

AI, IT exports hold key to eco future: Ahsan

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said on Saturday that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Information Technology (IT) exports hold key to Pakistan's economic future. He said that success in the IT sector did not require large factories or heavy investments, because the talent, knowledge and innovation are the real assets. He said Pakistani youth have proven that with determination and skills, they can work for clients in Europe, the United States and other parts of the world from anywhere in Pakistan. He was addressing as chief guest, the 3rd IT Freelancing Awards 2026 organized by Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) to recognize the achievements of Pakistan's talented freelancers at a local hotel. The event was attended by Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja Ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, former LCCI president Mian Anjum Nisar, Convener Standing Committee on IT Muddasir Naeem, and a large number of representatives from the business and IT sectors. Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said that freelancers are earning valuable foreign exchange for the country and that export growth is the foundation of Pakistan's economic independence. He described freelancers and IT professionals as the "pilots of the future economy," saying that while the government's role is to formulate policies, the private sector must take Pakistan's economy to global markets. He stressed the need to make "Made in Pakistan" a symbol of quality and excellence worldwide through close cooperation between the government and private sector. He assured the business community that their concerns and recommendations would be conveyed to the Prime Minister, emphasizing that no country can achieve sustainable growth without respecting and encouraging its private sector. He further stated that the world is rapidly moving towards a technology-driven economy and that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming the defining force of future success. He urged all sectors to adopt IT and AI technologies and prepare for the ongoing technological revolution. Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that innovation and the digital economy are key pillars of the national vision, "Uraan Pakistan.—APP

Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF SHAMA YASEEN JUDGE CIV-II/Family COURT RAWALPINDI
Petition u/s 25 of the Guardian and Ward act 1890 QaiserDanish Iqbal versus Mst. Dure-Najaf etc. Notice to (1) Mst. Dure-Najaf D/o Muhammad Afzal (2) Abeera Danish D/Danish Iqbal both R/o Mohallah Qureshiabad, Girja Road, Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through attorney on 20-07-2026 at 8 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

NDMA chief reviews GB monsoon preparedness

During the visit, the NDMA chief conducted a district wise review of preparedness measures, including early warning systems, rescue and relief capacities, evacuation plans and coordination mechanisms to ensure a swift and effective response during the ongoing monsoon season

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik visited the Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) here on Sunday. He paid this visit on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to review monsoon preparedness and strengthen response measures against flash floods, glacial lake outburst floods, landslides and riverine flooding in vulnerable areas of the region, according to a press release received here. During the visit, the NDMA chief conducted a district wise review of preparedness measures, including early warning systems, rescue and relief capacities, evacuation plans and coordination mechanisms to ensure a swift and effective response during the ongoing monsoon season. He directed the authorities to ensure the timely implementation of contingency plans and the prepositioning of relief supplies in high risk areas. He also stressed the need to enhance community awareness to minimise risks and improve preparedness at the local level. Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik underscored the importance of seamless coordination among district administrations, disaster



management authorities and all relevant stakeholders for an effective emergency response. He appreciated the efforts of the Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority and affirmed NDMA's full support for strengthening the region's resilience against hydro meteorological hazards.

Efforts afoot to conserve KP's forests

PESHAWAR: The Forest Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is conserving the province's rich forest resources through internationally recognized scientific management practices, including the harvesting of dead, diseased, dry, over mature and wind-fallen trees, curbing illegal logging and promoting community participation in forest conservation. The province's invaluable forest resources are being protected through internationally recognized scientific principles, approved working plans and sustainable forest management practices to ensure their long-term conservation for future generations. These views were shared by Asghar Khan, Chief Conservator of Forests, Northern Forest Region-II, Abbottabad, during a comprehensive briefing to a group of Peshawar-based journalists on scientific forest management, forest conservation, afforestation initiatives, legal reforms, transparent timber management and the department's anti-smuggling strategy.

