



# Islamabad POST

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## Cabinet reshuffle looms amid growing political 'turmoil'

According to political insiders, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar may be relieved of his current responsibilities and reassigned to the finance portfolio once again, while Mohsin Naqvi is being tipped as the next Foreign Minister

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Speculation is mounting in the federal capital that a major cabinet reshuffle is imminent, with several key ministers likely to be replaced as the government struggles to contain mounting criticism over governance, corruption, and law and order. According to political insiders, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar may be relieved of his current responsibilities and reassigned to the finance portfolio once again, while Mohsin Naqvi is being tipped as the next Foreign Minister. Naqvi's role in leading sensitive negotiations between the United States and Iran traditionally the domain of the Foreign Ministry has reportedly sidelined the incumbent foreign minister, raising questions about the relevance of the office under the current setup. Dar, meanwhile, is said to have fallen out of favor with the country's power brokers. His position has been further weakened by the recent scandal in Lahore involving allegations of confinement and sexual assault against foreign women, allegedly linked to his grandson Raza Dar, though Raza had pleaded not guilty. The incident sparked public outrage and intensified calls for accountability. Faisal Wada, a politician known for his close ties to the establishment, openly demanded Dar's resignation over the matter, adding fuel to the speculation of his removal.

While a change of government may not be expected in the immediate future, insiders suggest that a reshuffle of the cabinet is "very much likely." Several ministers could be shown the door, ostensibly for poor performance. However, critics argue that performance is merely a pretext, as few in the cabinet can claim tangible achievements. The

opposition has levelled government allegations of widespread corruption, mismanagement, and worsening law and order against the government, particularly in Islamabad, where police forces are accused of focusing on VIP protection rather than public safety.

The potential appointment of Mohsin Naqvi as Foreign Minister is being viewed as a strategic move. His involvement in high-level talks with Washington and Tehran has already demonstrated his influence in foreign policy matters. Analysts believe his elevation would formalize the role he has been playing behind the scenes, while simultaneously signaling a shift in the government's diplomatic priorities. For Ishaq Dar, the reshuffle could mark both a demotion and a return to familiar territory. Having previously served as Finance Minister, he may be tasked once again with steering the country's fragile economy. Yet his diminished standing with the establishment and the shadow of scandal could limit his effectiveness in the role.

Beyond these headline changes, other ministers are also expected to be replaced. The government's critics argue that reshuffling faces will not address the deeper issues of governance, accountability, and public trust. "If performance were truly the yardstick, no one in the cabinet would survive," one analyst remarked, pointing to the administration's record of stalled reforms and deteriorating public services. As rumors swirl, the public awaits official confirmation of the reshuffle. For now, the uncertainty underscores the fragile state of Pakistan's political landscape, where scandals, power struggles, and behind-the-scenes maneuvering continue to shape the course of governance while the hapless people of Pakistan continue to suffer.



ISLAMABAD: State Minister Barrister Aqeel, Additional Foreign Secretary Hamid Asghar Khan and others cutting cake to celebrate the Rwanda day event. - DNA

**Rape case: Police ordered to be impartial**

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Faisal Kamran said on Sunday that the police were ordered to treat a suspect - reportedly linked to a senior government minister - in the case of alleged abduction and assault of two foreign women like "any other criminal". On Thursday, the police booked five suspects over alleged abduction and sexual assault after the two women were rescued. Four of the suspects, including a close relative of a senior political personality, were arrested and later sent on a five-day physical remand. Addressing a press conference, he recounted the events leading up to

Continued on Page 06

**Telecom law needed, says minister**

FAISL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Information Technology Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Sunday stressed the need for the proposed changes to telecommunication laws, as the existing legal framework did not meet the demands of modern technologies such as 5G. The proposed Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organisation) (Amendment) Bill 2026 had been approved by the National Assembly on

Continued on Page 06

**US-Iran standoff**

## Implementation of US-Iran MoU 'difficult but possible': Ghalibaf

Iran's military leadership issued a stern warning amid heightened regional tensions. Senior commanders declared that any "enemy mistake" would be met with a "decisive response"

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: domestic political and military landscape saw significant developments this week, as senior officials weighed in on the future of U.S.-Iran relations and the nation mourned the passing of its supreme leader. Parliament Speaker and veteran negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf described the implementation of the recent memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Washington and Tehran as "difficult but possible." His remarks, delivered during a closed-door session with lawmakers, underscored both the challenges and opportunities of the agreement. Ghalibaf, who has long been involved in Iran's foreign policy debates, emphasized that while mistrust remains high, pragmatic steps could pave the way for limited cooperation. Analysts note that his statement reflects cautious optimism, signaling Iran's willingness to

explore avenues of engagement without compromising its core interests. Meanwhile, Iran's military leadership issued a stern warning amid heightened regional tensions. Senior commanders declared that any "enemy mistake" would be met with a "decisive response." The statement, carried by state media, reaffirmed the armed forces' readiness to counter perceived threats. Observers suggest this rhetoric is intended both as deterrence and reassurance to domestic audiences, reinforcing the narrative of strength and vigilance at a time of uncertainty. The mourning period for the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also drew attention to the dynamics within his family. While several of his sons were present to pay respects, Mojtaba Khamenei - often discussed in political circles as a potential successor - was notably absent.

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## China's military promotes two new generals

Anti-corruption purge had thinned ranks

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China's military promoted two officers to the rank of general in what may be a precursor to a reorganization at the top following the removal of several of its leaders in a long-running anti-corruption drive. The shake-up is believed to be part of an

effort to reform the military and ensure its loyalty to China's ruling Communist Party and the nation's leader, Xi Jinping. It comes as Xi seeks to accelerate the modernization of the armed forces to stake out and defend China's interests in the Pacific, including Taiwan and other territorial claims.

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### Briefs

**8 tribesmen killed in Quetta**

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Eight tribesmen and a young girl were killed in separate incidents in Balochistan on Sunday, including an armed attack in Qila Abdullah and a clash in Dera Bugti, officials said. In the first incident, a senior police official said that a group of armed men entered the Killi Badawan area and began firing on their opponents, which resulted in the death of four tribesmen and a young girl. The four tribesmen died on the spot after receiving multiple bullet injuries, while the young girl succumbed to her wounds when taken to Quetta for treatment. The official added that before fleeing the area, the armed men fired "hundreds" of bullets in the air.

### Lawlessness in the Capital

## Air Force hero Group Captain Asim martyred while rescuing woman

Police officials stated that the woman later revealed the accused was her office colleague. He had offered to take her to work but allegedly diverted the route, attempting to take her elsewhere; police arrest murderer Saad

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a tragic incident on Ninth Avenue, Pakistan Air Force officer Group Captain Asim embraced martyrdom while courageously intervening to protect a woman from harassment. According to initial reports, Group Captain Asim was passing through the area when he noticed a woman struggling to free herself from a motorcyclist who was pulling her hand. Acting as a responsible citizen, he turned back and stopped near the motorcycle. The woman managed to run to the other side of the vehicle, but the confrontation escalated. The alleged assailant, identified as Saad, began arguing with Group Captain Asim and within moments opened fire. The



officer sustained critical injuries and succumbed shortly afterward. The suspect fled the scene. Police officials stated that the woman later revealed the accused was her office colleague. He had offered to take her to work but allegedly diverted the route, attempting to take her elsewhere. When she resisted, he tried to overpower her. Group Captain Asim's timely intervention saved her from further harm. Law enforcement agencies have launched operations to apprehend the suspect. Group Captain Asim leaves

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## Turkiye eyes F110 fighter jet engines

KAAN is a twin-engine stealth fighter being developed by Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) to replace the Turkish Air Force's fleet of F-16s as Ankara seeks to join the exclusive club of nations producing fifth-generation combat aircraft, notably the US, China and Russia

AGENCIES

ISTANBUL: US President Donald Trump's visit to Ankara for the NATO summit could help secure Türkiye's acquisition of dozens of fighter jet engines, but won't resolve the F-35 dispute that has soured ties, analysts say. The July 7-8 summit, which is being hosted by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, will bring together leaders from the military alliance's 32 member states. Last month, Trump promised to make Erdogan "very happy" when asked about Türkiye looking to secure F110 jet engines and being readmitted to the F-35 fighter jet program. Analysts said it would likely mean freeing up fighter jet engines Türkiye wants to use in its flagship KAAAN stealth fighter project.

"Türkiye has produced a couple of prototypes which are flying with the F110 engine, but it has been waiting for the supply of additional engines to increase the number of KAAAN platforms," he said. KAAAN is a twin-engine stealth fighter being developed by Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) to replace the Turkish Air Force's fleet of F-16s as Ankara seeks to join the exclusive club of nations producing fifth-generation combat aircraft, notably the US, China and Russia. Although Türkiye will eventually fit the fighter with its own domestically-produced engine - the F110s lacking stealth capability - that project is still in the preliminary design phase, Defense Minister Yasar Guler said in September.

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**Pakistan's largest circulated diplomatic magazine**

# CENTRELINE

**Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine**

**Global CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani Inai ih Aziz envoys**

**Legendary Nepali mountaineer talks to Centreline**

**Chairman Moani Group Luqman Ali Afzal hostin 'a dinner**

**Fred Senevirathne**

**Sri Lanka: Climbing global rankings in governance and integrity**

Editor: Ansar M Bhatti

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## CCTV cameras mandatory for all shops within one month

FAISALABAD: The City Police have made the installation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras mandatory for all commercial establishments and directed the shopkeepers to complete installation within one month or face legal action including sealing of their businesses. Police spokesman said here on Friday that the directive applies to all small and large shops across Faisalabad including grocery stores and every category of commercial outlet operating within the city. He said that traders have been given one month to comply with the order after which a citywide monitoring campaign would be launched to assess implementation. He warned that any shop found without a functional CCTV camera after the deadline would face action under the law including sealing of the premises. Meanwhile, City Police Officer (CPO) Tanveer Hussain said that the initiative has been launched to strengthen the overall security environment, discourage incidents of robbery and theft, prevent cases of harassment, and ensure better protection of the lives and property of citizens and business community. He said that widespread installation of surveillance cameras would also enhance police response, facilitate investigations through digital evidence, and contribute to maintaining law & order across the city. He urged the traders to ensure timely compliance with the directive to avoid legal action and support collective efforts which were started to create safe business environment in Faisalabad.—APP

## CTI chief sees millions dollar export deals in intl' carpet expo

LAHORE, Jul 05 (APP): Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ijaz-ur-Rehman said on Sunday that export agreements worth millions of dollars would be signed in the international exhibition to be held in Pakistan, which would not only strengthen the industry but also help in introducing the skills of local craftsmen at the global level. The exhibition would prove to be an effective means of promoting exports and also play an important role in economic development, preservation of cultural heritage and strengthening global trade ties. He was addressing a meeting of industrialists and exporters in connection with International Handloom Carpet Exhibition scheduled to be held in Lahore from October 6 to 8. Ijaz-ur-Rehman said, such international exhibitions provide numerous opportunities to promote exports, access new markets and establish direct links with global buyers. He added that international handloom carpet exhibitions will contribute to important areas such as increasing exports, economic development, global partnerships, awareness of modern design trends, innovation and cultural diplomacy.—APP

# Tragic shooting in Bhagtanwala: victim's family pleads for Justice

The victim's family has now appealed to Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, to take immediate notice of the situation. They demand that the culprits be arrested and prosecuted without delay, and that police officials who failed to act responsibly be held accountable

## DNA

SARGODHA - A horrifying incident has shaken the community of Bhagtanwala, near Choki Bhagat in 80 Chak Janobi, where a man named Shahid was brutally shot dead. According to eyewitnesses, the attack was carried out by Musawar, son of Abid, along with his brothers, father, and two women from their household. The motive behind the killing was shockingly trivial: Shahid was accused of giving lifts to neighbors on his motorbike, something Musawar allegedly wanted to forbid in the locality. The violence did not stop there. Shahid's cousin Waheed, who rushed to intervene and calm the situation, was shot in both legs. He is currently fighting for

his life in a Lahore hospital, where doctors are struggling to save him. The family describes Waheed's condition as critical, with his survival hanging in the balance. Residents allege that instead of taking firm action, police have shown leniency toward the culprits. While Musawar remains accused of orchestrating the attack, his brothers and father were reportedly released by police. Disturbingly, locals claim these men are openly threatening Shahid's surviving family members, vowing to kill them as well. This has left the victim's household in a state of terror, fearing further bloodshed. Community members further accuse the police of corruption, stating that officers demanded bribes from Shahid's family in exchange for arresting the remaining suspects. Instead of protecting the victims,

the police are said to be providing protocol and undue favor to the accused, allowing them to roam freely and intimidate witnesses. Such actions have sparked outrage among locals, who believe justice is being deliberately obstructed. The atmosphere in Bhagtanwala is tense. Families are living under constant fear, worried that the killers will strike again. Many residents argue that the unchecked power of Musawar and his relatives has created a climate of lawlessness, where ordinary people feel unsafe even in their own homes. The victim's family has now appealed to Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, to take immediate notice of the situation. They demand that the culprits be arrested and prosecuted without delay, and that police officials who failed to act responsibly be held accounta-

ble. The family insists that without intervention from higher authorities, justice will remain elusive and more lives may be lost. This incident highlights broader concerns about law enforcement in rural Punjab, where allegations of police corruption and favoritism are not uncommon. The Bhagtanwala tragedy underscores the urgent need for reforms to ensure that victims are protected and perpetrators face the consequences of their actions. As Shahid's family mourns their loss and Waheed battles for survival, the community waits anxiously for decisive action. The call for justice is loud and clear: the people of Sargodha demand safety, accountability, and an end to impunity for those who commit violent crimes.

