has forecast more rain in the coming days, raising concerns about further rise in water levels. The district administration has assured that all necessary measures are being taken to ensure public safety and efficient water management at Rawal Dam.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on encouraging usage of electric vehicles in country.

# China, Pakistan witnessing a tighter financial chain

"Especially in Gwadar Port, we've supported banking arrangements for port operations, freezone development, and logistics projects, ensuring smooth financial coordination for Chinese enterprises," the Chief Representative emphasized

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The most critical area of financial cooperation under CPEC moving forward must be the development of robust cross-border financing mechanisms, including RMB-PKR settlement frameworks, syndicated lending structures, and project-specific risk mitigation tools such as guarantees and insurance, said a top Pakistani banker. During the 3rd China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE), Chief Representative, National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) Beijing Office, Shiahk Muhammad Shariq, told in an exclusive interview with China Economic Net. It is learned that since its establishment in 1981, the NBP Beijing Office has provided localized financial services to various Chinese companies investing in Pakistan, especially in key sectors

like infrastructure, energy, and telecom under CPEC. "Especially in Gwadar Port, we've supported banking arrangements for port operations, freezone development, and logistics projects, ensuring smooth financial coordination for Chinese enterprises," the Chief Representative emphasized. He added that Chinese companies expanding into Pakistan also face challenges related to regulatory compliance, banking procedures, tax structures, and local operational risks. Differences in legal frameworks, approval timelines, and repatriation of funds can also pose hurdles. "Thus, to address these issues, localized financial support, advisory services, and close coordination with regulators are essential. We assist them by providing on-ground guidance, facilitating smooth banking transactions, and helping navigate legal and

compliance matters to ensure business continuity and confidence." "Through years of efforts, we are actively working to support cross-border e-commerce between China and Pakistan, facilitating cooperation through payment solutions, trade finance, and regulatory alignment." Mr Shariq told CEN. "For instance, through our collaboration with UnionPay International, we help enable smoother digital transactions for Chinese businesses operating in Pakistan. NBP also engages in cross-border e-commerce initiatives to support payment collection, trade settlement, and financial infrastructure that benefit major platforms indirectly. As e-commerce continues to grow, we see strong potential for deeper integration in areas such as RMB settlement, digital wallets, and online escrow services." For decades, China's se-

ries of measures to continue to expand opening up in the financial sector have also had a significant impact on NBP's business in China. The Chief Representative believes that China's continued financial opening-up reflects a clear commitment to deeper global integration and high-standard development. "Since NBP established its presence in China, we've witnessed significant policy advancements from easier market access and improved regulatory transparency to the promotion of cross-border payment system and RMB internationalization. These measures have not only enhanced the operating environment for foreign financial institutions but also created new pathways for cooperation, especially under the CPEC." As for the supply Chain Expo, Mr. Shariq introduced his in-depth insights into the chain. He emphasized that with the development of

CPEC and deepening financial cooperation, the two countries are witnessing the emergence of a "financial chain" that complements physical trade routes, in which includes coordinated banking networks, cross-border payment systems, trade finance, and investment facilitation—all of which strengthen the resilience and efficiency of bilateral supply chains. "To play a greater role globally, both countries can focus on digitalizing financial infrastructure, promoting local currency settlements (like RMB-PKR), and developing joint financing platforms for cross-border projects. By aligning regulatory standards and expanding financial connectivity under initiatives like CISCE, China and Pakistan can become vital enablers of more secure, diversified, and inclusive global supply chains—particularly for developing economies.

## De-watering operations progress

ISLAMABAD: Director General (DG) PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia Friday highlighted that under Chief Minister Punjab's directions, a full-scale response has been launched to tackle the flood-like conditions triggered by the third spell of monsoon.

He said that repeated de-watering operations are in progress to clear all urban areas across Punjab within 48 hours and no loss of life has been reported.

In an inclusive conversation with a local news channel, Irfan Ali Kathia said that all departments across the province are on high alert to deal with the ongoing flood-like situation caused by the third spell of monsoon rains.

He mentioned that field workers and emergency teams are working around the clock to ensure public safety and minimize any disruptions. "Our teams are in the field day and night, closely monitoring vulnerable areas and responding swiftly to water accumulation and urban flooding," he added.

Under the direction of Chief Minister Punjab, all available resources are being utilized, including helicopters for rescue and relief operations. DG Kathia emphasized that the coordinated efforts between departments are aimed at protecting lives and property and so far, no precious life has been lost during the current monsoon spell. He said that before the arrival of the fourth monsoon spell, which is predicted by the Met Office to begin from July 21, all waterlogged areas and main arteries will be cleared. Special focus is being given to cities like Jhelum, Okara, Rawalpindi and Chakwal, which were among the most affected during the third monsoon spell, he added.

In response to a question, he said that clearing standing water is the top priority at the moment, especially in low-lying and urban areas where water accumulation poses health and safety risks. He assured that field teams are working around the clock to ensure quick drainage and restore normalcy in the affected regions. He further added that the Chief Minister has directed all relevant departments to ensure the uninterrupted supply of essential medicines and food to residents in the impacted areas.—APP

## Provinces urged to setup uniform legal marriage age

ISLAMABAD: The committee on Gender Mainstream urged the provincial governments to establish a uniform legal marriage age of 18 years for both men and women, helping reduce health risks associated with early marriage, promote gender equality, and enhance educational and economic opportunities for young women. The committee held on Thursday in Committee Room of Ministry of Human Rights, which was chaired by Dr Nafisa Shah commended the passing of Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025 referring to it as a milestone. Reporting on progress in the provinces the Secretary Human Rights reported that Punjab has constituted a committee to review the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, the Government of Balochistan reported that the Bill has been approved by the Cabinet and is currently pending, while the Gov-

ernment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stated that the bill has been forwarded to the Council of Islamic Ideology for comments and all provincial governments have been urged to expedite the legislative process. Special Committee also expressed concern on Pakistan's ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index at 148 and called upon the government to notify a cabinet committee on gender mainstreaming that would take practical steps towards Gender Parity. The Committee urged that Pakistan's low ranking in the gender parity index can be attributed to its weak performance in economic participation and opportunities for women, as well as the persistent under representation of women in politics and decision-making roles, both of which significantly hinder progress toward achieving gender equality. The Acting

Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) informed the Committee that the NCSW had conducted extensive consultations with parliamentarians, youth groups, civil society organizations, and legal experts regarding Child Marriage Restraint Act. She reiterated the Commission's support for setting 18 years as the minimum legal age for marriage. Further that the National Dialogue on Gender Gap has been conducted on 26th June, 2025 by NCSW and one of the key recommendations from the dialogue was the establishment of a National Task Force on Gender Data Synchronization. The meeting was attended by members of national assembly including Aqeel Malik, Shahida Rehmani, Khawaja Izhar Ul Hassan, Sher Ali Arbab, Senator Fawzia Arshad, and Officers of the concerned Ministries/Divisions.—DNA

## IRSA releases 386,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 386,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 423,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1530.00 feet which was 128.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 270,800 cusecs and 270,400 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1188.00 feet, which was 138.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 44,700 cusecs and 8,400 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 250,200, 196,400, 239,500 and 265,000 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 37,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 45,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

## Four killed in firing by rivals in Kahuta

RAWALPINDI: Four persons were killed in a firing by their rivals in the areas of Kahuta on Friday. A heavy police contingent led by Superintendent of Police Saddar Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar reached the spot on receiving information about the incident, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said. The police started collecting evidence from the spot while the dead bodies were sent to a hospital for postmortem, he added. According to the initial investigation, both the sides had an old enmity. Meanwhile, City Police Officer Syed Khalid Hamdani took notice of the incident and ordered for immediate arrest of the accused.—APP

## Excise links number plates to vehicle owners

ISLAMABAD: The Excise and Taxation Department of Islamabad has decided to issue vehicle number plates based on ownership rather than the vehicle itself for improving vehicle registration and transfer processes. Director Excise Islamabad, Bilal Azam, announced that under the new system, number plates will remain linked to the registered owner instead of the vehicle. When a vehicle is sold or transferred, a new registration number will be issued to the buyer by the Excise Department. According to the notification issued by the Director General of Islamabad Excise and Taxation, this decision will apply to both existing and future vehicle registrations. Vehicle numbers issued before the notification will also be subject to the new rules. The policy states that when a vehicle owner sells their vehicle.—APP

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## Pak supports Kashmiris strongly

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Minister for Rehabilitation Javed Iqbal Badhanvi has said Pakistan was Kashmiris strong advocate and Pak Army stood as our pride and honor and raised the image, honor and prestige of Pakistan the world over by establishing the history of gallantry and valor giving befitting response to the Indian unprovoked aggression recently. Talking to journalists at Kashmir Press Club here, he said that the valiant armed forces of Pakistan stood as the custodian of the Kashmiris besides the entire Pakistani nation and the country.