## Youth urged to embrace future skills at moot

PESHAWAR: Calling on young Pakistanis to prepare for a rapidly evolving digital economy, speakers at the Metrix Pakistan Khanpur Tech Summit 2026 stressed the importance of acquiring technology-driven skills, innovation and entrepreneurship to remain competitive in the years ahead. The summit, organised by Metrix Pakistan in collaboration with the Directorate of Youth Affairs, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Grow Pakistan and Mehmar, drew thousands of participants to TMA Hall, Khanpur on Sunday, making it the largest technology-focused gathering ever held in the town. More than 15 speakers from the technology industry, business sector, academia and youth development addressed students, entrepreneurs and aspiring professionals during keynote sessions, panel discussions and interactive question-and-answer sessions. Among the keynote speakers were Qaisar Akash Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Diligent Systems; Ahammad Ali, Chief Executive Officer of RankingGrow; Hassan Nisar, Chief Executive Officer Metrix Pakistan; women's empowerment advocate, Amina Mishkat; former teacher Zia Uddin; youth leader Waqar Bin Saif; cyber security expert Abdullah Ismail; IT expert and motivational speaker Muhammad Ali and Abdullah Muneer, Chief Executive Officer of Grow Pakistan. The speakers highlighted the growing impact of artificial intelligence, cyber security, digital marketing, software development, freelancing and entrepreneurship, urging young people to continuously upgrade their skills in line with emerging technologies. Addressing the participants, the speakers observed that technological change is reshaping economies across the world and creating new opportunities for those equipped with digital knowledge.—APP



RAWALPINDI: Representatives of Minority Forum Pakistan called on Mr. Isphanyar Bhandara yesterday to discuss the tragic murder of a Christian youth on Adiala Road, Rawalpindi. The delegation sought his support to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice and do not escape accountability. Mr. Bhandara assured the delegation of his full support and said that every effort must be made to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice and the law takes its course. DNA

# Govt's relief measures to revive real estate sector: Nauman

LAHORE :Federal Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Planning & Development, Hafiz Mian Muhammad Nauman, said on Saturday that government's recent relief measures for the real estate sector are aimed at reviving investment, restoring market confidence and stimulating economic activity. Addressing a seminar "Relief given by government to real estate sector and its future in Pakistan" organized by Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), he added that Pakistan must now move towards vertical urban development instead of the unchecked horizontal expansion of cities. He said the construction and real estate sectors are directly linked with around 70 industries and play a pivotal role in employment generation and economic growth. He stressed that affordable housing, banking support for long-term housing finance and sustainable urban planning are essential for the future development of the country. He was the seminar was chaired by LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol. Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh, MPA Malik Shahbaz Ali, former LCCI Presidents Mian Anjum Nisar and Muhammad Ali Mian, Executive Committee Members, VC PIAF Nassrullah Mughal, Convener Standing Committee Major (R) Muhammad Rafiq Hasrat and a large number of stakeholders from the real estate sector attended the seminar. Welcoming the participants, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that the real estate and construction sector serves as the backbone of the national economy, creating employment opportunities, attracting investment and supporting dozens of allied industries. He appreciated the government's recent tax relief measures, including the reduction in withholding tax on property purchases from 2.5 percent to 1.25 percent, reduction in withholding tax on property sales from 5.5 percent to 2.75 percent and the abolition of Section 7E. He said these initiatives would help restore investor confidence and improve business activity. The LCCI President, however, said that the business community expects the reduction in FBR property valuation to be extended to other housing societies and areas as well. He termed this demand justified and urged the government to ensure equal treatment across the sector. He said the seminar had been organized to provide investors, developers, builders and other stakeholders with a better understanding of the government's policy measures, their expected impact and future opportunities in the real estate sector. Mian Muhammad Nauman said that he had personally raised the issue of real estate reforms with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif nearly a year ago and strongly advocated for a comprehensive construction package. He said uncontrolled urban sprawl has significantly reduced green areas around major cities, particularly Lahore, and emphasized that international urban planning principles require adequate green belts between cities for environmental sustainability and food security. He said Lahore has expanded far beyond its original boundaries, with housing schemes now stretching into Sheikhpura, Kasur and other adjoining districts. Instead of further horizontal expansion, he said, Pakistan should promote vertical development to utilize existing urban infrastructure more efficiently. He pointed out that nearly 150,000 to 200,000 residential plots remain vacant within Lahore alone, indicating that better utilization of available land should be prioritized. Mian Muhammad Nauman said the government recognized the difficulties faced by the real estate sector over the past several years, which had led to reduced investment and declining business activity. He said extensive consultations were held with industry representatives, including ABAD and other stakeholders, to formulate reforms that would facilitate the sector while protecting investors. He also highlighted the government's decision to abolish Section 7E, describing it as a major relief for property owners.—DNA

## PESCO removes 23 illegal power connections in Dera operation

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) launched a grand anti-power theft operation in Dera Ismail Khan and removed 23 illegal direct electricity connections (kundas) in an effort to curb power theft and reduce feeder tripping. The operation was conducted on the 11kV CRBC feeder under the special directives of PESCO Dera Circle Superintendent Engineer Hizbullah Khan Mehsud and under the supervision of Acting Executive Engineer (Rural Division) Engineer Sanaulah Khan. The raid was led by SDO Mandhran Sub-Division Engineer Irfanullah Khan, accompanied by Line Superintendent Sajjad Ahmad Marwat, Recovery In-charge Jahanzeb Khan, and other PESCO officials. During the operation in Khawaj Khel Town, the team disconnected 23 illegal direct power connections and removed two low-tension (LT) wires that were being used for unauthorized electricity supply. PESCO officials said that references had been forwarded to the Cantt Police Station for the registration of cases against those involved in electricity theft in accordance with the law.—DMA

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Head Office  
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.  
Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822211, 2874289 - Fax: (+92 51) 2825132, 2274227.  
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

**Marsah**  
Room No. 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Kalkatana Mall,  
Main Street, Block 2, PESCO-15  
Karachi. Tel: (+92 21) 3403068, 3401947  
Fax: (+92 21) 3403147  
E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com

**Lahore**  
F-4, Gulberg Centre,  
Main Business Centre,  
Lahore. Tel: (+92 42) 3578961, 3578965  
Fax: (+92 42) 3571162  
E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com

**Peshawar**  
Office No. C18, 2nd Floor, Zohar Plaza,  
Laf Mole, Ring Road, Peshawar.  
Tel: (+92 91) 2523778  
Fax: (+92 91) 2523396  
E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com

**Kabul**  
Room #4, Street #4,  
Chahar Bazar, Ring Road, Shahr-e-Naw,  
Kabul, Afghanistan.  
Tel: +93 79921 773, 93 79358 888, 93 79948 208.  
E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com

## Demands for better civic facilities puts housing sector under strain in KP

PESHAWAR: The poor civic facilities and long hours loadshedding in rural areas have put extra pressures on the housing sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The rapid rise in population, combined with soaring property prices and inflation, has exacerbated the housing problems for low-income groups in urban areas of KP where about 2.5 houses are required for homeless and underprivileged. As Pakistan's population surpasses the 245 million mark this year, the demand for affordable housing reached high levels in KP, with an estimated 2.5 million additional units needed in the province alone over the next 14 years if current growth rate persist. The affordable houses challenges are particularly acute for those in the salary, pensioners class and marginalized communities, who find themselves increasingly priced out of the housing market. Squeezing of jobs, rising land costs, poverty and limited economic supply in KP have turned the dream of affordable housing into a harsh reality for many, leaving poor families struggling to find affordable and secure homes of their own. Despite economic strides made by government, addressing the housing shortfall remains a formidable task in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Officials recognize the urgency, yet progress is hindered by factors such as inadequate infrastructure, unemployment, and

limited financial resources. Local residents while sharing their frustrations said, "every month, I see my rent increase while my pension remains the same," says Misal Khan, a retired Govt employee in Peshawar while talking to APP. "It feels impossible to save for a house of my own in the wake of rising inflation and high land cost." Like Misal Khan, many face the grim reality of living in overcrowded conditions or commuting long distances to affordable areas in KP. "Affordable housing is the fundamental right of all citizens in KP where rapid population growth, fast migration from rural to urban areas, high construction and land cost factors have largely contributed to houses backlog," said Professor Dr Naveed Farooq of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan while talking to APP. "Globally, many Govts have attempted an alternative approach where they provide affordable housing at urban peripheries, encouraging residents to relocate where land is cheaper. However, this approach has created its own problems as people are cut off from social and infrastructure networks as well as gainful employment opportunities," he said. This has led to negative consequences in low- and middle-income countries, where some cities are growing so quickly that governments cannot build services, roads and infrastructure fast enough to

accommodate new arrivals, leading to a proliferation of slums at the peripheries. The repeated change of governments, political instability and unchecked rise of prices of lands and properties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made affordable houses in urban areas for salaried class and under privileged merely a dream and solid policies are required to clear this huge backlog. Dr Naveed said the rapid urbanization of the agricultural land have turned the fertile land into unplanned towns and societies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in Peshawar, Mardan, Abbottabad, Swat, Kohat, DI Khan and Nowshera districts. He said the current demand for new housing units was growing at the rate of 600,000 houses per year and if we add 0.5 million more houses, then 1.1 million units per year would be required to clear the existing backlog of 10 million houses in the next 14 years. The housing gap in Punjab is estimated at 2.3 million units in 2017 and was expected to skyrocket to 11.3 million units by 2047, he said, adding half of all urban households are overcrowded or lived in informal settlements with inadequate access to basic infrastructure, civic facilities and services while formal housing are almost out of reach of the poor people.—DNA

## 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/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

July 26/Cuba National Day

July 26/Liberia National Day

July 30/Morocco National Day

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Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666



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### Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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# Call for skills uplift to boost women's empowerment

As a leading national network dedicated to human resource development, HRDN contributed to the seminar by bringing together its extensive network of development practitioners, policymakers and professionals, enriching the dialogue on workforce development, gender inclusion and policy innovation

ISLAMABAD: Institute of Rural Management (IRM), in collaboration with the Human Resource Development Network (HRDN), hosted a high-level national seminar titled "Closing the Skills Gap: Women, Work and Sustainable Economic Growth" to discuss practical strategies for strengthening women's participation in Pakistan's workforce through skills development and inclusive economic policies. The event brought together senior government officials, development practitioners, academicians, civil society representatives, private sector leaders, media professionals and development partners, said a press release issued here. Barister Nabeel Ahmad Awan, Secretary, Establishment Division, Government of Pakistan, attended the event as the chief guest. Addressing the seminar, he said women's economic participation is a national priority and emphasized that Pakistan's inclusive and sustainable growth depends on equipping women with market-driven skills, digital literacy, entrepreneurship opportunities, financial inclusion, and stronger linkages to employment and markets. He also appreciated IRM for organizing a timely platform that fostered collaboration among the government, academia, development partners and the private

sector to translate dialogue into practical action. Earlier, IRM Chief Executive Officer Dr Roomi S. Hayat welcomed the participants and reaffirmed the institute's commitment to strengthening human capital development across Pakistan. He said skills development goes beyond employment by creating opportunities, empowering communities and contributing to national prosperity. Dr Hayat stressed the need for stronger partnerships among the government, educational institutions, industry and development partners to bridge the gap between education, skills and labour market demands while promoting women's economic participation. The keynote address was delivered by Dr Noor Fatima, Director of HRDN and Head of the Department of International Relations and Political Science at the International Islamic University Islamabad. Speaking on the theme "Women, Skills and Sustainable Economic Growth in Pakistan," she highlighted the importance of investing in women's education, future-ready skills and policy reforms to unlock Pakistan's economic potential and achieve inclusive development. During the strategic reflections session, former Federal Secretary Fareena Mazhar said women's skills development should be viewed as an econom-

ic growth agenda rather than a welfare initiative. She emphasized the need to move beyond certificate-based training towards outcome-oriented programmes that lead to employment, entrepreneurship, income generation and greater market access. She further stressed the importance of equipping women with digital skills, financial literacy, e-commerce capabilities and climate-smart livelihood opportunities while strengthening partnerships among the government, the private sector, training institutions and civil society. The seminar also featured a moderated discussion, enabling participants from government institutions, academia, development organizations and the private sector to exchange ideas and share recommendations on strengthening Pakistan's skills ecosystem and expanding economic opportunities for women. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Israr Mohammad Khan, Director General of the Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD). He appreciated the contributions of the chief guest, speakers, participants and the IRM team for organizing a meaningful forum. During his remarks, he proposed that, considering IRM's institutional experience and nationwide outreach, the organization be

considered for recognition as a Centre of Excellence for Skills Development, Women's Economic Empowerment and Rural Capacity Building through the appropriate official process. Souvenirs were presented to the distinguished guests, followed by a group photograph and a networking session, reaffirming the shared commitment of all stakeholders to advancing women's skills, inclusive employment and sustainable economic growth in Pakistan. It is to mention here that for more than 30 years, IRM has remained at the forefront of human resource development and institutional capacity building in Pakistan. Through its nationwide programmes, the institute has trained more than 1.5 million individuals, empowering women, youth, professionals, entrepreneurs and community leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to drive sustainable development and economic progress. As a leading national network dedicated to human resource development, HRDN contributed to the seminar by bringing together its extensive network of development practitioners, policymakers and professionals, enriching the dialogue on workforce development, gender inclusion and policy innovation.—APP

## ITP announces weekly schedule for facilitation vans

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has announced the weekly deployment schedule of its Facilitation Vans from July 6 to July 12, enabling citizens to access a range of traffic and police-related services at different locations across the federal capital. An ITP official told APP on Sunday that the mobile facilitation service would operate daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., providing facilities including Police Station (PS) on Wheel services, missing report registration, character certificates, learner permits, driving licence renewal, duplicate licences and duplicate driving test sheets. The official said the deployment schedule is as follows: Monday, July 06 on Wheel: Shifa Hospital H-8 Van-I: Khudad Heights, E-11 Van-II: DHA Phase-5 Gate-1 Van-III: Traffic Office Faizabad Tuesday, July 07 PS on Wheel: Centaurus Mall Van-I: Air Headquarters, E-9 Van-II: F-10 Bolan Gate Van-III: Naka Adventure Inn Wednesday, July 08 PS on Wheel: Rehman Enclave, Lehrar Road Van-I: I-10 near Goga Motors Van-II: G-9 Awami Trade Center Van-III: Traffic Office Faizabad Thursday, July 09 PS on Wheel: I-8 Markaz Van-I: Ali Pur near Bank Alfalah Van-II: R-Block, Ministry of Interior Van-III: Naka Foreign Office Friday, July 10 PS on Wheel: G-11 Markaz Van-I: Shah Allah Ditta Van-II: Barakau Athal Chowk Van-III: Traffic Office Faizabad Saturday, July 11 PS on Wheel: Blue Area (Tehzeeb Bakers) Van-I: Tarnol Benazir Chowk Van-II: G-7 Markaz Van-III: Rawal Town Sunday, July 12 PS on Wheel: F-9 Park Van-I: Traffic Office Rawal Town Van-II: Police Lines H-11 Van-III: Islamabad Club The official urged citizens to avail themselves of the mobile facilitation services at the designated locations for quick and convenient access to police and traffic-related services. For further information, citizens may contact the ITP Helpline 1915 or follow Islamabad Traffic Police's official social media platforms.—APP



RAWALPINDI: A young vendor sells cotton handkerchiefs by the roadside as people buy them to wipe away sweat during the severe summer heat.