The minister said that since Pak Army was always our protector, besides the entire nation of Pakistan, people across the country including Azad Jammu and Kashmir had great respect and for the Pakistan Army's vibrant role for the national defense of ideological and geographical frontiers of Pakistan besides AJK. Badahanvi, while reposing full trust in the leadership of the sitting PPP AJK President Chaudhry Yasin, said Yasin continually stood as the PPP, AJK chapter President of Azad Kashmir and would remain so in future. Categorically dispelling

the impression of any in-house change in Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, the minister said "There is no possibility of in-house change in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. "Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq's government is working for the improvement of nation-building institutions in Azad Jammu and Kashmir besides the speedy progress and prosperity of the region," he added. Responding to series of questions, the minister disclosed that appointments would be made to the vacant positions of in the AJK Election Commission,

Accountability Bureau, Services Tribunal and AJK High Court judges as per the rules. Former General Secretary, Mirpur Bar, Chaudhry Muhammad Bashir Tabassum Advocate, former Vice President Chaudhry Ashiq Hussain, eminent lawyer Sardar Azim Khan and Chaudhry Muhammad Altaf Advocate Ankh were also present on the occasion. Earlier, he expressed grief over the demise of the brother of Kashmir Press Club Mirpur, President, Syed Abid Hussain Shah and offered Fateha for the departed soul.—APP



## Potential of Uzbek-Pak-Afghanistan rail Link

THE recently held trilateral meeting in Kabul between the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan on July 17, 2025 has given renewed impetus to the long-envisioned rail link connecting Uzbekistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan. This high-level dialogue has reaffirmed the commitment of all three nations to enhance regional connectivity through sustainable infrastructure. The rail corridor, if realized, would mark a major breakthrough in efforts to link Central and South Asia economically, culturally, and strategically.

The meeting underscored the transformative potential of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) railway project, which promises to unlock new trade corridors and reduce logistical barriers. As reiterated by the foreign ministers, the project is not just about transportation—it is a strategic vision to integrate economies, connect people, and stabilize the region through shared prosperity.

Central Asia, rich in resources but landlocked, has long searched for viable trade routes to global markets. Pakistan, with its strategic geography and access to the Arabian Sea via Gwadar and Karachi ports, offers an ideal gateway. The UAP rail link would drastically cut cargo transit times and costs, making trade routes more competitive and reliable. For Uzbekistan, known for its exports of cotton, textiles, and precious minerals, and Pakistan, with its strengths in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing, this project opens up significant commercial possibilities.

The trilateral meeting also recognized the project's potential to complement the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by extending its influence into Central Asia. A functional rail link from Tashkent through Kabul to Peshawar and onward to Karachi would turn this corridor into a major Eurasian trade artery, attracting investment and supporting economic growth across the region.

Beyond economics, the foreign ministers acknowledged the socio-cultural dividends of such connectivity. Improved rail access would enable educational exchanges, religious tourism, and academic cooperation. It would revive historic ties that date back to the Silk Road era, reinforcing bonds between societies that share centuries of cultural and civilizational heritage.

A major focus of the Kabul meeting was ensuring Afghanistan's role as a co-operative transit partner. While security and political challenges persist, the Taliban-led government's participation in the trilateral forum signals its willingness to support regional infrastructure initiatives. The ministers emphasized the importance of a stable and secure Afghanistan for the success of this corridor and agreed to maintain diplomatic and technical engagement to resolve logistical and security hurdles. International support will be crucial. Countries like China and Russia, both with vested interests in regional integration, could play a significant role by offering technical, financial, and political backing. Similarly, organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) should be leveraged to provide a multilateral framework for planning, investment, and oversight.

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## Israel opens Syrian front; regional escalation raises alarms

IN a troubling development for the already volatile Middle East, Israel has opened a new front by launching strikes on certain areas in Syria. The Israeli government has accused the Syrian regime of facilitating disturbances within Israel through alleged support for proxy militias and cross-border threats. The latest attacks have targeted what Israel claims are military installations and surveillance facilities used by pro-Iranian forces operating under the umbrella of the Syrian government.

Israeli officials argue that the strikes are a defensive measure, aimed at neutralizing threats to their national security. However, many observers see these actions as part of an increasingly aggressive and unilateral approach by Israel, which appears intoxicated by its military superiority and global backing—particularly from the United States. The escalation has sparked renewed fears of a broader regional conflict. Syria, already devastated by years of civil war, foreign intervention, and humanitarian crises, now faces additional pressure from Israeli airpower. Damascus has condemned the strikes as violations of international law and sovereignty, warning of “serious consequences” if the aggression continues.

This aggressive posture by Israel, critics argue, reflects a pattern of behavior that disregards international norms and the principle of non-aggression. Israel has, in recent years, targeted Lebanon, Gaza, and Syria with impunity, often citing “preemptive defense” to justify its actions. But for many, this justification wears thin when weighed against the disproportionate force used and the destabilizing effects on regional peace. Furthermore, Washington's unwavering support for Israel continues to be a source of concern for global peace advocates. The United States, rather than playing the role of a neutral peacemaker, appears to be emboldening Israel's hardline approach by providing diplomatic cover and military assistance. This dynamic sends a troubling message to the rest of the world—that certain countries are above international accountability as long as they remain aligned with powerful allies.

The broader implications are deeply worrisome. With tensions already high across multiple Middle Eastern fronts—Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and now Syria—the opening of a new front only serves to heighten the risk of a regional war. Iran, a key ally of the Syrian regime and a long-time adversary of Israel, has warned that it will not remain silent in the face of attacks on its interests in Syria. Hezbollah in Lebanon has also issued veiled threats in support of Syria.

This dangerous game of military provocation and counter-provocation is unsustainable. Rather than pursuing endless cycles of retaliation, what is desperately needed is a renewed international push for dialogue, restraint, and peaceful conflict resolution. Regional peace will remain elusive as long as nations are allowed to attack others under the guise of security without international accountability.

# July 19: Kashmir's Chosen Path, Pakistan's Sacred Trust

Amjad Fraz

Pakistan did not embrace Kashmir's call as a conquest; it responded to it as a gesture of trust, kinship, and fraternity. Kashmir was regarded as part of the soul of Pakistan. Its rivers may nourish Pakistan's lands, but a far deeper current connects the two: the current of history, heartbreak, and hope. That is why every Pakistani child grows up knowing Kashmir is a living verse in our national story. As decades have passed, borders have hardened, wars have been fought, and ceasefires were made and sabotaged. But the spirit of 19 July endured. The echo of that first, fearless declaration continues: sometimes quiet; sometimes loud...

TODAY, when most discussions about Kashmir are dominated by disputes and militarised zones, it is vital to recall the clarity that once existed before the noise: before the falsehoods; before the walls and wires. On 19 July 1947, as British colonial rule neared its end, the legitimate political representatives of Kashmiri Muslims made a historic and peaceful choice: to join Pakistan. This resolution, unlike later events, carried popular backing and moral clarity. The Maharaja's hasty accession to India in October 1947, undertaken amidst revolt and violence, was never endorsed by the masses. A common language, familiar festivals, overlapping folklore and a collective sense of belonging tied the region to Pakistan. At that moment, Kashmir said, “We are with you,” not in anger or fear, but in unity and vision.

When Pakistan came into being on 14 August 1947, the dream of Kashmir's accession had already taken root in the new state's political and emotional landscape. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah viewed the 19 July resolution as among the clearest affirmations of the Two-Nation Theory, not just in doctrine but in practice. The idea that Muslims of the sub-continent had a distinct identity, deserving of self-determination, was nowhere more powerfully upheld than in the valleys of Kashmir. Pakistan did not embrace Kashmir's call as a conquest; it responded to it as a gesture of trust, kinship, and fraternity. Kashmir was regarded as part of the soul of Pakistan. Its rivers may nourish Pakistan's lands, but a far deeper current connects the two: the current of history, heartbreak, and hope.

That is why every Pakistani child grows up knowing Kashmir is a living verse in our national story. As decades have passed, borders have hardened, wars have been fought, and ceasefires were made and sabotaged. But the spirit of 19 July endured. The echo of that first, fearless declaration continues: sometimes quiet; sometimes loud; but never extinguished. It lives in the grief of mothers in Kashmir who light candles for their missing sons. It walks in the footsteps of schoolchildren from Kashmir Valley who pass soldiers and barbed wires on their way to class. It survives in the songs, the stories and the words whispered in curfews. Even now, they choose Pakistan, not only in slogans, but in small, persistent acts of resilience and resistance.

When Article 370 was scrapped in 2019 and Kashmir was placed under an unprecedented lockdown, it was meant to silence the land. Roads were blocked, phones went dead, and the world watched in silence. But in that stillness, the heartbeat of Kashmiris echoed the rhythm of 19 July. Their lives may have changed under occupation, but their truth remained untouched: they chose, long ago, and they have not wavered—not by force, not by chance—but by a conscious, enduring act of collective will. Recent skirmishes between India and Pakistan have put Kashmir back in the international spotlight. The silence is breaking, and questions are being raised. Even President Trump has reiterated that he is willing to help settle the dispute. This moment of reckoning is an opportunity to remind the world that Kashmiris have already written their will on July 19, 1947, with hope. Now, that hope deserves to

be heard and honoured.

In an age of daily crises and fleeting headlines, one may ask: why remember 19 July at all? The answer is simple: remembrance resists erasure. July 19 preserves a truth that pre-dates all political fog. It reminds the world, and ourselves, that before the people of Kashmir were silenced, they had spoken. Loudly. Clearly. Peacefully. And Pakistan, even though its internal challenges, continues to honour that choice. Every time a flag is raised or a dua offered for Kashmir, this day lives on. It is not a ritual. It is a reaffirmation.

The July 19 resolution is not a day of provocation. It is a day of commitment and continuity. It tells the story of a people who, before the world fully grasped the storm to come, had already decided their path. It tells the story of a young nation, Pakistan, still in the making, yet carrying the hopes of those who believed in it even before it was born. Yes, much has changed. And yes, global powers may remain indifferent. But in Pakistan, Kashmir's pain is personal, felt not just in policy rooms but in everyone's hearts.

We remember July 19 because it reminds us that some promises are not broken by treaties, nor dulled by time, nor silenced by war: some are carved into the conscience of a people. As long as Pakistan stands, 19 July will remain a reminder, not only of what was declared, but of what is still waiting to be fulfilled. Of a hand still extended. Of a bond that remains unbroken. Of a pledge that time cannot erase.

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# The Heart Outthinks the Brain

Qamar Bashir



This discovery led to a new field of study: neurocardiology. From this field, a stunning realization has emerged—the heart does not simply obey orders from the brain. It sends more signals to the brain than it receives. Nearly 90% of the fibers in the vagus nerve, the primary communication highway between heart and brain, are afferent—carrying data from the heart to the brain. The heart informs the brain about the body's physiological state and directly affects the function of brain regions responsible...

FOR centuries, Muslims have believed with conviction that the heart is more than a biological pump—it is the spiritual and emotional core of the human being. This belief is not derived from myth or metaphor but from the unaltered, timeless verses of the Qur'an and the recorded sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Qur'an speaks repeatedly of the heart as the center of understanding, faith, remembrance, and moral decision-making. Allah says, “They have hearts with which they do not understand,” (Surah Al-A'raf 7:179) and “It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the breasts that are blind” (Surah Al-Hajj 22:46). These declarations are not poetic abstractions. They are statements of physiological, psychological, and spiritual truth, long before such truths were accessible to scientific inquiry.

And yet, for the better part of the modern era, mainstream science reduced the heart to a muscular organ, essential but mechanical, pumping blood throughout the body with no capacity for thought or emotion. This assumption took hold not just in Western medicine but across much of the global intellectual landscape, including the Muslim world, where scientific validation is too often seen as the final authority. The heart, in this reductionist view, was subservient to the brain—a vital servant, yes, but without any autonomous or higher function. This was the dominant worldview—until science itself began to shift.

In the early 1990s, a groundbreaking discovery by neurocardiologist Dr. J. Andrew Armour challenged the orthodoxy. Armour and his colleagues uncovered a dense network of neurons—more than 40,000—embedded within the walls of the human heart. This complex neural system includes sensory neurons, motor neurons, and interneurons, much like the brain itself, and is capable of processing information, making decisions, and even learning independently of the central nervous system. Armour coined the term “intrinsic cardiac nervous system,” which researchers now refer to as the “heart brain.”

This discovery led to a new field of study: neurocardiology. From this field, a stunning realization has emerged—the heart does not simply obey orders from the brain. It sends more signals to the brain than it receives. Nearly 90% of the fibers in the vagus nerve, the primary communication highway between heart and brain, are afferent—carrying data from the heart to the brain. The heart informs the brain about the body's physiological state and directly affects the function of brain regions responsible for emotional processing, threat assessment, and decision-making, including the amygdala, hypothalamus, thalamus, and prefrontal cortex. In other words, the heart has a say not only in how we feel but in how we per-

ceive and react to the world around us. This neural communication is not only functional but influential. Scientific studies by institutions such as the HeartMath Institute have shown that the heart's rhythmic patterns can synchronize brainwave activity, leading to what researchers call “heart-brain coherence.” When people experience emotions like gratitude, compassion, and love, their heart rhythms become harmonious and wave-like, sending calming, stabilizing signals to the brain. This state is linked with improved cognitive function, emotional balance, and physical well-being. Conversely, negative emotions such as anger, fear, and anxiety create erratic heart rhythms that disrupt communication with the brain and impair mental clarity.

These findings echo the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who said, “Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Verily, it is the heart.” (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim). Science is now confirming what revelation articulated long ago: the heart governs the well-being of the entire being—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

But there is more. Modern research also shows that the heart is involved in intuitive processes. In the famous Iowa Gambling Task, participants begin to unconsciously favor better choices before they can articulate why—often guided by subtle physiological cues, such as heart rate variability. The implication is that the heart is involved in real-time decision-making and prediction, well before the rational mind catches up. These “gut feelings,” long dismissed by science, are now understood to be rooted in the body's neural networks, particularly those of the heart.

Perhaps most striking is the discovery that the heart produces hormones typically associated with the brain. The heart secretes oxytocin, the so-called “love hormone,” which is involved in social bonding, empathy, and trust. Researchers have found that concentrations of oxytocin in the heart can rival those found in the brain. Additionally, the heart plays a role in producing atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP), a hormone that regulates blood pressure but also influences stress response in the brain. These chemical pathways further establish the heart not as an emotional bystander but as an endocrine organ with executive capabilities.

All of this—validated in peer-reviewed scientific journals, supported by hard data and lab experimentation—brings us back to the starting point of revelation. The Qur'an told us, “The Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit, except for one who comes to Allah with a sound

heart” (Surah Ash-Shu'ara' 26:88–89). That “sound heart” is not just a religious metaphor. It is a literal condition of clarity, balance, coherence, and peace—scientifically measurable and spiritually transformative.

In our time, this truth is being embraced not only by Muslim scholars or imams but by increasing numbers of Western men and women—intellectuals, scientists, teachers, and students—who are turning to Islam after discovering the deep spiritual coherence of the Qur'an. Their conversions are not impulsive. They are the result of searching, studying, reflecting, and feeling. When asked why they accepted Islam, many reply in similar terms: “Because the Qur'an touched my heart.” They speak of the unmatched clarity, authenticity, and spiritual resonance they found in Islam—especially in a world that often seems morally hollow and spiritually exhausted.

These converts are not silent. They are visible, articulate, and engaged, using platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to explain how Islam changed their lives. They speak of a newfound sense of purpose, inner peace, and connection to the Divine—feelings that did not emerge from intellectual debate alone, but from something deeper and more visceral. The Qur'an did not speak to their minds first; it spoke to their hearts.

And perhaps that is the most important lesson in all of this. For too long, humanity has glorified the mind at the expense of the heart. Nations have rationalized wars, genocides, and exploitation in the name of strategy and logic, while silencing the voice of compassion. The mind, when severed from the moral compass of the heart, becomes a source of endless conflict. It invents problems to feel purposeful, and solves them with tools of control and destruction. The heart, on the other hand, thrives on gratitude, forgiveness, generosity, and love. It does not seek domination; it seeks peace.

If we, as individuals and as a civilization, wish to escape the cycles of tyranny, conflict, and spiritual emptiness, we must shift from the mind to the heart—not to abandon intellect, but to elevate it by reconnecting it to its source. Revelation is that source. Science, when honest, serves it. The Qur'an, preserved in its original form, remains the final and flawless testimony of that truth.

In a time of confusion, let us listen not only with our ears or minds, but with our hearts—for that is where truth resides, and where salvation begins.

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



## Briefs

Pak, Libya  
to expand  
defence ties

FROM PAGE 01  
the memorial dedicated to the martyrs of the Pakistan Army, paying rich tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for the defence of Pakistan. The solemn wreath-laying ceremony was followed by a ceremonial inspection of the guard of honour, symbolizing military respect and solidarity. General Haftar expressed admiration for the dedication and sacrifices made by the Pakistan Armed Forces, and acknowledged Pakistan's long-standing role as a responsible regional power advocating peace, stability, and cooperation. This visit is seen as part of a broader diplomatic and military engagement by Pakistan to strengthen strategic ties with countries in North Africa and the Arab world. Observers view the development as mutually beneficial, given Libya's current need for security assistance and Pakistan's rising profile as a provider of professional military expertise and defence solutions.

Pakistan to  
repay over  
\$23 billion...

FROM PAGE 01  
GDP growth numbers in the past few years, but now in the wake of reduced inflation and lowering nominal growth, the debt to GDP ratio is going to worsen in the coming months. "The total public sector external debt requirements are hovering at \$15 billion, including \$4 billion SAFE Deposits from China on the books of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Division for the ongoing FY2025-26," top official sources said. The remaining \$9 billion external debt servicing is on the books of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), including loans obtained from the IMF and foreign deposits on which the rupee cover for the budgetary support is not allowed.