## Why fear of failure is holding Pakistan's youth back?

ISLAMABAD: Fear of failure has become a major obstacle for many young people in Pakistan. Whether in education, careers or personal life, many believe that one wrong decision or a poor exam result will determine their entire future. This mindset creates stress, lowers self-confidence and makes it difficult to stay motivated. Instead of viewing mistakes as opportunities to learn, many see them as proof that they are incapable. Experts have long warned about the consequences of unrealistic expectations. Dr. Zainab, a psychiatrist practicing in Islamabad, talking to APP said, "When young people are taught that their value rests solely on success, failure becomes terrifying, not educational." He said that when fear of failure becomes overwhelming, it can contribute to anxiety, depression and emotional distress, making timely psychological support essential. Dr. Kazmi, a Clinical Psychologist, in response to an APP query explained, "Societies that stigmatize failure often discourage young people from taking healthy risks, trying new opportunities and developing creative thinking. According to her, viewing failure as a learning experience instead of a personal defeat is essential for building resilience and emotional well-being." Many young people have experienced this firsthand. Samra Batool, a COMSATS University student living in a hostel, shared, "The fear of failing examinations often keeps me awake at night because delaying my degree is not an option. Studying away from my parents and native home is already expensive, and extending my education would place an additional financial burden on my family." However, she believes that fear is not always negative. "A reasonable fear of failure creates a sense of responsibility and motivates us to work harder, as long as it does not damage our mental health." Employers, however, often value resilience over perfection. "Not everyone needs to have a perfect record. Those who have experienced setbacks and overcome them by learning and progressing are appreciated," said the human resource manager of a prominent firm in Pakistan. His perspective highlights that adaptability and perseverance can be more valuable than an uninterrupted record of success. Society also tends to judge individuals by their achievements, careers and financial status. As a result, many young people fear criticism, disappointment and embarrassment if they fail to meet these expectations. Social media has intensified this pressure. Every day, young people are exposed to posts highlighting scholarships, promotions, successful businesses and outstanding exam results. These carefully curated success stories encourage unhealthy comparisons, making many believe that everyone else is succeeding while they are falling behind. Fear of failure is not limited to academics alone. Many young people also experience it in career choices, job interviews, entrepreneurship, relationships and even social interactions. The pressure to "succeed early" in life makes them hesitant to take risks such as changing career paths, starting a business, or expressing themselves freely, as failure in any of these areas is often seen as permanent rather than temporary. Students, recent graduates and young job seekers are particularly vulnerable. Those preparing for MDCAT, engineering entrance tests and university admissions often face intense pressure. According to a study by the Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning (PILL)—SDNA

## Govt to spend Rs1.6b to boost weather forecasting

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan plans to strengthen its weather forecasting, disaster preparedness and climate resilience capabilities through a series of projects and policy initiatives. According to the Annual Plan 2026-27, a copy of which is available with Wealth Pakistan, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has been allocated Rs1.6 billion to improve forecasting systems and disaster risk management. The allocation includes Rs344 million for the proposed National Centre for Rainfall Enhancement to support water security, climate adaptation and agricultural productivity. Weather surveillance radar projects in Multan and Sukkur have been earmarked Rs195 million and Rs5 million, respectively, to improve real-time weather monitoring and early warning capabilities. Another Rs1 billion has been allocated for the modernisation of Hydromet Services in Pakistan project, which aims to upgrade hydrometeorological infrastructure, improve forecasting

accuracy and strengthen climate-related data systems. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination is projected to receive Rs2.5 billion, with the bulk of the allocation focused on forestry, biodiversity conservation, afforestation and ecosystem restoration. Key initiatives include the Pakistan Climate Innovation and Green Growth Initiative to equip youth with green skills and support entrepreneurship through a Green Innovation Fund. A National Forest and Tree Cover Assessment using remote sensing and machine learning technologies is also planned to improve forest monitoring and restoration planning. The programme will further introduce specialised initiatives under the Upscaling of Green Pakistan Programme, including the Pollution Load Assessment Network for environmental monitoring in Islamabad, a Botanical Garden in the federal capital and conservation efforts in the Margalla Hills Na-

tional Park. The government also plans to advance climate-smart agriculture, efficient water management, disaster risk reduction, green industrialization, circular economy initiatives and domestic carbon market mechanisms to support sustainable economic growth. The focus on resilience reflects Pakistan's increasing exposure to climate-related disasters. The Annual Plan notes that major floods in 2010, 2011, 2014, 2022 and 2025 caused extensive human and economic losses, damaging infrastructure and livelihoods across the country. Citing the World Bank's 2022 report, the plan says Pakistan suffers average annual losses of around \$2 billion from floods and earthquakes. These losses could rise to \$250 billion by 2030 and \$1.2 trillion by 2050, with damage in priority sectors reaching up to 30% of GDP in a peak disaster year, highlighting the urgency of strengthening climate adaptation and disaster preparedness.—DNA

## Ashrafi seeks strong protection of worship sites

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, highlighting religious coexistence, communal peace, and mutual understanding among faiths, stated that safeguarding places of worship is a core duty of the state and stressed that any attempt to change their legal status will not be tolerated. In his interaction with the media channels, he reiterated that safeguarding places of worship is a national and moral responsibility of the state and warned firmly against any attempt to modify their legal status. He said that people should respect each other's religions and work towards strengthening social unity, tolerance, and patience in society, adding mutual respect among all faiths is essential for peaceful coexistence.—APP

## Apna Ghar Housing Loans more accessible through NBFCs

ISLAMABAD: Access to affordable housing finance is set to become easier for citizens, particularly underserved and non-banking segments, as the Federal Government has approved the inclusion of lending Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) as Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs) under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Program (PM-APG). The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), recognizing the potential of NBFCs to expand housing finance, proposed their inclusion in the program. The initiative will not only enhance the availability of housing loans but also strengthen the role of NBFCs in Pakistan's financial sector, said a press release issued by the SECP on Saturday. Under the scheme, non-banking housing finance companies and investment finance companies will provide housing loans of up to PKR 10 million, while microfinance companies will offer loans of up to PKR 5 million. The inclusion of NBFCs will provide people with additional channels to access subsidized housing finance, especially those with limited access to traditional banking services. With their wider outreach, flexible financing models, and focus on underserved customers, NBFCs are expected to help more families move towards owning their first homes.—APP

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## Briefs

NUTECH  
Rector visits  
NKC, reviews  
academic  
facilities

ISLAMABAD: Rector NUTECH, Engr. Moazzam Ejaz has visited NKC, a strategic initiative established under his leadership to expand NUTECH's academic excellence and technological outreach across Pakistan. Upon arrival, he was warmly received by Director NKC, Dr. Atif Ali along with faculty and staff, said a press release. During the visit, the Rector reviewed the NKC's ongoing development and visited its academic labs and learning facilities. He also interacted with students to gain firsthand insight into their academic experience, encouraging them to pursue excellence, innovation, and professional growth. The Rector held a detailed meeting with the NKC management, where discussions focused on the NKC's contribution to delivering quality education, skills development, and industry-oriented training to meet the evolving needs of the region. He appreciated the progress made by NKC and emphasized NUTECH's commitment to producing a highly skilled workforce equipped to support national development. Later, the Rector also visited the DCK Main Office, where he held discussions with the management on strengthening institutional collaboration and exploring future opportunities for academic expansion, infrastructure development, and mutually beneficial partnerships. The visit reflected the Rector's continued commitment to providing strategic leadership, ensuring academic excellence, and guiding the sustained growth and development of NKC in line with the University's vision.—DNA

Security  
high alert in  
churches

RAWALPINDI: Security has been put on high alert across Punjab for Christian worship services and prayer gatherings being held at churches in different parts of the province, officials said on Sunday. According to police officials, the Inspector General (IG) Punjab has issued directives to all Regional Police Officers (RPOs), District Police Officers (DPOs) and senior officers to ensure foolproof security arrangements at churches and other sensitive locations. The IG directed supervisory officers to personally visit churches to review security arrangements on the ground. He also ordered the deployment of snipers and additional police personnel at sensitive churches to deal with any untoward situation. Officials said Dolphin Squad, Police Response Units (PRU) and Elite Force teams have been instructed to conduct continuous patrolling around churches and Christian localities. The IG further directed that all deployed personnel remain on high alert and keep strict vigilance over suspicious individuals and activities. He also ordered enhanced checking at entry and exit points of churches and tightening of security cordons in and around Christian localities. The IG further directed that all deployed personnel remain on high alert and keep strict vigilance over suspicious individuals and activities. He also ordered enhanced checking at entry and exit points of churches and tightening of security cordons in and around Christian localities.—APP

Leghari highlights  
power sector reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awas Ahmad Khan Leghari on Saturday said Pakistan had undertaken far-reaching structural reforms in its power sector, reducing distribution inefficiencies by more than 45 percent over the last two years. Addressing Turkish investors at the Pakistan-Turkiye Business Conference, the minister said the government had restructured power distribution companies and prepared them for privatization as part of a comprehensive reform agenda aimed at improving efficiency, transparency and service delivery. He said the reforms had yielded significant results, with inefficiencies in the distribution sector declining by over 45 percent in just two years. Leghari said Pakistan was fully committed to privatization and had enacted legislation barring the government from establishing or purchasing any new electricity generation companies in the future. He said competitive electricity markets had been introduced, while an Independent System

and Market Operator (ISMO) had been established to ensure transparent and efficient dispatch of electricity across the national grid. The minister said the National Grid company had been restructured and split into two parts and it's operating in a much more efficient manner than we had seen anytime in the country in the past. Highlighting investment opportunities, he said the government planned to modernize and digitize electricity metering systems to improve transparency, facilitate future planning and curb power losses and electricity theft in distribution companies. He said metering systems alone offered investment opportunities exceeding US \$1.7 billion over the next two to three years. Leghari said the transmission lines, which have a very high utilization factor presented another \$830 million investment opportunity over the next four years. He said five electricity distribution companies that would not be privatized during the first phase were being prepared for large-scale investments in advanced metering systems, with individual project sizes ranging between US\$100 million and US\$150 million.

Pak's first Int'l arbitration  
training programme concludes

Through strategic international collaboration and experiential learning, ICADRP remains committed to developing the next generation of arbitration practitioners capable of representing Pakistan in complex international commercial and investment disputes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's First Comprehensive International Arbitration Training Programme – Module I, organized by the Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of Pakistan, International Mediation and Arbitration Centre (IMAC) delivered by the International Centre for Appropriate Dispute Resolution and Prevention (ICADRP), successfully concluded in Islamabad following five days of intensive training from 29 June to 3 July 2026. Designed to strengthen Pakistan's capacity in international commercial arbitration, the programme brought together an exceptional cohort of participants, including senior government officials, Secretaries to the Government, Members of Parliament, legal advisers, and dispute resolution professionals from across the country. The programme was delivered through an innovative, practice-oriented methodology that moved beyond conventional lectures. Each day featured highly interactive workshops, realistic arbitration simulations, procedural exercises, drafting sessions, tribunal deliberations, and group-based problem-solving activities, enabling participants to develop practical skills required in modern international arbitration. The program was designed and delivered by ICADRP in collaboration with International Law Institute (ILI), Washington, D.C., based on international standards. The training was led by Dr. Nudrat E. Piracha, Chief Executive Officer of ICADRP, together with Mr. Carlos Dávila of the International Law Institute (ILI), Washington, D.C., ICADRP's international collaborating institution. The faculty was further strengthened by renowned arbitration practitioners contributing as Assessors, including Mr. Farrukh K. Qureshi, Founding partner of Samadani Qureshi Aqil, Mr. Zafar Iqbal Kalanauri, Mr. Nasir Khan, MBE, Co-Founder of the CIARB Pakistan Branch, and Ms. Mahwish Elahi, who collectively brought decades of international arbitration and



dispute resolution experience to the programme. A special highlight of the programme was the visit of Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law and Justice, who interacted with participants during the training and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening Pakistan's arbitration ecosystem and developing internationally competent dispute resolution professionals. The programme concluded with a closing ceremony graced by Barrister Aqeel Malik, Minister of State

for Law and Justice, who congratulated the participants on successfully participating in Module I and commended the Ministry, IMAC, ICADRP, and the International Law Institute for organising and delivering a programme of international standards. He emphasized the growing importance of international arbitration in promoting investor confidence, facilitating cross-border commerce, and enhancing Pakistan's legal capacity in international dispute resolution. The successful completion

of this course, making those who will qualify the assessment, skilful to serve as an arbitrator in Pakistan, marks an important milestone in Pakistan's journey towards building a world-class arbitration community. Through strategic international collaboration and experiential learning, ICADRP remains committed to developing the next generation of arbitration practitioners capable of representing Pakistan in complex international commercial and investment disputes.

Put country  
before political  
agendas

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Aun Chaudhry Sunday called on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership to prioritize the country's interests by exhibiting political maturity and seriousness, actively participating in Parliament before putting forward its demands. Talking to the media, Aun Chaudhry said the government was ready to listen to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's reservations, but stressed that the party must first demonstrate political seriousness and maturity. He said PTI contested elections only to tender resignations later instead of fulfilling its parliamentary responsibilities. "They neither ensure meaningful participation in Parliament nor raise public issues on the floor of the House. This is not the way democratic politics works," he remarked. Aun Chaudhry said the government had repeatedly offered dialogue to PTI, but meaningful talks could only take place when the party adopted a serious and responsible approach. "The doors for dialogue remain open, but PTI must first prove its commitment to democratic and parliamentary politics," he added. Minister, while responding to a question about the Gilgit-Baltistan election results and Kashmir-related political narratives, said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is a respected political leader and that discussions with him had been positive. He said that during consultations, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had accepted certain reservations and demands related to Gilgit-Baltistan. He expressed confidence that the PPP would continue to remain an allied party working together in the broader political framework. Chaudhry added that if any political leader issues statements during an election campaign, it is their democratic right. He further said that political narratives during election drives are common, including in Kashmir and if any region brings change aligned with its aspirations, there is no objection as long as it reflects the will of the people. He concluded that national stability remains a priority for the Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N), calling for political unity to strengthen the country's direction.—APP

## FIA nabs fraudster

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Secretariat said on Saturday that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested a Ghotki resident for posing as a National Assembly official using a forged appointment letter. In a statement, the NA Secretariat said that, who posed as a Grade 17 officer, was arrested from the National Assembly on the direction of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. The matter came to light following public complaints and social media reports, prompting the speaker to take immediate action. "According to reports, the said individual not only misled government officials and police authorities by claiming this fake status and allegedly obtaining undue privileges and protocol, but was also reportedly involved in harassing and pressuring citizens through various means, causing concern and unrest among the public," the statement said. Abdul Wajid possessed

a fake appointment letter from the National Assembly Secretariat bearing the Speaker's forged signature, and had been illegally obtaining privileges and protocol despite having no connection with the institution. The Secretariat's spokesperson declared that the preparation of forged documents bearing a speaker's signature and impersonating a government official was a "serious and punishable offence", adding that strict legal action would be taken against such elements without discrimination. The Secretariat urged the public and all government institutions to verify the authenticity of any appointment letter, offer letter, or official document purportedly issued by the National Assembly Secretariat, and to immediately report any suspicious activity or forged documents to the relevant law enforcement agencies to discourage misuse of state institutions' names.—DNA

PM pays tribute  
to hero of  
Kargil war

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid rich tributes to the hero of the Kargil War (1999), Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Nishan-e-Haider, on his 27th martyrdom anniversary, and appreciated his great sacrifice and unparalleled bravery. In a statement, he said, "The extraordinary bravery and eternal sacrifice of Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed in the most adverse circumstances is a shining chapter in the military history of Pakistan, which is a testimony to the highest traditions of loyalty to the motherland and bravery." "Defence of the beloved homeland is a sacred duty, and the great sacrifices made by the sons of the pure land are the guarantor of our peace and sovereignty today," he added. He reiterated the firm resolve of the government and the people of Pakistan that they stand shoulder to shoulder with their armed forces against any external or internal threat facing the country.—APP

ICCI hosts P3A  
session to explore  
new avenues

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, said that Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become a globally recognized instrument for accelerating economic growth, infrastructure development and sustainable investment. Addressing a presentation organized under the ICCI Sister Cities Initiative, he observed that Pakistan requires significant investment in transport, energy, urban infrastructure, healthcare, education, housing and municipal services, adding that the PPP model offers an effective mechanism to mobilize private capital, enhance efficiency and support long-term development objectives. Deputy Head Policy, Public-Private Partnership Authority (P3A) highlighted the evolving PPP landscape in the country and briefed participants on the general concepts of PPPs, regulatory framework, institutional mechanisms and the development cycle of PPP projects. He emphasized that P3A is committed to creating an enabling environment that promotes private sector participation, strengthens investor confidence and facilitates the implementation of viable and sustainable infrastructure initiatives. Sardar Tahir Mehmood reiterated that ICCI remains steadfast in its efforts to build stronger synergies between the public and private sectors through dialogue, knowledge-sharing platforms and investment-focused initiatives. He noted that the ICCI Sister Cities Initiative serves as an important avenue for fostering institutional cooperation, promoting innovation and facilitating the exchange of expertise for economic advancement. Sajid Iqbal, Convener ICCI Sister Cities Initiative, said that creating awareness about innovative financing mechanisms and investment models is essential for unlocking Pakistan's development potential.—DNA

GDEC opens  
with focus  
on digital  
economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD, July 4 (): The 2026 Global Digital Economy Conference (GDEC) opened here, bringing together officials, executives, scholars and technology companies to discuss digital-friendly cities and the next stage of the global digital economy. Being held from July 2 to 6 under the theme "Building a Digital-Friendly City: Inclusive Intelligence, Borderless Connectivity," the conference includes an opening ceremony, a main forum on digital-friendly cities and thematic sessions on artificial intelligence, digital talent and industrial digitalization, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. A concurrent Digital Economy Industry Expo is showcasing humanoid robots, large AI models and other digital technologies. Opening-day releases included the 2026 Global Digital Economy Lighthouse Casebook.

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## Can we build a better society?

DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEER



**E**CONOMIC debates in Pakistan often swing between two familiar poles. One side argues that markets alone will solve the country's problems while the other expects the state to carry the entire burden of development. Yet history offers another path that deserves renewed attention. More than two centuries ago, Robert Owen, a Welsh industrialist and social reformer, advanced the idea that economic progress and social justice need not be competing goals. His philosophy of cooperative socialism was based on the belief that communities flourish when workers, employers and citizens share responsibility for production, ownership and welfare. At a time when Pakistan faces persistent inflation, unemployment, declining industrial productivity and widening inequality, Owen's ideas offer useful lessons rather than ideological slogans Robert Owen was not a revolutionary in the conventional sense. Unlike later socialist thinkers who viewed class conflict as in-

evitable, he believed that cooperation could replace confrontation. His experience as the manager of the New Lanark textile mills in Scotland convinced him that workers treated with dignity, fair wages, decent housing and quality education became more productive and responsible members of society. He argued that poverty was not the result of individual failure but of social conditions that could be improved through thoughtful reform. The central pillar of Owen's philosophy was cooperation. Instead of allowing wealth to accumulate in the hands of a few or expecting the government to control every aspect of economic life, he proposed enterprises owned and managed collectively by those who worked in them. In such arrangements, profits would be shared fairly, decisions would be taken democratically and communities would become active participants in their own development. Pakistan's economic challenges make this idea particularly relevant. The country possesses abundant agricultural land, a youthful labour force and a vibrant entrepreneurial culture. Yet millions of small farmers, artisans and informal workers remain disconnected from modern markets and financial institutions. Their individual efforts are often too small to compete, negotiate better prices or invest in technology. Cooperative organisations could bridge this gap by pooling resources, reducing costs and increasing bargaining power. Agriculture presents the clearest opportunity. Pakistan's farms are dominated by small landholdings that struggle with rising input costs, limited access to credit and fluctuating market prices. Farmers acting individually often purchase expensive fertilisers and seeds while selling their produce through multiple intermediaries who capture a significant share of the profits. Properly governed agricultural cooperatives could enable members to purchase inputs collectively, invest in storage facilities, share machinery and negotiate directly with processors and exporters. Such arrangements have transformed rural economies in several countries by improving both productivity and farmers' incomes. The dairy sector offers an-



other example. Pakistan ranks among the world's largest milk producers, yet much of its dairy production remains fragmented and informal. Thousands of small livestock owners lack access to cold storage, veterinary services and organised marketing networks. Cooperative dairy societies could help improve quality standards, strengthen supply chains and connect producers with urban markets while ensuring that greater returns reach rural households. Small and medium-sized enterprises, widely recognised as the backbone of employment generation, could also benefit from Owen's cooperative principles. Many small manufacturers face difficulties obtaining affordable credit, adopting new technologies or accessing export markets. Cooperative industrial clusters could allow businesses to share training facilities, research centres, logistics networks and marketing platforms without sacrificing their independence. Such collaboration would enhance competitiveness while preserving local entrepreneurship. Pakistan's education system also reflects concerns that Owen recognised two centuries ago. He viewed education not merely as preparation for employment but as the foundation of responsible citizenship. Pakistan continues to face significant disparities in educational quality between urban and rural areas and between public and private institutions. Greater collaboration among local communities, businesses and educational institutions could support vocational training, technical education and lifelong learning programmes aligned with the needs of modern industries. Human capital remains the country's most valuable long-term investment. However, embracing cooperative principles requires caution as well as optimism. Pakistan has experimented with cooperative institutions before, but many were weakened by political interference, weak regulation, corruption and poor governance. Some became vehicles for patronage rather than genuine community organisations. Owen's philosophy depended upon transparency, accountability and democratic participation. Without these foundations, cooperatives can easily become ineffective or vulnerable to elite capture. For this reason, Pakistan should avoid treating cooperative socialism as an ideological substitute for market economics. Instead, it should view cooperatives as complementary institutions operating within a competitive market economy. Successful examples across Europe and Asia demonstrate that cooperatives can coexist with private enterprise while expanding opportunities for groups that markets alone often overlook. The objective is not to eliminate competition but to ensure that cooperation enables smaller producers and workers to compete more effectively. Digital technology provides opportunities that Owen himself could scarcely have imagined. Digital payment systems, mobile banking, online marketplaces and transparent record-keeping can reduce many of the administrative weaknesses that undermined traditional cooperatives. Farmers can receive payments directly, members can monitor financial accounts electronically and decisions can be recorded with greater transparency. Technology cannot replace good governance, but it can strengthen accountability. Public policy also has an important role to play. The government should modernise cooperative laws, simplify registration procedures and establish independent oversight mechanisms. Financial institutions should design products specifically for well-managed cooperatives while universities and business schools should offer specialised training in cooperative management, accounting and governance. Provincial governments, working with chambers of commerce and civil society organisations, can encourage pilot projects in agriculture, fisheries, handicrafts and small-scale manufacturing. Equally important is the role of local leadership. Cooperatives succeed when members trust one another and participate actively in decision-making. Building such trust requires transparency, professional management and a culture of accountability. Pakistan's social traditions, particularly in rural areas, already contain elements of mutual assistance and community solidarity. Strengthening these traditions through modern institutional frameworks may prove more effective than importing models that do not reflect local realities. Robert Owen's cooperative socialism does not provide a complete blueprint for Pakistan's economic future. The country still requires prudent macroeconomic management, fiscal discipline, investment in infrastructure, export diversification and institutional reforms. Yet Owen reminds policymakers that sustainable development is ultimately about people rather than statistics. Economic growth becomes meaningful only when it expands opportunities, strengthens communities and distributes its benefits more broadly. Pakistan stands at a moment when conventional policy debates often appear trapped between excessive state control and unchecked market forces. Owen's philosophy points towards a more balanced approach, where cooperation complements competition and communities become partners in national development rather than passive recipients of government assistance. If adapted thoughtfully to Pakistan's social and economic realities, cooperative institutions could strengthen agriculture, support small businesses, improve education and create more inclusive growth. In an era defined by economic uncertainty, that lesson deserves careful consideration.

## Martyrdom That Defeated a Superpower (Part-II)

Qamar Bashir



The symbolism is now visible throughout Khamenei's funeral ceremonies. His coffin is to travel through Qom, Najaf and Karbala before his burial in Mashhad. Black mourning flags recalling the martyrdom of Imam Hussain hang over Iranian streets. The journey itself connects Khamenei's death with the religious geography and historical memory that have shaped Shia political consciousness

**T**HE third dimension of Khamenei's death lies in Karbala. In Shia Islam, the sacrifice of Imam Hussain, grandson of Prophet Muhammad, is not merely a seventh-century tragedy remembered through annual rituals. Karbala represents a permanent moral command: stand against tyranny, refuse submission to oppression and remain beside the victim even when resistance carries an unbearable personal cost. The symbolism is now visible throughout Khamenei's funeral ceremonies. His coffin is to travel through Qom, Najaf and Karbala before his burial in Mashhad. Black mourning flags recalling the martyrdom of Imam Hussain hang over Iranian streets. The journey itself connects Khamenei's death with the religious geography and historical memory that have shaped Shia political consciousness for centuries. Iran has consistently interpreted Palestine through this ideological prism. Palestinians have endured displacement, occupation, bombardment, hunger and repeated military devastation. Gaza has been reduced to rubble on a catastrophic scale, families have disappeared beneath destroyed buildings and civilian suffering has horrified much of the world. The confrontation has repeatedly expanded into Lebanon, spreading destruction across a region already exhausted by decades of conflict. One may condemn particular tactics used by Hamas, Hezbollah or other armed organisations and still ask why these groups continue to exist and retain support. Their political justification is deeply connected to the unresolved Palestinian question. Resolve that conflict justly and the strategic architecture of armed resistance begins to lose its rationale. Without the wound, organisations created around resisting that wound face an inevitable crisis of purpose. A credible two-state settlement could fundamentally transform the Middle East. Give Palestinians the right to choose their government, protect their social and religious traditions, preserve their language and maintain a recognised connection with their land. Once Palestinians possess dignity, political agency and a viable na-