Railway  
project to  
usher in...

FROM PAGE 01  
He also ordered third-party validation of the entire process of EV distribution and the government support mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability. Highlighting the need for inclusivity, the prime minister emphasized that economically disadvantaged individuals should be prioritized in the government-supported electric vehicle schemes. He further directed the launch of a public awareness campaign to educate citizens about the government assistance programs for obtaining electric vehicles.

Libyan army  
chief meets  
PM Shehbaz

FROM PAGE 01  
gratitude to the Prime Minister for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and his delegation. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif, Federal Minister for Defence Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Prime Minister's Advisor Dr. Tauqir Shah, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi, and senior government officials were also present at the meeting.

5 'bombers'  
arrested at...

FROM PAGE 01  
identity cards, they said. The suspects, believed to be between 15 and 18 years old, have been moved to an undisclosed location for further investigation, sources added. Pakistan witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces, since the return of Taliban rulers in Afghanistan in 2021. In May this year, Pakistan saw a slight uptick in militant attacks even as heightened military tensions with neighbouring India failed to trigger a significant escalation in violence from extremist groups.

Crisis deepens in Pakistan hockey:  
Major shake-up expected in PHF

Despite the ongoing turmoil, there may be a silver lining on the horizon. Sources have indicated that Pakistan could still take part in the Pro League 2026, even if the government fails to release official funds

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a major development that has sent ripples through Pakistan's sports community, Asif Bajwa has resigned from his position as President of the Punjab Hockey Federation (PHF). According to credible sources, Bajwa's resignation comes amid growing pressure and the likelihood of his arrest over administrative and certain other failures. His departure signals the start of what insiders are calling a "massive shake-up" within the broader Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF).

Multiple reliable sources have confirmed that both the President of PHF and its Secretary are under serious scrutiny, and at least one of them is expected to be replaced soon. The growing dissatisfaction within the hockey fraternity, particularly among current and former players, has reportedly forced the authorities to consider a reorganization of the federation's top leadership.

Tariq Bugti, the current PHF President, is said to be politically well-connected and enjoys support from powerful quarters. This backing might secure his position, at least temporarily. However, the same cannot be said for PHF Secretary Rana Mujahid. Insiders claim that Mujahid is likely to be shown the door in the coming weeks, especially given the mounting resentment from players and former officials alike. If that happens then Shehbaz senior will be a strong contender for the post of PHF secretary general. "The players are extremely unhappy. They have not been paid their dues, their daily allowances are minimal, and they feel completely neglected by the federation," said a former national player who requested anonymity. "The whole management needs to go."

The crux of the crisis lies in chronic mismanagement and the federation's inability to fulfill basic commitments to its players. Over the past few years, numerous complaints have surfaced about delayed or missing payments, poor travel arrangements, and inadequate training facilities. Despite being one of Pakistan's most storied sports, hockey continues to suffer from dwindling sponsorship,



lack of infrastructure, and a leadership accused of incompetence and nepotism. The growing frustration reached a boiling point recently, with reports of informal discussions among players expressing no confidence in the current leadership. Several players have privately voiced that they feel abandoned, especially when compared to how other countries treat their national athletes. Adding fuel to the fire is Pakistan's non-participation in the upcoming Asia Cup being held in India. PHF sources claim that Pakistan made repeated requests to the International Hockey Federation (FIH) to relocate the tournament due to political tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi. However, these efforts proved unsuccessful, as India continues to hold significant sway within the FIH.

"This is a major blow. Pakistan has a rich history in Asian hockey, and our absence from such a key event highlights the dire state of affairs," said a former coach. Players and supporters alike have expressed disappointment, pointing out that withdrawing from tournaments due to venue issues further isolates Pakistan from the international hockey community.

Despite the ongoing turmoil, there may be a silver lining on the horizon. Sources have indicated that Pakistan could still take part in the Pro League 2026, even if the government fails to release official funds. Influential figures from the private sector and political corridors have reportedly stepped forward and promised financial backing if Pakistan is invited to the tournament.

"There are a few well-wishers of hockey who have

committed support," a PHF insider confirmed. "They understand that it's not just about the sport—it's about national pride."

While the possibility of participating in the Pro League might offer a temporary morale boost, critics argue that without systemic reform, Pakistan hockey will continue its downward spiral. Once the pride of Pakistan, hockey has now become a symbol of institutional neglect and misgovernance. The national team, which once dominated world rankings and Olympic podiums, now struggles to qualify for major tournaments. The federation's leadership has long been accused of misappropriating funds, making political appointments, and ignoring the grassroots development of the game.

With Bajwa's resignation and the likely exit of key PHF officials, many see this as a turning point. But questions remain: Will the coming changes be cosmetic, or is this the beginning of genuine reform? Former players, coaches, and hockey lovers across the country are calling on the government, the Pakistan Sports Board, and the FIH to step in and ensure accountability. They stress that unless the leadership is overhauled with competent, transparent individuals focused on merit and development, Pakistan's national game will remain in the shadows. The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), a body mandated to promote and support sports in the country, appears to be at odds with the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF). Tensions have reportedly escalated under the new PSB Director General, who notably lacks a background in sports. One major point of contention is the PSB's recent decision to increase the hockey ground usage fee for clubs by a staggering 300 percent. This move sparked strong criticism from players and the PHF alike. Despite widespread coverage in the national media and formal complaints from clubs, the PSB leadership has remained unyielding on the issue. As the drama unfolds, one thing is clear: Pakistani hockey stands at a crossroads. The choices made in the next few weeks will determine whether it can rise from its current state or slide further into obscurity.

England reach Euro 2025 semis  
after shootout win over Sweden

ZURICH: England roared into the semi-finals of Women's Euro 2025 on Thursday after coming back from two goals down and then beating Sweden 3-2 in a chaotic penalty shootout to continue their title defence. Smilla Holmberg blasted over from the spot to settle the shootout drama in Zurich after the match finished 2-2 thanks to Lucy Bronze and Michelle Agyemang's quick-fire strikes just as England looked to be limping out of the tournament. The reigning European champions were staring at elimination with 11 minutes remaining in normal time after Kosovare Asllani, who opened the scoring with her 50th international goal in the second minute, and Stina Blackstenius shot Sweden into a two-goal lead at half-time. "That was one of the hardest games I have ever

watched. We could have been out four or five times," England boss Sarina Wiegman told the BBC.

"We started badly. We didn't create anything so we changed shape and we scored two goals which was crazy. The shootout, we missed a lot but they missed more and we're through." England will face Italy, who are in the last four for the first time since 1997, in the last four in Geneva on Tuesday after a roller-coaster comeback. "Not how we planned it to be, of course, but it's a learning experience that we put in our back pocket and learn from going forward," Chloe Kelly, who was key to both England goals and took one of the few good penalties of the shootout, told reporters. "We solved the problems and then it was about getting back in the game. The resilience of the team is incredible." Defeat ended Sweden's bid

for a first major honour since winning the first official Euros back in 1984, Peter Gerhardsson's team falling in the most painful of fashions. Goalkeeper Jennifer Falk, who saved four penalties, had the chance to send Sweden through but like Holmberg she scooped her effort over the bar and gave England the chance to reach the last four. "All analysis feels fairly pointless right now, right now it's melancholy. You feel a certain sadness that it turned out this way," said Sweden coach Peter Gerhardsson. England scored 10 goals in their final two Group D matches to reach the last eight but showed none of that attacking flair in the early stages at the Letzigrund Stadium. Sweden were on the front foot from the off and somehow it was no surprise when Asllani drilled home her opener after just one minute

and 46 seconds, the attacking midfielder being left completely free to collect Blackstenius' lay-off and score. Jess Carter's loose pass led to that goal and moments later goalkeeper Hannah Hampton almost gifted Blackstenius her third goal of the tournament after miscontrolling the ball and allowing the Arsenal striker to bear down on an open goal before Leah Williamson slid in to cut out the danger. Lauren Hemp's pot shot was brilliantly tipped onto the bar by Falk but that was a rare bright spot in a dismal opening half for England, who were deservedly two behind at the break. Blackstenius showed how lethal she can be in the 25th minute when she raced in behind a dozing English defence, collected Julia Zigiotti Olme's pass, held off Carter and slotted home. — Agencies

Wrexham chief  
wants playoff push

WELLINGTON: The Hollywood fairytale that is Wrexham AFC is only just beginning, the club's chief executive said Friday as the Welsh side continued its unlikely quest to crack the English Premier League. Since Hollywood stars Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney purchased the Welsh club in 2020, Wrexham have become the first team to earn three successive promotions from England's national league to the second-tier Championship. Wrexham will on August 9 play relegated former Premier League club Southampton in their Championship opener, a prospect club chief executive Michael Williamson described as a "pinch yourself" moment. Williamson, speaking in Wellington during the club's preseason tour to Australia and New Zealand, said success was more than simply making up the numbers. "The expectation is, and Rob McElhenney will say that he doesn't know what this word is, but obviously we need to consolidate our position in the Championship," Williamson told AFP. "If we are able to find ourselves halfway through the season, in December, in that 3-4-5-6-7 position, people should be worried about us."

"Because I believe if we make the playoffs with the type of mentality that we have, anything can happen in 90 minutes. "I really would give ourselves a strong shot of giving it a run." The Welsh minnows languished for years in the lower tiers of English football before being purchased by Reynolds and McElhenney, and shooting to fame through the "Welcome to Wrexham" documentary. They return to the Championship — one step below the Premier League — for the first time in more than 40 years. The fighting words were echoed by former Wrexham player-turned-club ambassador, Ben Tozer, who was also in New Zealand for the tour. — Agencies

Pakistan  
records  
\$2.1bn...

FROM PAGE 01  
also shared the data on X, highlighting a \$328 million current account surplus in June 2025. "Country's Current Account (CA) for June 2025 closes in \$328Mn Surplus, taking full-year Surplus to over \$2.1Bn — annual Surplus recorded after 14 years, and the largest Surplus in 22 years," the adviser wrote on X.

President,  
PM condemn  
attack

FROM PAGE 01  
"According to initial reports, the acting deputy superintendent of police's (DSP) vehicle was targeted," the spokesperson Rind said in a statement. The assailants opened fire on the vehicle near the Choto area of Mastung on the National Highway, the statement elaborated. Rind stated that "a search operation is underway to apprehend the assailants, and security forces have been dispatched to the site of the attack".

Majeed  
Brigade must  
be listed...

FROM PAGE 01  
The demand came hours the US designated The Resistance Front, considered an offshoot of the proscribed Lashkare-Taiba (LeT), as a "foreign terrorist organisation" over its alleged involvement in the April 22 attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) that killed 26 people. The incident sparked heavy fighting between the two nuclear-armed neighbours in decades as New Delhi blamed Pakistan for the attack, a charge denied by Islamabad.

ATC extends  
remand of  
Mahrang

FROM PAGE 01  
murder, attempted murder, incitement to violence and rebellion, creating disorder, promoting racial hatred and damaging property. Mahrang, along with 17 others, was arrested and is currently being held at the Quetta District Jail under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance. The case accused Mahrang and the BYC leadership of assisting rioters in shooting police officers, passersby, civilians, and their protesting colleagues, which resulted in the deaths of three individuals and left 15 police officers injured.

Pakistan qualify for  
semifinal in volleyball  
tournament

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Storms into the Final of the 2nd Asian Men's U16 Volleyball Championship After Dominating Win Against India Nakhon Phanom, Thailand — The Pakistan U16 Men's Volleyball Team continued their extraordinary unbeaten run in the 2nd Asian Men's U16 Volleyball Championship 2025 by delivering a stunning performance in the semi-final match against traditional rivals India, winning by 3-0 sets. The highly anticipated match took place today, 18th July 2025, and saw Team Pakistan dominate with set scores of 25-16, 25-19, and 25-12, securing a comprehensive victory and punching their ticket to the Final of the Championship. The match showcased exceptional skills, discipline, and team coordination. Among the standout performers were Junaid, Faizan, Irfan, and Talha, who led the attack and defense with composure and determination throughout the game. Pakistan's superior blocking and fast counter-attacks left the Indian team struggling to gain momentum. The result not only highlights Pakistan's potential at the youth level but also secures their position as one of Asia's strongest emerging volleyball nations.

Pakistan team  
to feature in  
World Squash  
events

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan junior team departed to Egypt on Friday to feature in the World Junior Individual Squash Championships and World Junior Team Squash Championships, taking place in Egypt from July 21 to August 1. The Pakistan contingent is all set to make their mark on the world stage, led by Sqn Ldr Atif Kamran (Team Manager) and Coach Faraz Muhammad, the talented young players are ready to give it their all in the championships, said a press release. The players included Anas Ali Shah, Abdullah Nawaz, Umair Arif and Yahya Khan. — Agencies

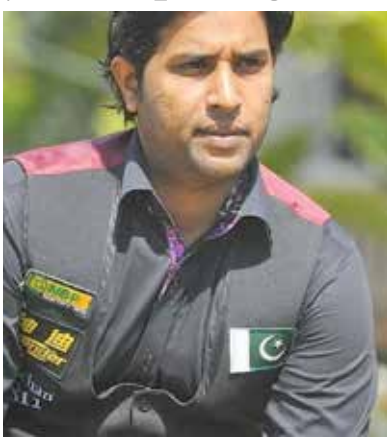
Wrexham chief wants playoff push  
after promotion to Championship

WELLINGTON: The Hollywood fairytale that is Wrexham AFC is only just beginning, the club's chief executive said Friday as the Welsh side continued its unlikely quest to crack the English Premier League. Since Hollywood stars Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney purchased the Welsh club in 2020, Wrexham have become the first team to earn three successive promotions from England's national league to the second-tier Championship. Wrexham will on August 9 play relegated former Premier League club Southampton in their Championship opener, a prospect club chief executive Michael Williamson described as a "pinch yourself" moment. Williamson, speaking in Wellington during the club's preseason tour to Australia and New Zealand, said success was more than simply making up the numbers. "The expectation is, and Rob McElhenney will say that he doesn't know what this word is, but obviously we need to consolidate our position in the Championship," Williamson told AFP. "If we are able to find ourselves halfway through the season, in December, in that 3-4-5-6-7 position, people should be worried about us. "Because I believe if we make the playoffs with the type of mentality that we have, anything can happen in 90 minutes. "I really would give ourselves a strong shot of giving it a run." The Welsh minnows languished for years in the lower tiers of English football before being purchased by Reynolds and McElhenney, and shooting to fame through the "Welcome to Wrexham" documentary. They return to the Championship — one step below the Premier League — for the first time in more than 40 years. The fighting words were echoed by former Wrexham player-turned-club ambassador, Ben Tozer, who was also in New Zealand for the tour. "It's a massive challenge, don't get me wrong," Tozer said. "But the momentum of our club, four years of pure success and heading in the right direction, winning a lot more games than losing. We could surprise some people." — Agencies

Muhammad Asif wins World Title again,  
Hasnain Shines in U17 Final

*Hasnain, who has lost only one frame in the entire tournament so far, will face Wales' Riley Powell in the final scheduled for Friday. The match promises to be a clash of rising stars, and fans are eagerly anticipating another proud moment for Pakistan*

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's snooker ace Muhammad Asif has once again made the nation proud by clinching the IBSF World Masters Snooker Championship title in Bahrain. In a thrilling display of class and composure, Asif defeated India's Brijesh Damani in the final to reclaim his place at the top of the world amateur snooker scene. The championship final, held at Crowne Plaza Bahrain, saw Asif in top form as he outclassed Damani, who had beaten him earlier in the group stage. This time, however, Asif was determined to settle the score—and he did so with dominance. The victory adds another prestigious title to his name, reaffirming his status as one of Pakistan's all-time snooker greats. Asif had earlier booked his place in the final with a gripping 4-2 win over India's Manan Chandra in the semi-final. He started strong with a 118-6 frame win but briefly lost momentum before storming back to win three consecutive frames. His semi-final frame scores were 118-6, 0-84, 25-76, 92-11, 87-62, and 72-41. With this latest triumph, Asif has not only avenged his ear-



lier group-stage loss to Damani but also showcased his mental strength and tactical brilliance. His consistency and determination throughout the tournament have won widespread praise. Meanwhile, young cueist Hasnain Akhtar has emerged as another shining star for Pakistan, reaching the final of the IBSF World U17 Snooker Championship. The 16-year-old sensation stormed past Poland's Olivier Nizialek with a commanding 4-0 win in the semi-final. Hasnain's frame scores were 76-1, 69-8, 88-0, and 62-37. Hasnain, who has lost only one frame in the entire tournament so far, will face Wales' Riley Powell in the final scheduled for Friday. The match promises to be a clash of rising stars, and fans are eagerly anticipating another proud moment for Pakistan. Earlier, Hasnain defeated another Polish cueist, Krzysztof Czapnik, 3-1 to reach the semi-final stage. With Asif crowned world champion and Hasnain eyeing glory in the U17 category, Pakistani snooker is experiencing a golden chapter, reinforcing the country's growing stature in international cue sports. — DNA



## Briefs

Gold price  
increases by  
Rs 2,500 per  
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.2,500 and was traded at Rs.357,600 on Friday as compared to its sale at Rs. 355,100 on the last trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs2,143 to Rs.306,584 from Rs. 304,441 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went up by Rs.1,964 to Rs.281,045 from Rs. 279,081. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver increased by Rs.48 and Rs.44 to Rs.4,012 and Rs.3,439 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$25 to \$3,351 from \$3,326 whereas that of silver rose by \$0.48 to \$38.28 from 37.80, the Association reported.—APP