tional future, the justification for maintaining a permanent kinetic posture against Israel will inevitably weaken. Iran could have chosen silence. It could have followed the cautious path adopted by much of the Muslim world. Türkiye, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and numerous Muslim states have spoken for Palestine diplomatically, but none willingly absorbed the scale of military, economic and strategic consequences Tehran accepted by directly challenging the Israeli-American strategic order. Iran understood the price of its policy and still refused to retreat. Had Tehran treated Palestinian suffering as somebody else's problem, it might have secured economic comfort, sanctions relief and international accommodation. Yet a state that invokes Karbala cannot easily preach the sacrifice of Imam Hussain at home while remaining permanently silent when it believes another people are subjected to occupation, collective punishment and overwhelming military force abroad. This explains why Khamenei's martyrdom may prove strategically more powerful than his political life. His killing did not eliminate the philosophy of resistance associated with his leadership. It liberated that philosophy from the limitations of an individual ruler and embedded it more deeply in Iran's national consciousness. His coffin, moving towards Qom, Najaf, Karbala and ultimately Mashhad, has itself become a travelling symbol of that narrative. Iran's military response subsequently demonstrated the logic of asymmetric warfare. Tehran did not need to match the United States aircraft for aircraft, carrier for carrier or dollar for dollar. It expanded the battlefield horizontally, imposed costs on military infrastructure supporting attacks against Iran and threatened strategic arteries upon which global economies depend. Conventional military superiority was confronted by calculated strategic disruption. Iran's calculation was brutally simple. It did not have to defeat the United States in a traditional battlefield contest; it only had to make continuation

of the war economically, politically and strategically unbearable. By stretching the theatre of confrontation and exploiting regional dependencies, a militarily weaker state demonstrated how disproportionate costs could be imposed upon adversaries possessing vastly superior weapons and resources. The war intended to fracture Iran instead strengthened its cohesion. The campaign justified by fear of an Iranian atomic bomb killed the religious leader whose fatwa had restrained nuclear weaponisation. The attempt to destroy a philosophy of resistance provided that philosophy with its most powerful martyr. These contradictions now hover over every funeral procession moving through Iran and Iraq. The presence in Tehran of senior representatives from Russia, China, Pakistan, Iraq and other states adds another dimension to the moment. Iran was supposed to emerge isolated, humiliated and broken. Instead, as Khamenei lies in state, representatives of major powers and regional governments are standing before his coffin, while the funeral journey prepares to cross national borders and the great centres of Shia faith. As Khamenei is carried towards his final resting place in Mashhad, the ultimate irony is difficult to escape. His enemies possessed superior aircraft, larger arsenals, advanced intelligence systems and enormous financial resources. Yet his death gave Iran something military technology could neither manufacture nor easily destroy: a renewed story of sacrifice, dignity and collective resistance. The superpower possessed the larger arsenal, but the martyr left behind the stronger story. History repeatedly demonstrates that military power can destroy buildings, eliminate leaders and devastate economies, but it cannot always determine which narrative survives a war. In Khamenei's case, the attempt to kill a leader may instead have immortalised his cause and strengthened the nation his death was intended to break.

—The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC / Michigan, USA

## The enduring Foreign Policy Doctrine of Ayatollah Khamenei

Dr Abed Akbari

the strategic intellect of the Islamic Republic? In conventional international relations literature, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic is often interpreted through the lens of ideology—as if all of Tehran's decisions can be explained solely by referencing the slogans of the Islamic Revolution. While this narrative captures a fragment of reality, it falls short of explaining the logic behind Iran's foreign policy. Policy, as the long-standing tradition of Persian political thought testifies, has always been the product of the relationship between ideals and pragmatism. From Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk's Siyasatnama (The Book of Government) to the reflections of contemporary thinkers, the survival of the state

**I**n the history of nations, individuals sometimes transcend their own eras to become an integral part of a country's strategic memory. In such cases, evaluating them is not merely passing judgment on the record of a ruler, but rather an attempt to comprehend a school of thought that has permeated the political institutions, decision-making culture, and a nation's perception of the world. The martyrdom of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei belongs to this very category. The answer to the question of what the Islamic Republic of Iran will do in his absence is directly linked to another question: to what extent has the doctrine formulated and institutionalized by Ayatollah Khamenei over more than three decades transcended the will of a single individual and evolved into the strategic intellect of the Islamic Republic? In conventional international relations literature, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic is often interpreted through the lens of ideology—as if all of Tehran's decisions can be explained solely by referencing the slogans of the Islamic Revolution. While this narrative captures a fragment of reality, it falls short of explaining the logic behind Iran's foreign policy. Policy, as the long-standing tradition of Persian political thought testifies, has always been the product of the relationship between ideals and pragmatism. From Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk's Siyasatnama (The Book of Government) to the reflections of contemporary thinkers, the survival of the state, the preservation of authority, and the safeguarding of independence have been deemed the primary conditions for realizing any grand ideal. In this sense, the legacy of Ayatollah Khamenei should be sought not in the clash between idealism and realism, but in the endeavor to synthesize the two. His strategic worldview was anchored in a fundamental premise: the international system remains an arena of unequal distribution of power, and states live under the shadow of the balance of power before they live under the shadow of legal frameworks. From this perspective, security is not a gift bestowed by great powers upon others; security is the product of a nation's capacity to safeguard its own independence. This understanding was not merely an abstract international relations theory, but arose from Iran's historical experience—a country that, over the past two centuries, has repeatedly paid the price of weakness, dependency, and foreign intervention, viewing independence not as an abstract concept, but as historical capital. Consequently, the concept of "independence" in Ayatollah Khamenei's thought was more than a political slogan; it was the backbone of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. Independence meant

the right to make decisions freely on national issues, without the will of external powers overriding the will of the nation. It was on the basis of this understanding that the development of defense capabilities, self-reliance in strategic industries, investment in indigenous technologies, and the reinforcement of deterrence became indispensable components of national strategy. In this logic, a country that advocates its means of self-defense to others will sooner or later surrender its political decision-making power as well. Ayatollah Khamenei's mistrust of the United States is also understandable within this framework. Rather than stemming from temporary hostilities, this mistrust was rooted in a reading of great power behavior, where international politics is organized around interests and the balance of power rather than trust. From this perspective, negotiation was never rejected, but it only held value when conducted from a position of strength. Diplomacy, in this framework, was not an alternative to power, but an extension of it—just as Persian statecraft has traditionally held that a lasting peace is only established when backed by authority. The Islamic Republic's nuclear dossier was the clearest manifestation of this outlook. Accepting dialogue and agreement did not mean abandoning the components of power. On the contrary, the premise was that political agreements, no matter how significant, cannot substitute for deterrence. Therefore, even during the years of active diplomacy, the development of the country's defense capabilities was pursued with equal vigor. This synchrony stemmed from the belief that while agreements are subject to political shifts, national power is the only safeguard whose longevity remains entirely in the hands of the nation itself. Within this same framework, the Islamic Republic's regional policy also gains meaning. What was perceived from the outside merely as the expansion of Iranian influence was, in the strategic logic of the Islamic Republic, the creation of "strategic depth" for a country situated in one of the world's most turbulent regions. Supporting the Axis of Resistance, forging alliances with aligned forces, and striving to prevent threats from establishing themselves near Iran's borders were components of a policy aimed at raising the cost of any aggression against the country. Undoubtedly, there are differing views regarding the consequences of this strategy. Some see it as a factor elevating Iran's geopolitical standing, while others emphasize its economic and political costs. Yet, irrespective of these judgments, it is difficult to overlook the role of this policy in reshaping the security dynamics of the region.

Another prominent feature of Ayatollah Khamenei's strategic thinking was his attention to the gradual transformation of the global order. Years before speaking of a "post-Western world" became commonplace in international relations literature, he emphasized the gradual end of the monopoly of power and the movement of the global system toward more multipolar arrangements. Accordingly, the policy of expanding relations with Asian powers, developing regional cooperation, and diversifying international partners was pursued. Of course, this policy was not immune to the constraints of the real world, as no power, whether in the East or the West, sacrifices its national interests for another. However, the core strategy was to reduce reliance on a single pole and increase Iran's room for maneuver in the international arena. Nonetheless, evaluating any strategic doctrine is not possible solely by counting gains or costs. During Ayatollah Khamenei's leadership, Iran managed to raise its deterrent capacity to a level where direct military threats against the country involve far more complex calculations than in the past. Concurrently, the Iranian economy faced extensive sanctions, financial constraints, and difficulties in interacting with the global economy. These two realities must be viewed alongside one another, rather than against each other; for foreign policy is not the art of choosing between easy options, but of navigating through hardships. Perhaps the most significant legacy of Ayatollah Khamenei lies not in any single decision, but in the institutionalization of a certain "strategic culture"—a culture that prioritizes independence over dependence, regards deterrence as the prerequisite for peace, and views diplomacy as effective only when backed by national power. This culture is tied less to an individual and more to Iran's historical experience, its geopolitical position, and the political elite's perception of the international environment. For this reason, the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei will not mark the end of the doctrine he formulated and institutionalized in foreign policy over many years. Strategies, when linked with a nation's geography, history, and security memory, outlive their architects. If so, the primary legacy of Ayatollah Khamenei is not a collection of temporary decisions, but the consolidation of an understanding of foreign policy in which independence, authority, and deterrence constitute the three pillars of Iran's national security—an understanding that will likely remain one of the most vital foundations for thinking about Iran's place in the future world order.

## Briefs

## Air Force hero Group Captain...

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behind a grieving family – his widow, a daughter, and a son. His sacrifice is being hailed nationwide as a symbol of bravery and honor. On social and national media, tributes are pouring in, remembering him as a valiant officer who gave his life to protect a woman's dignity. His martyrdom reflects the ethos of Pakistan's armed forces: safeguarding not only the nation's borders but also the honor of its citizens.

## Turkiye eyes F110 fighter jet engines

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Turkiye received a first batch of 10 F110s in September, and talks with the US government to acquire 80 more were "ongoing," he said. Indigenous defense systems But that's been held up by a lack of political clearance linked to Turkiye's 2017 acquisition of a Russian S-400 missile defense system, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said in September. Infuriated, Washington expelled Turkiye from its F-35 fighter jet program in 2019 and imposed CAATSA sanctions a year later, hampering Turkish defense projects and souring ties. "The CAATSA issue must be resolved. The US needs to take steps both regarding the F-35 and the engines for KAAAN. KAAAN's engines are currently awaiting approval in the US Congress," Fidan said, his remarks raising eyebrows back home as Turkiye had said the KAAAN would be entirely domestically produced. Ankara's F-35 exclusion has forced it to refocus on self-sufficiency. "Some argue we should not buy F-35s and invest that money into our own fifth-generation fighter jet program. And that's exactly what's happening with President Trump's decision to export jet engines," Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, head of the German Marshall Fund in Ankara said. "Without those engines, Turkiye cannot produce the KAAAN jet." With a KAAAN delivery date many years away, only Indonesia has placed an order, signing a \$10bn contract to buy 48 fighters, although the NATO summit could generate further interest, Ulgun said. "Looking at the failure of the German-French FCAS initiative, there may be some interest. Spain could potentially become a partner and there may be interest from the Gulf as well... But there are more obstacles to be overcome for it to become a credible offer on the international stage," he said. Experts expected little progress on the lingering F-35 dispute: for Congress to lift the CAATSA sanctions, Ankara would have to get rid of the S-400 – but selling it to a third country would require Moscow's approval, and returning it to the Russians was not on the cards.

## Implementation of US-Iran... MoU 'difficult but possible'...

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His absence has fueled speculation about internal divisions and the future of succession politics in Iran. Some commentators argue that Mojtaba's decision may have been strategic, aimed at avoiding public scrutiny during a sensitive transition, while others see it as a sign of shifting influence within the clerical establishment. Together, these developments highlight the complexity of Iran's current trajectory: balancing cautious diplomatic overtures with uncompromising military posturing, while navigating the delicate politics of leadership succession. The coming weeks are expected to reveal whether Ghalibaf's guarded optimism translates into tangible progress on the MoU, and how the absence of Mojtaba Khamehnei shapes perceptions of Iran's political future.

## Patient Morocco beat co-hosts Canada to set up quarterfinal against France

Heading into Houston Stadium, the Moroccan fans were confident their place in the last-eight was all but assured

HOUSTON: The end result was as expected, but for 45 minutes the performance was not. After a quintessential game of two halves, Morocco became the first African team in history to twice reach the World Cup quarterfinals, yet it was not the easy game against Canada that many fans anticipated. When the final whistle went, two-goal hero Azzedine Ounahi said he "felt like crying" after helping to give his country the celebrations its people were expecting. Heading into Houston Stadium, the Moroccan fans were confident their place in the last-eight was all but assured. Ranked No7 in the world – 23 places higher than their North American opponents – and with the experience of four years ago when they reached the semi-finals in Qatar, fans wearing fezzes and draped in the red and green flag of their nation spoke of a "comfortable" win and "two or three nil". In the end it was indeed 3-0, but for the first half at least, comfortable it was not. In fact, Canada coach Jesse Marsch's pre-match declaration that Morocco have "zero weaknesses" looked like a bluff as his Canada side showed enough determination, ambition, and speed of attack to rattle the African champions. Jonathan David, Tani Oluwaseyi, and Alistair Johnston all missed early chances, while Morocco offered little. The Atlas Lions looked neutered for much of the first half, managing just one touch in the opposition box. Ounahi, however, showed shortly after half-time that true predators do not need to get close to kill, with his goal from distance changing the shape of the game.



"These days, there are no easy teams anymore," said Ounahi, who added a second before Al-Ain's Sofiane Rahimi wrapped it up in added time. "People say, 'Morocco will go through easily; it'll be an easy match,' but that's not the case. Every team plays with determination and gives everything they have. In the first half, we had some problems building up from the back, but in the second, we stayed calm, tried to find the right solutions to win the match, and, alhamdulillah, you could see we were much better in

the second half." Real Madrid forward Brahim Diaz, who snared two assists to take his tally to four this summer, echoed his teammate's sentiments. "Sometimes football is like this. The World Cup is really difficult, the most important thing is how we developed the mentality we have because we knew we didn't have a good first half, and we came out to put everything on the pitch. In football and in life, you have bad times, so how you keep your head up and keep going is most important. I'm so proud of my team."