Rupee gains  
10 paisa  
against US  
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 10 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 284.86 against the previous day's closing Rs 284.96. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 288.2 and Rs 288.5, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.21 to close at Rs 331.54 against the last day's closing of Rs 330.33, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained stagnant and closed at Rs 1.91, whereas a surge of Rs .41 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 382.80 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 381.39. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 03 paisa each to close at Rs 77.55 and Rs 75.94, respectively.—APP

UAE  
celebrates  
journey from  
federation  
to global  
leadership

ABU DHABI : As the UAE marks the first anniversary of the "Union Pledge Day" on 18th July, the nation reflects on the pivotal moments that led to its unification, recalling the enduring legacy of the founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and his brothers, the Rulers, whose historic declaration in 1971 laid the foundations for the federation. The day is one of the most important days in the history of the UAE, as the declaration of the Union and the UAE Constitution were signed, and its name was announced, with the solid foundation for its establishment laid on 2nd December. Union Pledge Day was designated as a national occasion by President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to reaffirm loyalty to the homeland and celebrate the country's continued development. The day aims to strengthen national identity and raise public awareness of the foundational steps that propelled the UAE to its current status as a regional and global leader. The occasion highlights the vision and sacrifices of the founding fathers, whose legacy continues to shape the UAE's trajectory. In his first address to the nation as President, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed said, "Today, we see our nation ranked among the most advanced nations globally, as well as being one of the best places to live and work. This was the vision of the late Sheikh Zayed and our founding fathers, and we thank God for this blessing. We will continue to follow their wise approach, drawing inspiration from their unfaltering leadership. Our history, identity, and cultural heritage will form an essential part of our plans for the future." Union Pledge Day also serves to honour the UAE's achievements in state-building and unity, forged amid complex regional dynamics. The founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed, led the country through the formation of the Arab world's first federal state and launched one of the region's largest development drives. Following Sheikh Zayed's leadership, the late Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan led the empowerment phase (2004–2022).—APP

## UN chief calls Cyprus peace talks 'constructive'

Following the meeting, Tatar said that the Greek Cypriot side had sought to have a new road built in the buffer zone between the two sides to reach a new crossing – something unacceptable to the Turkish Cypriot side

UNITED NATIONS, UNITED STATES: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday that meetings between Cyprus's rival leaders at the organization's New York headquarters were "constructive," even as questions remained about crossing points on the divided island. Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar have been holding talks and had reached a breakthrough on forming a committee on youth and three other

topics, Guterres said.

The opening of four crossing points, and the exploitation of solar energy in the buffer zone between the two sides of the island remained unresolved, he said. "It is critical to implement these initiatives, all of them, as soon as possible, and for the benefit of all Cypriots," Guterres said.

Following the meeting, Tatar said that the Greek Cypriot side had sought to have a new road built in the buffer zone between the two sides to reach a new crossing

– something unacceptable to the Turkish Cypriot side.

"Because of this buffer zone complication, we have not been able to announce the opening of four gates," he told reporters. "I'm very upset about this."

Tatar said that he had offered a counterproposal to his Greek Cypriot counterpart that was not accepted. "We are not losing ground," he insisted, saying he was hopeful there would be movement on the issue by the time of the United Nations General

Assembly high-level meetings in September. Thursday's meeting follows one in Geneva in March, which marked the first meaningful progress in years. At that gathering, both sides agreed on a set of confidence-building measures, including opening more crossing points across the divide, cooperating on solar energy, and removing landmines. Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when a Turkish action followed a coup in Nicosia backed by Greece's then-military junta. The Turkish

Republic of Northern Cyprus, declared in 1983, is recognized only by Ankara. The internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus, a member of the European Union, controls the island's majority Greek Cypriot south. The last major round of peace talks collapsed in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in July 2017. "I think we are building, step-by-step, confidence and creating conditions to do concrete things to benefit the Cypriot people," Guterres said in remarks to reporters. —Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, met with Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Defense, Ms. Zeb Jaffer, along with several emerging green startups working on clean energy and carbon credits.

Baghdad and Irbil  
agree to resume  
Kurdish oil exports

There has been no claim of responsibility for any of the past week's attacks, and Baghdad has promised an investigation to identify the culprits

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi government announced Thursday an agreement to resume crude exports from the autonomous Kurdistan region after a more than two-year halt and amid drone attacks on oil fields. Lucrative oil exports have been a major point of tension between Baghdad and Irbil, with a key pipeline through Turkiye shut since 2023 over legal disputes and technical issues. The Kurdistan regional government shall "immediately begin delivering all oil produced" in the region's field to Baghdad's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO) "for export," the Iraqi government said in a statement. The quantity should be no less than 230,000 barrels per day, and Baghdad will pay an advance of \$16 a barrel. The Kurdistan regional government said in a statement it "welcomes" the deal, and hoped all agreements would be respected. Oil exports were previously independently sold by the Kurdistan region, without the approval or oversight of the central administration in Baghdad, through the port of Ceyhan in Turkiye. But the region's official oil exports have been frozen since March 2023 when the arbitration tribunal of the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris ruled oil exports by the regional government illegal and said that Baghdad had the exclusive right to market all Iraqi oil. The decision halted the region's independent exports by pipeline via Turkiye. Ever since, the federal and regional governments have been haggling over the production and transport costs payable to the region and its commercial partners among other financial issues. The latest agreement should also solve the long-standing issue of unpaid salaries for civil servants in Kurdistan, which has been tied to the tension over oil. The federal finance ministry will pay salaries for May once SOMO confirms it has received the oil at the Ceyhan port. The regional government said it hoped that the issue of salaries would be treated separately from any disputes. The deal comes after a tense few weeks in Kurdistan, which has seen a spate of unclaimed drone attacks mostly against oil fields, with the latest strike hitting a site operated by a Norwegian firm on Thursday morning – the second attack in two days on the same site. There has been no claim of responsibility for any of the past week's attacks, and Baghdad has promised an investigation to identify the culprits.—APP

India eyes closer coop  
in ceramics with KSA

NEW DELHI: India is eyeing closer collaboration with Saudi Arabia in the pharmaceuticals and ceramics industries, following talks between Indian trade minister Piyush Goyal and his Saudi counterparts earlier this week. Goyal held separate virtual meetings with Saudi Arabia's Economy and Planning Minister Faisal bin Fadel Al-Ibrahim and Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih to discuss ways to strengthen trade and investment ties between the two countries. His meeting with Al-Ibrahim was focused "on enhancing our trade & investment partnership and collaborating in key sectors" such as pharmaceuticals, petroleum and ceramics, while his discussion with Al-Falih was centered on mutual growth, innovation and long-term collaboration, Goyal wrote on X. "We are confident of exciting growth prospects ahead for both nations," he said. In 2023-24, Saudi-India trade reached nearly \$43 billion, making India Saudi Arabia's second-largest trading partner, while the Kingdom stands as New Delhi's fifth-largest. Bilateral energy trade alone was worth \$25.7 billion in 2023-24, with Saudi Arabia being the third-largest source of India's LPG, crude and petroleum imports. In 2023, India's investment in the Kingdom reached \$4 billion, showcasing an increase of 39 percent from 2022, when it stood at about \$2.39 billion. Saudi Arabia and India have been in talks to deepen their strategic partnership. When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Jeddah in April, "both sides reaffirmed the strong commitment to advance economic and investment partnership," Indian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Suhel Ajaz Khan, told on Friday. India's pharmaceuticals and ceramics sector, in particular, had potential to support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 transformation project, he added. With India being the world's third-largest producer of drugs by volume after the US and China and supplying more than 20 percent of global demand on generic drugs, Delhi is keen to open up new collaborations in the pharmaceutical industry with Saudi Arabia. —APP

Indian killed,  
one abducted in  
Niger attack

NIAMEY, Niger: An Indian national was killed and another abducted in what India's embassy termed a "terrorist" attack in southwestern Niger, while a third is listed as missing, it said in a statement. Local sources said unidentified armed attackers ambushed a Nigerien army unit providing security at a construction site for an electrical line in the Dosso region, around 100 kilometers (63 miles) from the capital Niamey. Urging Indian nationals in Niger to be "vigilant," India's embassy in Niamey said it was in contact with the employer and families of the victims as well as the Nigerian government to facilitate repatriation of the dead man's remains. It said it was also working to secure the release of the person abducted in the attack, which took place Tuesday near the Nigerian border. Local sources and social media posts suggested at least one Nigerien soldier was killed in the attack, which authorities had not yet commented on Friday. Niger, under military rule following a 2023 coup, has faced around a decade of violence perpetrated by jihadists affiliated to Al-Qaeda and the Daesh group. The Dosso region borders both Nigeria and Benin, where attacks regularly target civilians, the army and also a giant oil pipeline transporting crude from Niger to Benin.—APP

Chinese firms exploring  
agriculture chain coop with Pak

BEIJING: Chinese agritech companies are looking to partner with Pakistan to help tackle key agricultural challenges in the South Asian country, offering solutions for water scarcity and the rehabilitation of saline land. At the ongoing third China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE), Chinese firms presented technologies they believe are well-suited for Pakistan's environment and could provide a boost to local farmers and the national food supply chain, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. A company named Xiaoma IoT is introducing smart agriculture solutions aimed at conserving water and fertiliser, and boosting productivity. The company has secured its first Pakistani client earlier this year with a \$50,000 order for equipment like digital valves and integrated water-fertiliser systems, a company representative told CEN in an interview. This technology allows farmers to manage irrigation and fertilisation through a smart platform that monitors soil conditions like moisture and nutrient levels in real-time. By delivering what the crop needs, the system helps conserve water and fertilisers. The firm, which develops its own hardware and software, stated that it has received further business inquiries from other potential partners in Pakistan. Another company, Guiwugu, is proposing an innovative ecological model to bring saline and alkaline land - a common problem in many of Pakistan's agricultural belts - back into production. The method uses crayfish to naturally treat the soil. Crayfish live off surface water on land, gradually reducing salinity. Afterwards, the rehabilitated land can be used to grow rice, with the crayfish and rice cultivated together in a symbiotic system. Crayfish act as a natural form of pest control and their waste fertilises the rice fields, which can improve the quality of the rice harvest without reducing the yield, Guiwugu founder Ni Libin told CEN. According to a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report, Pakistan lost 6.67 million hectares out of its 22-million-hectare agricultural land area to salinity, or 30% of the total farm land. This technology is already in use in Northeast China and is being tested in Xinjiang, a region with a climate that shares similarities with parts of Pakistan. "The technology can be tried in Pakistan," he stated, noting that winter temperatures in Pakistan's agricultural zones are suitable for this type of farming. decline in its share price to close at Rs3,115.20.—DNA

Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa leads  
CDA toward remarkable transformation

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) of Islamabad has witnessed a remarkable transformation under the leadership of its current chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa. With renewed vision, efficient planning, and strong administrative control, the CDA on the directions of Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Minister for Interior has not only accelerated development projects but has also restored public confidence in civic governance. The recent achievements of the CDA stand as a testament to what committed leadership can accomplish when guided by integrity and purpose. Islamabad tourism

At the heart of CDA's recent success on the instruction of Mohsin Naqvi Minister Interior and under the supervision of Muhammad Ali Randhawa an innovative approach emphasizes transparency, efficiency, and timely execution—three principles that have long been needed to revitalize Islamabad's urban management. Through regular field visits, direct public interaction, and strict



accountability within the CDA workforce, the chairman CDA has injected a new sense of responsibility into the organization. Major Development Projects are several key infrastructure projects which have been completed and there are some projects which are near completion under the current administration. These include:

- Expansion and Rehabilitation of Roads: Numerous roads across the capital, including Srinagar Highway, IJP Road, and the 7th Avenue Interchange, have seen rapid construction and improvement. These projects have significantly eased traffic congestion and improved connectivity.

- Park and Green Area Restoration: In line with Islamabad's atmosphere as a green city, the CDA has revived several parks, planted thousands of trees, and enhanced green belts across sectors. Initiatives like the Urban Forest Project and tree plantation drives have garnered praise from environmentalists and citizens alike.

- Waste Management and Sanitation: Under the current chairman, the CDA has implemented an improved waste management system, with better garbage collection routes, more efficient sanitation services, and increased public awareness campaigns about cleanliness. In Sector Development: The long-stalled development in sectors such as Park Enclave, C-15, C-16, E-12 and I-12 has resumed after years of delay. Landowners and allottees are finally seeing progress on ground, thanks to strong administrative resolve and legal measures to clear encroachments and disputes. Besides Sector Development, Digital Governance in order to ensure Transparency is the hall mark Initiative of CDA.

One of the most notable aspects of the current leadership under Mohsin Naqvi Federal Minister for Interior and supervision of Muhammad Ali Randhawa has been the digital transformation of the CDA. Key services such as building plan approvals, plot verifications, and tax payments have been shifted online.

Palestine  
cause needs  
to be looked  
thru lens of  
values

DNA

RAMALLAH: The State of Palestine welcomes the outcome of the Emergency Ministerial Conference of the Hague Group, held in Bogotá from 15 to 16 July 2025, under the joint chairmanship of the Republics of Colombia and South Africa. This meeting is a pivotal step toward restoring international law as a binding reference for ending the Israeli occupation and enabling the Palestinian people to realize their inalienable rights. The growing consensus within the Global majority, as reflected in this meeting, affirms that the will of nations for freedom and justice can no longer be ignored. The Palestinian cause is no longer measured solely through the lens of interests, but rather through the lens of universal values and human dignity. Palestine appreciates Colombia's generous hosting and leadership and will continue to work with friends and allies to defend our common values and shared goals.—APP

Saudi twins  
Yara, Lara  
successfully  
separated in  
surgery

RIYADH: Saudi conjoined twins Yara and Lara were successfully separated during a complex surgical procedure conducted on Thursday at King Abdulaziz Medical City in Riyadh in a major medical milestone. According to the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief), Dr Abdullah Al Rabeeah, General Supervisor of KSrelief and head of the Saudi Conjoined Twins Programme, confirmed the success of the operation, which involved a 38-member team of highly specialized professionals. The nine-stage procedure was carried out at King Abdullah Specialist Children's Hospital under the Ministry of National Guard. Dr Al Rabeeah extended his deep gratitude to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz for their continued support, which he said has been critical to the program's global humanitarian impact. "Their unwavering backing has enabled Saudi Arabia to deliver world-class specialized care, improving lives and demonstrating the Kingdom's commitment to humanitarian service," Al Rabeeah remarked. The twins, born on November 5, 2024, were conjoined in the lower abdomen and pelvis, sharing parts of the lower colon, rectum, urinary and reproductive systems, and pelvic bone. Despite the complexity, the medical team determined after extensive assessment that separation was feasible.—APP

Pope urges  
Netanyahu  
to end  
'heartbreaking'  
Gaza war

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV emphasized the importance of protecting places of worship in a call Friday by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu following Israel's deadly strike on Gaza's only Catholic Church, the Vatican said. The pontiff also renewed his appeal for negotiations, a ceasefire and the end of the war, while reiterating his concern for the "dramatic humanitarian situation" in the Palestinian territory, it said in a statement. The Vatican said Netanyahu initiated the call on Friday morning, the day after Israeli fire on the Holy Family Church in Gaza City killed three people and provoked international condemnation. "During the conversation, the Holy Father renewed his appeal to revive negotiations and reach a ceasefire and the end of the war," the Vatican said in a statement, noting that Leo was at his summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome. "He once again expressed his concern for the dramatic humanitarian situation of the population in Gaza, whose heartbreaking toll is borne particularly by children, the elderly and the sick." APP



## Briefs

Gwadar port  
Five private  
firms pitch  
proposals

Ferry service will improve travel ease between Pakistan and Gulf states, says Minister Junaid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Five private-sector operators have submitted formal proposals to operate a proposed ferry service between Gwadar Port and Gulf countries, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs said on Friday. Federal Maritime Affairs Minister Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chaired a high-level meeting to evaluate submissions from private bidders outlining technical, operational, and financial plans for the ferry corridor. The envisioned ferry routes are expected to link Gwadar Port with key destinations in the Gulf region, offering an affordable and efficient alternative for both passenger travel and cargo transport. During the meeting, the minister stressed the strategic value of the initiative, noting that the service would not only reduce transportation costs but also boost regional trade integration and maritime activity. He emphasised that successful implementation of the project could significantly elevate Pakistan's maritime presence and transform Gwadar into a central hub in international sea trade networks.

Over 100,000  
e-bikes to  
be provided  
under govt  
scheme

PM Shehbaz links electric vehicle initiative to economic growth and job creation

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Centre aims to provide more than 100,000 electric bikes and over 300,000 electric loaders to the public through easy loans and at subsidised rates under a government-supported scheme, it emerged on Friday. Presiding over a high-level meeting today, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs) would reduce Pakistan's dependency on imported fuel, conserve billions in foreign exchange, help protect the environment, and support local industry. He directed the preparation of a comprehensive action plan to make electric vehicles affordable and accessible to ordinary citizens across the country. The prime minister further announced that high-achieving students from all educational boards, including the federal board, would be awarded electric bikes free of cost.