Ounahi, who plays his domestic football with Girona, was lifted onto the shoulders of his teammates at full-time, but the 26-year-old was quick to play down his Man of the Match-winning role, insisting Morocco is a team united and ready to fight together. "Honestly, I'm proud of everyone," he said. "I'm proud of the whole group. It's not about the fact I scored today. We're one team, we all want the same thing, and we all share the same objective. Whether it was me who scored or someone else, we're all happy. I'm proud of this generation, and I'm proud of this group." The 68,777 fans crammed into the roofed Houston Stadium were certainly entertained. Even as Canada enjoyed some sustained possession in the second half, Morocco's colourful supporters began whistling so loudly that the entire arena rang with a relentless tinnitus-like whine. "Sometimes I feel like crying when I see them out celebrating – the elderly, the young people, little kids, women – everyone is supporting the team, everyone is happy," Ounahi said. "We know how important football is to the Moroccan people. Our goal is to make them proud. Inshallah, if we all stay united, we'll achieve the best possible result." Taking place in Texas on the 250th birthday of the United States of America, the red and white of Canada were left feeling blue, yet they can take great heart from a historic campaign that brought them a first World Cup point, first World Cup victory, and first knockout-stage win, while also showing they can compete with one of the strongest teams at this summer's tournament. – APP

## Babar Azam named Test captain as PCB announces squads for West Indies, England tours

Cricket board unveils squads for both upcoming Test series; Shaheen Afridi excluded

## DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday announced Pakistan's Test squads for the upcoming tours of the West Indies and England, with Babar Azam returning as the team's captain. The squads were announced by the PCB selection committee, including Aqib Javed, Asad Shafiq, and Misbah-ul-Haq during a press conference in Lahore. A 16-member squad has

been named for the two-match Test series against the West Indies, while a 17-member squad has been announced for the England tour. Saud Shakeel has been included as the 17th member for the England series, subject to fitness clearance. Left-arm spinner Ali Usman, right-handed batter Muhammad Awais Zafar, right-arm fast bowler Ubaid Shah and wicketkeeper-batter Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri are the uncapped players included in the squad. All-rounder Aamer Jamal

has returned to the Test squad for the first time since featuring against South Africa in 2025, while the pace attack comprises Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Ali, young speedster Ubaid Shah and Khurram Shehzad. Sajid Khan is the only specialist spinner in the squad, while Salman Ali Agha could provide a backup spin option. The lineup does not include Noman Ali, who was also omitted from Pakistan's previous Test tour of Bangladesh. Responding to a question on why the Test captain was

changed while the selection committee remained intact, head coach and selector Aqib Javed said he and Asad Shafiq had been serving on the selection committee for the past 18 months, while Misbah-ul-Haq and Sarfaraz Ahmed joined six months ago. He said performance is assessed separately in all three formats, adding that captaincy also carries responsibility. Aqib said although Shan had performed well individually, the team had failed to produce the desired results under his leadership.

## Pakistan U-21 hockey squad named for Oman Tour 2026

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Sunday officially announced the 20-member national Under-21 hockey squad for the Oman Tour 2026, following successful trials held at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium in Islamabad. The final selection was approved by PHF President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, on the recommendations of the national selection committee headed by Olympian Samiullah Khan. The committee also included Olympians Nasir Ali, Naeem Akhtar, Kashif Jawad, and M. Khalid. Star forward Hamza Fayyaz will lead the team as captain, while Samiullah has been appointed vice-captain for the tour. **Full Squad:** Goalkeepers: Ehtisham Khan, Ahsan Mahmood Defenders: Abdullah Farooq, Asam Haider, M. Zain Halfbacks: Ali Hamza, Ali Raza, Ali Mehdi, Ali Ansar, Samiullah (Vice-Captain), Azir Khan Midfielders: Saifullah, Muhammad Shehir, Yahya Najib, Humair Arshad Forwards: Hamza Fayyaz (Captain), Ghulam Mustafa, M. Ahmed, Saif Ahmed, Hassan The team will now begin preparations ahead of its tour to Oman, where it will compete in international fixtures aimed at testing young talent and building future national strength.

## China's military promotes two new generals

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Xi, who is also head of the military, presented orders promoting Zhang Shuguang and air force commander Wang Gang to generals at a ceremony Friday. Zhang was also named the head of the division investigating corruption at the Central Military Commission, the military's top body. The promotions could put them in line to fill vacancies on the seven-member commission, which has been effectively reduced to two by the corruption investigations. Zhang in particular looks like a leading candidate, analysts said. The case for Wang is less clear, as two other air force officers – the commanders of China's Central and Eastern Theaters – were promoted to general in the People's Liberation Army, or PLA, in December. "Wang Gang is part of a new generation of PLA Air Force elites with hard operational experience who have been delegated important roles in the Chinese military since the latest round of purges," said James Char, an assistant professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. The commission is chaired by Xi. Its only other active member is Vice Chair Zhang Shengmin. Two former vice chairs, including the military's top general, have been removed or effectively removed. The purges have dismantled the two main factions in the military, giving Xi a cleaner slate to choose future leaders, Char said.

## Police ordered to be impartial

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the recovery of the women and the subsequent arrest of the suspects. "Our priority was to ensure the recovery of the women. We carried out raids in Sargodha and several other locations; at the same time, when we found the family tree of one of the suspects and after speaking to inhabitants at one of the raided houses, it emerged that the family of suspected used to live in the house some time back on rent and were probably related to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar," he said. The police official identified the suspect as Muhammad Raza Dar. He continued: "As soon as this was flagged, we had to confirm the information, and we confirmed it from the family; we got the number (of the suspect) from them and began tracing his location." "The family definitely would have told him to surrender," the police official remarked. Kamran said that once the investigation began, he apprised the senior command and the government of the circumstances surrounding the suspect's relation with a high-profile personality.

## Telecom law needed, says minister

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June 11, but amid controversy over its multiple clauses, a special committee has suggested major changes to its language. Addressing a press conference alongside Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar in Islamabad today, Khawaja noted the proposed bill sought to amend the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organisation) Act of 1996, which she said no longer adequately addressed the requirements of modern digital technologies. Highlighting the rationale behind the proposed amendments, Khawaja said the existing telecommunications law was enacted when 2G technology was in use and was no longer sufficient to meet the demands of modern technologies such as 5G and next-generation digital connectivity. The minister said Pakistan had witnessed a nearly 25 per cent increase in data consumption over the past two years, driven by population growth and the rapid adoption of digital technologies.

## Adventure sports bringing global recognition

RAWALPINDI: President of the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) Major General Irfan Arshad Khan said Pakistan's identity on the global stage is increasingly being defined by positive achievements, noting that Pakistani women have earned international recognition for the country through their outstanding accomplishments in diverse fields. He made these remarks while announcing the launch of the Second Women Khusar Gang Expedition 2026, reaffirming the club's commitment to promoting women's participation in mountaineering, adventure sports, and outdoor leadership across Pakistan. Addressing a ceremony in Rawalpindi, Major General Irfan Arshad Khan said the all-women expedition reflects the ACP's continued efforts to empower female mountaineers and encourage greater participation in high-altitude climbing and adventure sports. Marking the club's Golden Jubilee celebrations, he also announced the issuance of a Rs50 commemorative postage stamp featuring four of Pakistan's iconic mountain peaks. He described the stamp as a symbol of the country's natural beauty and a tribute to its rich mountaineering heritage. The ceremony was attended by Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Managing Director Aftab Rana, Green Tourism representative Brigadier Irfan Akhtar, Commodore Akhtar Shahid Wain, Brigadier Mehdi, Khalid Mahmood, and other distinguished guests. The expedition will see a team of female climbers attempt to summit Khusar Gang (6,040 metres), located in the scenic Shigar Valley of Gilgit-Baltistan's Karakoram mountain range. The initiative follows the successful all-women Bari La Expedition conducted during the ACP's Golden Jubilee celebrations, which received widespread appreciation both nationally and internationally. ACP officials said the Khusar Gang Expedition aims to provide women climbers with practical high-altitude mountaineering experience, develop leadership skills, and promote greater female participation in adventure sports across Pakistan. Participants were selected through a transparent process by a committee of experienced women climbers led by renowned Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiani. The selected team comprises Zeba Batool and Bibi Afsoon from Gilgit-Baltistan, Amara Sharif from Islamabad, Asma Bashir Bangash from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bisma Hassan and Sadia Maqbool from Punjab, Natasha Fateh Muhammad from Sindh, Bibi Malika from Balochistan, and Laiba Shakeel from Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The team is scheduled to depart from Skardu during the first week of July 2026, with all planning, coordination, and logistical arrangements being managed by the Alpine Club of Pakistan. Reaffirming the club's broader vision, ACP leadership said it remains committed to promoting mountaineering, adventure tourism, environmental awareness, and gender inclusion in outdoor sports. Officials added that the club will continue creating opportunities for young Pakistanis, particularly women, to showcase their talent in the country's mountainous regions. – DNA

## Kylian Mbappe's penalty lifts France past Paraguay into quarterfinals

PHILADELPHIA: Kylian Mbappe converted from the spot for his 19th World Cup goal and seventh of this tournament as France outlasted Paraguay to reach the quarterfinals with a 1-0 victory on Saturday in a steamy round of 16 encounter. With the penalty, earned by substitute Desire Doue's slaloming run into the area, Mbappe scored in the 70th minute to pull even with Argentina's Lionel Messi after the 2026 Golden Boot leaderboard and move within one of the 39-year-old for the all-time World Cup goals lead. It was all Les Bleus needed against a resilient but limited Albirrojo side, who defended admirably in sweltering conditions with

temperatures nearing 100 Fahrenheit while offering little going forward. France advance to meet Morocco next Thursday in Foxborough, Mass., in a rematch of the 2022 semifinal that ended in a 2-0 French victory. Paraguay shocked Germany on penalties following a 1-1 draw in the round of 32 on Monday, a result that inspired president Santiago Pena to declare Tuesday a national holiday. But the Albirrojo still exited a round shy of their all-time best quarterfinal finish in 2010, which doubled as their last World Cup finals appearance. The South Americans frustrated the two-time World Champions throughout the first half and well into

the second, aided in part by the card-shy approach of Uzbek referee Ilgiz Tantashev. When he did reach for his pocket, it was puzzling for three French offenders even though Paraguay led 12-9 in fouls. But Paraguay had no solution for the injection of energy Doue brought after Didier Deschamps inserted him in the 61st minute for Bradley Barcola. Moments after Tantashev waved off appeals for a foul on Mbappe just outside the box, Doue's excellent incisive dribbling in from the left forced an awkward challenge from the left leg of Diego Gomez that required the referee to make another decision. Initially he reached the same conclusion and held his whistle, only to be summoned

to the replay monitor by his VAR lead Juan Lara. Eventually he saw Gomez's clear foul. After some delaying tactics by Paraguay on the spot, Mbappe neatly converted into the bottom right corner as goalkeeper Orlando Gill guessed in the opposite direction. Clearly fatigued by the conditions and their 120-minute effort against the Germans, Paraguay tried at last to get numbers forward. Substitute Mauricio mustered their first effort on target in the 90th minute. But it was France who looked more likely to add another goal, with Gill doing well to deny Mbappe a brace with one stop in the 89th minute and two more in the sixth minute of second-half stoppage time. – APP

## Briefs

## Iraq signs deal with oil services giant Halliburton

BAGHDAD: Iraq's government and US oil services giant Halliburton signed a deal Sunday to manage two oil fields in the country's south, as Baghdad looks to boost production. The state-owned Basra Oil Company has signed a joint management contract with the American company Halliburton for the Bin Omar and Sinbad oil fields in Basra province, said the Iraqi oil ministry's media office. Iraqi Oil Minister Bassem Khodeir said the deal with Halliburton aligns with the government's plans to "boost oil and gas production capacity." He added that Iraq aims to boost oil output at the Bin Omar field by 150,000 barrels per day (bpd) within five years, along with 300 million cubic feet of associated gas. Production at the Sinbad oil field should increase by 80,000 to 100,000 bpd. Baghdad's new government, led by Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi, has urged the OPEC oil cartel to increase Iraq's oil production quota, taking into account the damage done to its industry from past conflicts and the recent Middle East war. Like other oil producers, Iraq, a founding member of OPEC, was greatly affected by the US-Iran conflict, as it is hugely dependent on oil exports, which make up about 90 percent of its budget revenues. The new contract with Halliburton was signed prior to Zaidi's upcoming visit to Washington later this month.—APP

## Qatar says all maritime activities will resume immediately

DOHA: Qatar said on Sunday that maritime activities would resume with immediate effect, according to a Transport Ministry statement posted on X. This reverses a June 29 a victory that had urged the temporary suspension of sailing and fishing boats until further notice, though commercial shipping was exempted. The ministry on Sunday urged all maritime vessel operators and users to "abide by the maritime regulations and instructions in effect, to ensure the highest levels of safety and security for all trips." Qatar did not provide a reason behind the June 29 measure, but it came a day after it said one of its nationals had been killed after sustaining injuries from shrapnel due to "military operations in the region," following the disappearance of his vessel. Meanwhile, Iran's commercial attaché in Doha told state media on Sunday maritime trade between Iran and Qatar has resumed after a roughly five-month suspension. An interim deal between Tehran and Washington signed last month announced the end of hostilities after a four-month conflict and mandated a return to pre-war maritime traffic in the Gulf, although transit in and out of the Gulf remains contested.—APP

## Almarai shares closed at SR46, down 3.31 percent

CATRION Catering Holding Co. also announced the signing of a SR75.7 million agreement with Dammam Airports Co., under which it will lease premises to provide its services and operations at King Fahd International Airport. A Tadawul filing said the agreement supports the company's sustainability strategy, aligns with rising passenger and flight traffic, strengthens its position in the aviation services sector, and advances the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030. CATRION Catering Holding Co. shares closed at SR76.25, down 0.40 percent.

## Cuba denounces U.S. embargo ahead of UN debate on July 7

Rodríguez accused Washington of intensifying its blockade through an "energy siege" that he described as an act of genocide and collective punishment. He stressed that Cuba poses no threat to U.S. national security, declaring: "Cuba is not a threat

## DNA

HAVANA: Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla has strongly condemned the United States' economic, commercial, and financial embargo against Cuba, calling it a "crime against humanity in full execution." Speaking at a press conference ahead of the United Nations General Assembly debate scheduled for 7 July, Rodríguez announced that Cuba has formally requested the Assembly to consider the

agenda item titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

Rodríguez accused Washington of intensifying its blockade through an "energy siege" that he described as an act of genocide and collective punishment. He stressed that Cuba poses no threat to U.S. national security, declaring: "Cuba is not a threat. The blockade is." He argued that the embargo undermines the well-being of the Cuban people, violates international humanitarian law, and

destabilizes regional peace and security. The Cuban minister highlighted what he called unprecedented diplomatic pressure by the U.S. to prevent the UN session from taking place. He alleged that the State Department has circulated documents threatening sanctions against governments, companies, and financial institutions that maintain ties with Cuba. These measures, he said, represent illegal extraterritorial coercion under international law. Rodríguez also rejected U.S. claims linking Cuba to terrorism and regional

instability, dismissing them as "slandering and mendacious." He emphasized that Cuba remains committed to peace, recalling Havana's role in declaring Latin America and the Caribbean a Zone of Peace. He further denied allegations of Cuban involvement in the war in Ukraine, noting that Cuba prosecutes mercenary activity under its constitution.

The minister criticized U.S. attempts to block humanitarian food aid through the World Food Programme, despite Cuba's severe shortages caused by the block-

ade. He pointed out that damages from the embargo have reached \$170 billion, with last year alone causing losses of over \$7.5 billion.

Rodríguez expressed confidence that the UN General Assembly will once again support Cuba, as it has done in 33 previous votes demanding an end to the embargo. He concluded by reaffirming Cuba's commitment to sovereignty and independence: "For Cuban men and women, a free, sovereign, dignified, and independent homeland is sacred. Cuba is not a threat; the blockade is."



MULTAN: Labourers unloading sacks of fresh leafy vegetables from trucks at the wholesale vegetable market for distribution to local markets in the city.

## Hundreds of firefighters battle a wildfire in Portugal

ATHENS: Hundreds of firefighters battled wildfires in Portugal and Greece Sunday, with Spain and Italy sending reinforcements to Portugal to help battle a massive blaze burning for more than three days. In Greece, authorities on Sunday urged residents of parts of Thessaloniki, the second-largest Greek city, to remain indoors and shut their windows and doors due to toxic smoke from a burning recycling plant that was engulfed by a wildfire on the outskirts of the city. In central Portugal's Vouzela area, more than 1,200 firefighters backed up by nearly 400 vehicles and 15 aircraft tried to put out a blaze that broke out on Thursday, according to the country's Civil Protection authority. The wildfire had burned across an area of 12,000 hectares — 120 square kilometers, 46 square miles — by Sunday, information from the European Union's Copernicus satellite mapping agency showed. The European Union's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid said Spain sent 120 firefighters and 45 vehicles as reinforcements to Portugal on Friday, while three firefighting aircraft from Italy and Spain were also dispatched to help. Toxic smoke from wildfire in northern Greece. On the other side of southern Europe in Greece, a fast-moving blaze at a recycling plant broke out Saturday evening near the Oraikastro suburb of Thessaloniki, triggering evacuation alerts for three suburbs and a facility housing 157 people with special needs. Strong winds fanned the flames, and around 160 firefighters were deployed to battle the flames through the night until water-dropping aircraft could take off at dawn, the fire department said. Oraikastro mayor Pandelis Tsakiris said on Greece's state broadcaster ERT that several businesses and homes were damaged by the fire, but that a clearer picture would emerge after authorities conduct a full evaluation. A 76-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of having started the blaze through negligence by generating sparks with his vehicle that set vegetation near the road alight, the fire department said. He was due to appear before a prosecutor on Sunday. The fire came days after another wildfire in a nearby area killed a 12-year-old boy and his father. Fire department spokesman Brig. Ioannis Artopoulos, speaking on ERT television Sunday, said that about 85 percent of wildfires in Greece were caused by negligence, including through sparks generated through the use of agricultural machinery, discarded cigarettes and the use of outdoor barbecues. "This means most of them could have been avoided," he said. Greece suffers frequent, often devastating, wildfires during its hot, dry summers. In 2018, a blaze east of Athens killed more than 100 people, while a massive fire in 2023, which tore through a remote nature reserve in northeastern Greece, was the largest wildfire recorded in the European Union. The country has increasingly turned to technology to combat the threat of fires, exacerbated by climate change. It is integrating an array of four satellites, launched into low orbit in May, that will monitor for wildfires. So far this summer, Greece has been spared the heatwaves that have scorched much of western Europe in recent weeks.—APP

## Mass protests in Germany fail to stop far-right congress

ERFURT: Tens of thousands of demonstrators flooded a German city on Saturday, blocking major roads and disrupting public transport, but failed to halt a congress of the far-right AfD party. Many Alternative for Germany — AfD — delegates arrived at the conference center in Erfurt in the early hours, before protesters set up their blockades and the event opened on time. Protesters flocked from across Germany to join largely peaceful demonstrations against the party, which is topping national opinion polls. Police said around 31,000 took part while organizers said at least 50,000. They blocked multiple routes into the eastern city, in Thuringia state, with some abseiling from a motorway bridge. Several groups staged sit-in blockades around the city center, according to journalists. City authorities reported numerous disruptions to bus and subway services. "It's important to send a signal against the shift to the right," demonstrator Lene Krug, 19, from Gera, east of Erfurt, said. "The AfD is an anti-democratic party that spreads hate." Another protester, Ella, was among a group who stuck themselves to tram tracks in a city square. "1933 to 1945 must never happen again," said the 44-year-old, who only gave one name, referring to the period when the Nazis were in power. The democratic parties need to understand that they must impose a ban (on the AfD)." As the day drew on, protesters lifted the blockades and marched toward the congress center. Thousands of police have been deployed for the two-day congress. Despite fears of violence, the protests had been largely peaceful, although police said they used pepper-spray during isolated clashes. The AfD's rise has unnerved many Germans, who feel they have a special duty to fight far-right politics given Germany's dark Nazi past. Some have seen a deliberate provocation in the AfD holding its conference in Erfurt on the 100th anniversary of a Nazi conference in nearby Weimar, a charge the AfD denies. Alice Weidel, one of the AfD's co-leaders, rejected claims that the party was anti-democratic, insisting: "We are the new people's party in Germany." "The AfD is ready to take responsibility because we, because the Germans, because Germany deserves to be governed well," she told the congress. The party is eyeing power for the first time as state elections loom in Germany's ex-communist east, its electoral heartland. Polls indicate it could win an absolute majority in September polls in Saxony-Anhalt state. Nationwide, the party has been at or near the top of polls since national elections held last year, when it came second with 20 percent of the vote, behind Chancellor Friedrich Merz's center-right CDU/CSU bloc.—APP

## Countering rising temperature through scientific ways

## GHAZALA ANBREEN

The sea surface temperatures are constantly rising because of increased emissions. There are different factors which are responsible for this. The heat is generated from unlined waste dump sites. Unfortunately, the burning of crop residues is also a very big source of increase in temperature in Pakistan. Another major source is vehicular emissions. The heat caused by Euro 2 fuel is more than that caused by Euro 5. Therefore, switching to Euro 5, cleaner fuel standards is very necessary and is the dire need of the time in order to counter this heat problem. Factories also need to have a proper control as regards the environmental certificates. Electrostatic precipitators with the towers should be in working condition.

When we go to the suburbs of big cities there are small plants which burn plastic. Because of the emissions of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), this burning of plastic

becomes the reason of generating toxic substances as, for instance, dioxins and furans. These are highly dangerous because a lot of heat is generated through them. For environment they have a severe detrimental effect. These dioxins can travel through the atmosphere. As a result they poison the crops, water and soil and contaminate them. Thus the food chain is affected and human health is at stake. In Karachi some people have died because of heat stroke. The number of patients suffering from heat strokes admitted in hospitals are increasing all over the country.

Despite the fact that global warming is a reality, for a comfortable living, controlling the sources of heat generation is essential. We have to look at our waste disposal mechanisms also. The unmanaged waste is also a reason for the increase in temperature. These create methane gas which leads to global warming. We have to check it meticulously whether our waste has the capability of burning at 1100 degree centigrade. Attaining the target of zero waste to landfill can be possible when

it is seen how much waste we throw in the landfills. In general, much of the waste in most of the countries all over the globe is thrown to the engineered landfills, as it is the cheapest and safest method of waste disposal. The gas from these landfills is used for energy production. However, achieving the target of Near zero waste to energy can become a reality. And for this purpose the training of the people, (the consumers) is essential. The people should be consistently reminded through regular awareness campaigns that they must throw the waste in separate designated bins only.

To sum up, resorting to cleaner fuel standards, minimizing vehicular emissions, better waste management techniques, regulations regarding industrial controls and proper enforcement and stopping open crop residue burning, all these measures can help countering the problem of rising temperature to a great extent. These are in our control and with the use of proper technology we can help achieve this for a better future for our younger generations.

## Kuwait PMI slips to 46.4 while Qatar rebounds to 4-month high

RIYADH: Non-oil business activity in Kuwait and Qatar remained in contraction in June as supply disruptions, regional geopolitical tensions and cost pressures weighed on business conditions. S&P Global data showed Kuwait's Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 46.4 in June from 47.2 in May, remaining below the 50-point threshold that separates expansion from contraction for a fourth consecutive month. Qatar's PMI, meanwhile, improved to a four-month high of 47.6 from 45.9, signaling a slower pace of deterioration in business conditions. The slowdown in Kuwait's non-energy sector came against the backdrop of heightened regional tensions following the escalation of the conflict that began in late February, which increased economic uncertainty across the Gulf. Andrew Harker, economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said: "Although there have been some more positive signs in recent weeks regarding a potential resolution to the conflict in the region, firms in Kuwait continued to feel the effects in June." He added: "Price increases and competition for scarce new orders — particularly from abroad — are limiting growth opportunities at present and leaving companies in retrenchment mode." New orders declined further, driven by lower customer numbers, intense competition, clients' reluctance to accept higher prices, and challenging market conditions linked to the regional conflict. New export orders registered the steepest decline, excluding the April 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, since the survey began in September 2018. The conflict and border issues with Iraq had a particular impact on exports. Business activity declined for the fourth straight month, with the pace of contraction accelerating from May amid reduced workloads. Employment declined for the fourth consecutive month at a pace similar to that recorded in May. Despite staff reductions, companies maintained sufficient capacity to clear backlogs of work. Purchasing activity fell sharply, recording the fastest rate of decline since April 2020, due to lower workloads and higher input prices. Inventories decreased at the fastest pace on record. Looking ahead, companies remained concerned about future market conditions because of the regional conflict. Some companies, however, expected conditions to improve through new product development, high-quality customer service, and marketing initiatives. "As we enter the second half of the year, firms will be hoping that the signing of the memorandum of understanding for a cessation of hostilities between the US and Iran will help lead to a more stable market environment and an improvement in business conditions," concluded Harker.—DNA

## Qatar ports post double-digit growth

JEDDAH: Qatari ports handled 78,002 twenty-foot equivalent units in June, marking a 13 percent increase from May as container traffic strengthened and vessel calls increased. According to Mwan Qatar's June Ports Performance report, the country's three commercial ports received 121 vessels during the month, representing a 21 percent increase from May. The latest figures underscore the resilience of Qatar's logistics sector as the country continues to invest in transport infrastructure under its National Vision 2030 strategy and seeks to strengthen its position as a regional trade and logistics hub. Qatar's ports also handled nearly 23,000 tonnes of general cargo, while bulk cargo volumes exceeded 67,000 tonnes, up 40 percent from the previous month, Mwan Qatar said in its X post. In a separate post highlighting performance during the first six months of 2026, the state-owned ports operator said the ports handled more than 493,105 TEUs and around 273,325 tonnes of general cargo. It added: "The ports also handled more than 325,000 tonnes of bulk cargo, approximately 25,000 roll-on/roll-off units, and over 112,000 head of livestock across 866 vessels." Mwan Qatar operates the country's three commercial ports — Hamad Port, Doha Port, and Al-Ruwais Port — and plays a central role in facilitating trade, supporting supply chains, and advancing Qatar's logistics sector. The latest figures come as Gulf shipping routes remain under close watch amid recent regional tensions, with Qatar continuing to rely on its ports to facilitate trade and maintain supply chains. They also follow a strong 2025, when Qatar's ports handled more than 3,000 vessels and nearly 1.46 million containers, alongside around 1.85 million tonnes of general cargo and more than 122,000 roll-on/roll-off units, highlighting the sector's growing role in supporting trade and logistics.—APP

## Closing Bell: Saudi main index slips to close at 10,798

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index slipped on Sunday, losing 28.01 points, or 0.26 percent, to close at 10,798.97. The benchmark index recorded a total trading turnover of SR3.03 billion (\$808 million), with 103 stocks advancing and 153 declining. The Kingdom's parallel market Nomu also fell 239.39 points, or 1.04 percent, to close at 22,689.95, with 21 stocks advancing and 43 declining. The MSCI Tadawul Index lost 2.55 points, or 0.18 percent, to close at 1,436.32. The best-performing stock of the day was Tabuk Agricultural Development Co., whose share price surged 9.89 percent to SR7.89. Other top performers included Naseej International Trading Co., whose share price rose 7.93 percent to SR31.30, and Red Sea International Co., whose stock gained 5.68 percent to SR26.42. Saudi Fisheries Co. recorded the steepest decline, with its share price falling 9.99 percent to SR69.85. East Pipes Integrated Co. for Industry also saw its share price drop 6.48 percent to SR202. Tihama Advertising, Public Relations and Marketing Co. declined 5.28 percent to SR17.05. On the announcements front, Almarai Co. reported its interim condensed consolidated financial results for the six-month period ended June 30. According to a Tadawul filing, the company posted a net profit of SR1.36 billion in the first six months of the year, down 0.73 percent from the same period in 2025. The company attributed the decline primarily to poultry market supply conditions in the first quarter, as well as cost inflation driven by higher feed and shipping costs in its dairy segment, in addition to increased distribution expenses resulting from higher energy costs.—APP