UN rights chief urges prompt  
probe into Syrian violence

"This bloodshed and the violence must stop and the protection of all people must be the utmost priority," Volker Turk said in a statement

GENEVA: The United Nations rights chief demanded on Friday that Syria's interim authorities ensure accountability after days of deadly clashes in the southern city of Sweida that reportedly left hundreds dead. "This bloodshed and the violence must stop and the protection of all people must be the utmost priority," Volker Turk said in a statement. He demanded "independent, prompt and transparent investigations into all violations," adding: Those responsible must be held to account. "It is crucial that immediate steps are taken to prevent recurrence of such violence," he said. "Revenge and vengeance are not the answer." His comments came after Syrian troops pulled out of the Druze heartland of Sweida on Thursday on the orders of the Islamist-led government, following days of clashes that reportedly killed nearly 600 people. The southern province has been gripped by deadly sectarian bloodshed since Sunday, with hundreds reportedly killed in clashes pitting Druze fighters against Sunni Bedouin tribes and the army and its allies. Israel had meanwhile hammered government troops with air strikes during their brief deployment in Sweida and also

Tarar requests IHC to restore  
SRBC for employees sake

Attaullah Tarar said a previous government caused billions of rupees of losses to Pakistan International Airlines by making irresponsible statements

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Friday that he had requested the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to restore Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company. Talking to the media outside the Islamabad High Court, he said that he had presented his position in the court. He said the process of SRBC liquidation had started much before he assumed office as Minister for Information and



Broadcasting. "The company has more than 300 employees, it is necessary to restore the company to protect their jobs," Attaullah Tarar remarked. The court has issued orders to submit a business plan, Tarar said, adding it has also directed the liquidator to pay the salaries of the SRBC employees. Attaullah Tarar said a previous government caused billions of rupees of losses to Pakistan International Airlines by making irresponsible statements. He said by the grace of God that PIA flights to Europe and the UK have been restored due to the efforts of the present government. He said that Pakistani airlines' flights to Europe were being restored in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz era. To a question, he replied that incompetence was at its peak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Corruption, mismanagement are on the rise in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government," Attaullah opined. The minister said the PTI government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could not save the tourists stranded in the Swat River due to rampant corruption and inefficiency.

## Monsoon rains

Medium-level flood on Indus  
River at Punjab's Kalabagh

Rescue operations continued in Punjab after recent deadly rains wreaked havoc on and claimed at least 63 lives across the province

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Flooding at Punjab's Kalabagh on the Indus river reached a "medium" level on Friday, while low-level floods were reported at four other locations on the river due to heavy monsoon rains and glacial melting, the Punjab Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Friday. Rescue operations continued in Punjab after recent deadly rains wreaked havoc on and claimed at least 63 lives across the province. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has forecasted that five more such spells of rain are expected in the coming days, leading to rising water levels, the Associated Press of Pakistan reported.

EU hits Russia with  
sweeping new sanctions  
over Ukraine war

BRUSSELS: The EU on Friday adopted a sweeping new package of sanctions on Russia over the Ukraine war, looking to pile more pressure on the Kremlin by lowering a price cap for Moscow's oil exports. The 18th round of economic measures from Europe against Russia since its 2022 invasion comes as allies hope US President Donald Trump follows through on his threat to punish Moscow for stalling peace efforts. "The EU just approved one of its strongest sanctions packages against Russia to date," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. "The message is clear: Europe will not back down in its support for Ukraine. The EU will keep raising the pressure until Russia ends its war." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hailed the sanctions' adoption as "essential and timely". The new measures were approved after Slovakia dropped a weeks-long block following talks with Brussels over separate plans to phase out Russian gas imports. Kremlin-friendly Slovakian leader Robert Fico - whose country remains dependent on Russian energy - dropped his opposition after getting what he called "guarantees" from Brussels over future gas prices. France's foreign minister Jean-Noel Barrot called the latest moves "unprecedented" and said that "together with the United States we will force (Russian President) Vladimir Putin into a ceasefire". As part of the new sanctions designed to sap Russia's war chest, diplomats said the EU has agreed to lower its price cap on Russian oil exported to third countries around the world, to 15 percent below market value. - Agencies

PSX flat after hitting  
record high as investors  
lock in profits

KSE-100 Index surges to intraday high of 140,585.38, gaining 1,919.89 points, or 1.38%

DNA

KARACHI: The stock market traded flat on Friday as investors booked gains following a record-breaking rally fuelled by bullish sentiment ahead of corporate earnings announcements and expectations of monetary easing. Sana Tawfiq, Head of Research at Arif Habib Limited, noted: "Momentum to continue amid result season. However, there will be episodes of profit taking." The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index touched an intraday high of 140,585.38 points, marking a gain of 1,919.89 points, or 1.38%, while the lowest level of the day was recorded at 138,551.61 points, reflecting a drop of 113.88 points, or 0.08%. "Stocks trading at a new all-time high ahead of major earnings announcements due next week and likely SBP policy easing amid thin inflation," said Ahsan Mehanti, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities. "Expectations over strong financial results and annual payouts played catalyst role in bullish activity at PSX," he added. Investor optimism was further supported by the finance minister's recent remarks regarding monetary easing. On Monday, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb stated there was room to reduce the interest rate, though the decision lies solely with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Irregular  
spending  
by LEAs

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: From jogger shoes and warm trousers to advance payments for undelivered boats and excessive purchases of ice, billions of rupees have been spent by civil law enforcement agencies under the Interior Ministry during the fiscal year 2023-24 without following the most basic procurement rules. An audit report has lifted the lid on what appears to be a pattern of irregular spending, favouritism to specific firms and blatant violations of financial discipline. The audit, covering various departments including the Pakistan Rangers, Frontier Corps and Pakistan Coast Guards, reveals an astonishing misuse of taxpayers' money - ranging from non-transparent tenders to advance payments without delivery, repeated contract extensions and unjustified procurement decisions. One glaring example is the Punjab Rangers, who awarded contracts worth Rs43 million for woolen socks and half-sleeve vests to firms that didn't even meet the required specifications. Yet, the technical committee, instead of rejecting the bids, declared these firms "responsive." The auditors called it "undue favour" and sought an inquiry, recommending fixing responsibility including an official of the Interior Ministry involved in the process.

Body of  
missing boy  
recovered

DNA

PESHAWAR: The body of a young boy who went missing in the Swat River has been recovered, 21 days after he was swept away with other family members. Rescue workers confirmed that the body of Abdullah, a child from Sialkot, was found on Thursday in Barikot tehsil of Swat district, The News reported. Rescue 1122 Swat had been conducting a continuous and intensive search operation since June 27. Officials said Abdullah was the last remaining victim unaccounted for in the incident. His body was recovered after a sustained and intensive rescue effort. Following the necessary legal procedures, the body would be transported to the child's hometown in Daska. The incident occurred on June 27 when 17 members of a family from Sialkot were swept away by a sudden surge in the Swat River while picnicking near the bank.

Gilani acquitted in all  
multi-billion TDAP  
corruption cases

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: An anti-corruption court on Friday acquitted Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani in all cases pertaining to a multi-billion-rupee Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) scandal. The hearing was held at the Federal Anti-Corruption Court in Karachi, where Gilani, who served as the country's prime minister between 2008 and 2012, appeared in person. Gilani, along with former TDAP chairman Tariq Iqbal Puri, former director general Abdul Karim Daudpota and others, had been booked in over two dozen cases for alleged involvement in approval and disbursement of freight subsidies worth billions of rupees to various firms through fake claims in violation of the prescribed procedure for the scheme. In 2018, formal charges were framed against Gilani, Daudpota, Farooq Awan Puri, Mohammad Zubair, and approximately 20 others. However, after hearing arguments from both sides, the special federal anti-corruption court acquitted Gilani in the last 14 pending TDAP cases on Friday.

UN rights chief urges prompt  
probe into Syrian violence

"This bloodshed and the violence must stop and the protection of all people must be the utmost priority," Volker Turk said in a statement

GENEVA: The United Nations rights chief demanded on Friday that Syria's interim authorities ensure accountability after days of deadly clashes in the southern city of Sweida that reportedly left hundreds dead. "This bloodshed and the violence must stop and the protection of all people must be the utmost priority," Volker Turk said in a statement. He demanded "independent, prompt and transparent investigations into all violations," adding: Those responsible must be held to account. "It is crucial that immediate steps are taken to prevent recurrence of such violence," he said. "Revenge and vengeance are not the answer." His comments came after Syrian troops pulled out of the Druze heartland of Sweida on Thursday on the orders of the Islamist-led government, following days of clashes that reportedly killed nearly 600 people. The southern province has been gripped by deadly sectarian bloodshed since Sunday, with hundreds reportedly killed in clashes pitting Druze fighters against Sunni Bedouin tribes and the army and its allies. Israel had meanwhile hammered government troops with air strikes during their brief deployment in Sweida and also

struck targets in and around the capital Damascus, including the military headquarters. It said its attacks would intensify until the government pulled back. "Among the reported perpetrators were members of the security forces and individuals affiliated with the interim authorities, as well as other armed elements from the area, including Druze and Bedouins," the statement said. This had sparked "mass displacement", it said. It highlighted one incident on July 15, when the UN rights office documented the "unlawful killing of at least 13 people when armed individuals affiliated with the interim authorities deliberately opened fire at a family gathering". On the same day, such individuals also reportedly summarily executed six men near their homes in two separate incidents, it said. "The deployment of state security forces should bring safety and protection, not add to the fear and violence," Turk said. "With the fall of the former government, Syrians have witnessed a moment of hope for a better future based on human rights," he said. "It is the responsibility of the interim authorities to demonstrate that this chapter will be defined by rights, justice, and equal protection for all." - Agencies

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