## GCC banks post net profit of \$16.8b in Q1

RIYADH: The net profit of listed banks operating in the Gulf Cooperation Council region rebounded in the first quarter of 2026, posting a solid recovery after a decline in the previous three months, an analysis showed. According to the latest report by Kamco Invest, aggregate net profits for listed banks in the region stood at \$16.8 billion, registering a quarter-on-quarter growth of 4.6 percent and a year-on-year expansion of 5 percent. This uptick comes as the region's banks demonstrated resilience despite a complex global interest rate environment shaped by on-going Middle East conflicts, elevated energy prices, and divergent monetary policies worldwide. The strong net profit growth among banks in the region also aligns with an analysis made by S&P Global in March, which said that the GCC banking sector faces limited short-term credit risk from the Iran war, supported by strong financial buffers and sovereign backing. "The increase in bottom line was led by a broad-based growth across countries aggregates with only Oman registering a decline, while the rest of the countries showed a quarter-on-quarter increase," Kamco Invest said. In the fourth quarter of 2025, net profits of listed banks in the GCC region declined by 5.9 percent from the record high achieved in the previous three-month period, reaching a four-quarter low of \$15.6 billion, driven by a rise in operating expenses.—APP

## Briefs

### Ambassador Khalil visits Kashgar

AMBASSADOR Khalil Hashmi received a detailed briefing on NLC's cross-border logistics operations and facilities. He praised NLC's role in promoting Pakistan-China trade and connectivity, calling it commendable. The facilities established by NLC in Kashgar and Tashkurgan hold significant importance for Pakistan-China trade. NLC's centers facilitate seamless transportation of goods to China, Central Asian countries including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and onward to global markets. NLC continues to play an effective and key role in the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The organization has also established a wholly-owned logistics company in China. NLC's modern fleet of vehicles is actively strengthening Pakistan-China trade relations. Its services are giving new dimensions to the growing trade ties between Pakistan and China. - APP

### China, Russia navies hold exercises

BEIJING: The Chinese and Russian navies will hold joint exercises in the waters and airspace off the Chinese city of Qingdao next week, China's defense ministry and Russian state media said on Sunday. "Following the exercises, some of the forces from both sides will proceed to relevant areas of the Pacific Ocean to carry out joint maritime patrols," it said in a statement. The drills are an annual occurrence, "aimed at jointly addressing security challenges and maintaining regional peace and stability," it said. Russian state-run RIA news agency said a cruiser, a corvette, a diesel-electric submarine and a rescue vessel from Russia's Pacific Fleet had arrived in Qingdao to participate in the drills, which would run from July 6 to 13. - APP

### Attack by Yemen's Houthis kills 14

The fighting between the two sides has largely been frozen since a UN-negotiated truce in 2022

ADEN: Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels killed 14 troops in an attack south of the port city of Hodeidah, a military official aligned with the country's internationally-recognized government told AFP on Sunday. The official said pro-government forces had repelled the attack in Hays district, south of Hodeidah, in "clashes lasting for several hours at dawn on Saturday." He added "fighting resulted in dead and wounded among (Houthi) ranks," without specifying the number killed in the opposing force. The Houthis have been at war with the government since 2015 in a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people and triggered a major humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The rebels control Yemen's capital Sanaa and much of the north, including Hodeidah on Yemen's western Red Sea coast, while the internationally-recognized government holds much of the south. The fighting between the two sides has largely been frozen since a UN-negotiated truce in 2022. But on Friday the Houthis threatened airports and vital assets belonging to Saudi Arabia, a key backer of Yemen's Aden-based government. The rebel group, part of Iran's "axis of resistance" against Israel and the United States, accused the kingdom of trying to stop an Iranian plane from landing. m- APP

# US, Pakistan have trusted, mutually beneficial ties: Natalie

## US Embassy Marks America's 250th Independence Day with Historic Illuminations in Pakistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of American independence, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the U.S. Consulate General in Lahore bring the spirit of Freedom 250 to two of Pakistan's most iconic cities highlighting the cultural and political connections between the two countries. The U.S. Mission to Pakistan expresses its appreciation to the Government of Pakistan for supporting the celebration

of America's 250th anniversary. The U.S. Embassy illuminated the Pakistan National Monument in the colors of the American flag from July 1 through July 5, 2026. The illumination was carried out as a gesture of friendship and in coordination with Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Capital Development Authority. Throughout the five-day commemoration, red, white, and blue lights also illuminated the Globe Chowk on Constitution Avenue. In Lahore, the U.S. Mission to Pakistan co-



ordinated the illumination of the iconic Alamgiri Gate and Picture Wall at the Lahore Fort, along with the Quaid-e-Azam Library and the National Institute of Technology as part of the Freedom 250 celebrations. Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker highlighted, "America's 250th anniversary is a moment of renewal. It is a chance to strengthen our institutions, reaffirm our leadership, and build partnerships rooted in mutual respect and reciprocity. With Pakistan, we are building on sovereignty, strength, and shared

prosperity, translating mutual respect and aligned interests into real results. As we step into this next chapter, America moves forward with confidence in our values and a clear sense of purpose, committed to a partnership that delivers lasting security and shared opportunity for generations to come." These illuminations are part of the U.S. Mission to Pakistan's Freedom 250 campaign, the United States' year long, global initiative to mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It offers a unique opportunity to celebrate this milestone alongside friends and partners who have shared in America's journey. These illuminations honor the enduring values of freedom, democracy, and opportunity that continue to strengthen the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Anchored in expanding trade and investment, a growing partnership in critical minerals, economic development, and regional peace, the bilateral relationship continues to evolve in ways that benefit both nations.

### Iran: friendly nations to get special Hormuz treatment

BEIJING: Iran's ambassador to China insisted Saturday that new fees would be charged to ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz — an idea rejected by Washington — while assuring that "friendly" nations would receive special treatment. The initial deal struck between Iran and the United States to end their war stipulated that commercial ships would transit the strait free of charge for 60 days, but it remains unclear what will be in place after that period. Iranian Ambassador Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli told the World Peace Forum in Beijing that his country was working in "collaboration and cooperation" with Oman on "new arrangements" for the vital waterway. "As a country where the Hormuz is part of its territorial waters, we will definitely charge service fees," Azli said in translated remarks, while insisting such fees would not be a "toll." "These new arrangements will be concerning guaranteeing the security of passage through the Straits of Hormuz, supervision of the passage of the vessels... and also guaranteeing and dealing with the environmental consequences of the massive number of ships," he said. - APP

## Opec+ tipped to raise quotas again as Middle East calms

### Oil market experts predict Opec+ measures to boost production limits for August

DNA

LONDON: Seven oil countries are expected to exceed their oil target this Sunday because the war in the Middle East is causing problems for Gulf nations, according to analysts, AFP reported. Saudi Arabia, Russia and five other members of the enlarged Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec+) are meeting online on Sunday to discuss quotas for August. Opec+ will likely continue "to unwind the production cuts at the same pace like in the previous months," said Giovanni Staunovo, a commodity analyst at the Swiss bank UBS, predicting an increase of 188,000 barrels per day. "But for now, production is probably still below the group's targets," Staunovo told AFP. Gulf countries had to cut output after the near-paralysis of the Strait of Hormuz orchestrated by Iran during the war in the Middle East, which blocked their oil exports for several months. Between the first quarter of 2026 and May, combined production by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait — three of the seven countries raising their quotas — fell by some six million barrels per day, Opec data have shown. But on June 17, Tehran and Washington signed a memorandum of understanding, committing themselves to removing obstacles to maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz for the duration of talks following the signature.

Since then, ship transport in the region has shown signs of recovery, and oil prices have dropped sharply to levels comparable to those seen before the war in anticipation of a gradual return to normal. Oil supplies through this shipping lane may already have exceeded ten million barrels a day, according to a US official quoted by the Bloomberg agency. But the oil currently leaving the strait has up to now been stored on tankers or in storage facilities, said Saxo Bank analyst Ole Hansen, adding that "shut-in production takes time to restart". "Assuming shipping continues to normalise, July will show an improvement with August probably being the month where the pickup accelerates," he told AFP. Rebuilding the inventories that countries tapped during the conflict should help absorb the flows at first, but producers may face a strong downward pressure on prices later on. And Opec+, already weakened by the departure of the United Arab Emirates from the group in May, will have to manage sliding prices while members will push for production increases. Iraq, in particular, has asked the cartel to raise production quotas to make up for the shortfall it incurred during the war in the Middle East, the Iraqi Oil Ministry said in late June. But Hansen said the need for a higher quota "is not imminent" as production volumes are still far from their pre-conflict levels.

## Trump mixes patriotism with partisanship anniversary

Yet Trump also leaned into partisan territory unusual for an Independence Day address, which presidents typically use as a moment to unify the country

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump mixed partisan politics with patriotic appeals on Saturday as he commemorated the 250th anniversary of American independence, a moment he declared "one of the most joyous and glorious milestones of all time." Speaking in Washington after storms prompted a roughly two-hour evacuation of the National Mall, Trump honored veterans, including several from World War II and one of the first Black officers to lead a Special Forces team in combat in Vietnam. They appeared before flags that symbolized some of the most significant and challenging moments in American history, from the one that was draped over Abraham Lincoln's casket to the one that flew on the plane piloted by the Wright Brothers. Yet Trump also leaned into partisan territory unusual for an Independence Day address, which presidents typically use as a moment to unify the country. Instead, he stumped again for the SAVE America Act, an elections bill that's encountering challenges even from Trump's fellow Republicans in Congress. He highlighted his support for the Second Amendment and revived denunciations of communism, which are becoming an increasingly central part of Trump's message ahead of the November midterms. The speech capped a holiday that Trump has gone to great lengths to shape to his own tastes. He was introduced by two musical performers who often appear at his trademark rallies, including Lee Greenwood, who performed "God Bless America." The event organizers were largely aligned with the White House, supplanting a bipartisan organization that was launched by Congress a decade ago. "We will always be on top," Trump said. "We will never let our country fall. We will always be the best." Trump didn't talk about himself as much as he does during his normal rally speeches. Still, he still found time to include a joke about seeking a third presidential term and about World War II's "greatest generation." "They are the greatest generation," Trump said. "I hate to admit that, but they are."

### Nepal PM marks 100 days with fast change and few words

KATMANDU: One hundred days after taking power promising sweeping reform, Nepal's 36-year-old rapper-turned-Prime Minister Balendra Shah has upended the government while remaining an elusive public figure. The former mayor of Katmandu, better known as "Balen," reached the milestone on Sunday and has moved quickly since taking office. Just a day after he was sworn in, police arrested former prime minister KP Sharma Oli and his ex-interior minister on the recommendation of an inquiry commission into the deadly September 2025 uprising that toppled Oli. The two have since been released without charge while investigations continue. Observers say that first move set the tone for the government's subsequent actions. - APP



LAHORE: A high level delegations of Uzbekistan met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations. - DNA

## Prayers offered for Iran's Khamenei on day two

Khamenei's funeral is being viewed outside Iran as a test of support for the government following mass protests before the war in January that rights groups say were quelled by a crackdown that left thousands dead

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Prayers were held Sunday over the casket of Iran's late supreme leader Ali Khamenei, the second day of funeral ceremonies that have drawn huge crowds to pay their final respects in Tehran. Khamenei ruled the Islamic republic from 1989 until he was killed aged 86 in an airstrike on the first day of the US-Israeli war with Iran on February 28. Sunday's service at Tehran's Grand Mosalla complex was led by prominent Shia cleric Ja'far Sobhani, a 97-year-old scholar who teaches in seminaries at the holy city of Qom. Khamenei's son and successor Mojtaba Khamenei, who is said to have been wounded in the February 28 attack, has not appeared in public since being named supreme leader and was notably absent from the funeral prayers. The late supreme leader's other three sons, Masoud, Mostafa and Meysam, were in attendance. Sunday was declared a public holiday across Iran, and later in the day, Khamenei's body will be moved from the Grand Mosalla complex where it is lying in state in preparation for processions through the capital on Monday. The vast religious complex and surrounding streets were packed with mourners on Sunday morning, AFP journalists saw. With temperatures set to exceed 35C, mourners carrying Iranian flags and portraits of Khamenei, as they made their way to the Grand Mosalla, were handed refreshments. President Masoud Pezeshkian attended the ceremony alongside senior officials including parliament speaker and Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher

Ghalibaf, state television footage showed. Khamenei's coffin, draped in the Iranian flag and topped with his black turban, was placed alongside the coffins of four relatives also killed in the February strikes, including an infant granddaughter. Authorities have said they expect more than 10 million people to take part in ceremonies in Tehran. After five weeks of intense hostilities, the Middle East war is on hold after a ceasefire and an initial accord with the US. But both Washington and Tehran have warned they are ready to resume fighting at any time. "What is observed today in the emotions, tears, and passionate presence of the people in various scenes is the most telling sign of his position among the Iranian nation and the free people of the world," Pezeshkian said in a speech Saturday, accusing Israel in particular of acting as a "destabilising factor" in the Middle East. "Muslims have shown that they will not surrender to oppression and bullying," he added. Khamenei had long pursued a course of confrontation with the West, and Tehran for years has provided support to anti-US and anti-Israel armed groups around the region, including Palestinian Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah. Delegations from both groups met with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Saturday, state media reported, while representatives of Yemen's Houthi rebels and Hamas ally Palestinian Islamic Jihad were also in attendance at the funeral. After Monday's procession, Khamenei's coffin will be moved on Tuesday to Qom, then on Wednesday to neighboring Iraq, before the burial on Thursday in his northeastern hometown of Mashhad.

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