The briefing was attended by Habib ul Hassan Gillani, Additional Secretary, Climate Change, Forestry, Environment and Wildlife Department, Hayat Ali, Conservator of Forests, Lower Hazara; Salim Khan Marwat, Conservator of Forests, Upper Hazara and Latif Ur Rehman, Project Manager Media, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Forest Department. During the presentation, participants were informed that Northern Forest Region-II is among the most significant forest landscapes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, encompassing approximately 604,000 hectares of forests, representing nearly 35 percent of the region's total land area. Speaking at the briefing, Asghar Khan emphasized that forest management extends far beyond tree planting or timber harvesting. It is a comprehensive scientific discipline that integrates biodiversity conservation, watershed protection, natural forest regeneration, rights of local communities, and climate resilience into a

unified management framework. He explained that all commercial harvesting is carried out strictly in accordance with legally approved working plans and statutory provisions. Likewise, the selection of dead, diseased, dry, wind-fallen, over-mature and malformed trees is undertaken on scientific grounds to enhance the overall health, productivity and regenerative capacity of forest ecosystems. The department plans to harvest 33,036 million cubic feet (cft) of dead, diseased, dry, wind-fallen, over-mature and malformed trees over the next ten years in the Northern Forest Region as part of its scientific forest management plan. This decision is part of scientific management for regeneration to over all improving the health and hygiene of the Forest, Asghar Khan explained. In the current year, the department will cut around 2.387 million cft of wood under the plan to allow regeneration and growth of growing trees, he added.—DNA

Sindh to connect youth, employment

KARACHI: The Sindh government has decided to establish a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Forum to connect youth with employment, skills development, and the private sector. This decision was made during an important meeting chaired by Sindh Secretary for Sports and Youth Affairs, Munawar Ali Mahesar, with a delegation from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at a private hotel here on Friday. The meeting was attended by UNFPA representatives Golden Melillo, Zahra Jabeen, Renka Swamy, as well as officials from various public and private institutions, develop-

ment partners, and other stakeholders. Director of Sports Asad Ishaq, Deputy Director Habibullah, Assistant Directors Muiz Hussain, Rizwan Mallah, and other officers were also present. The participants held detailed discussions on the establishment of the PPP Forum for youth development and empowerment. Secretary Mahesar stated that the purpose of the forum is to create effective and sustainable collaboration between the government, private sector, educational institutions, industries, development partners, and civil society. This will enable joint initiatives for employment, skills, entre-

preneurship, sports, social inclusion, and access to modern technology for the youth of Sindh. He added that the forum will also promote policymaking aligned with youth needs, private investment, and institutional cooperation. A detailed briefing was given on the performance of the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, ongoing projects, youth centers, and future programs. The participants agreed on a joint strategy for the economic, social, and welfare development of youth and expressed their commitment to further expand cooperation with the department.—APP

Investment drive gains momentum after China pharma deals

CHINIOI: Federal Minister for Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh visited a free medical camp organized at Chak No. 146, JB, Bhakri Jhuk, met with patients, reviewed medical facilities, and appreciated the services of doctors and medical staff. Talking to the media, the Federal Minister said providing quality health facilities to the people is the government's top priority. He noted that the lack of medical facilities in rural areas is a major challenge, which is being addressed through mutual cooperation between the government and philanthropic organizations. The camp was organized in collaboration with Islamia Hospital Chinioi, with support from the local administration, social figures, and volunteers. Qaiser said a Business-to-Business conference between Pakistan and China is underway in Islamabad to promote investment in the pharmaceutical and health sectors. Practical agreements worth about \$40 to \$42 million have been signed, under which Chinese companies will invest in medicine manufacturing and the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan, creating new employment opportunities and strengthening the country's economy. He stressed that all political parties must rise above their differences and agree on a Charter of Economy to ensure economic stability and investment promotion. He added that Pakistan's economic growth rate has been about 3.7 percent, but a further increase in the pace of investment and economic development is indispensable to improve the standard of living of the people. The Federal Minister said more than 500 patients have been examined and various medical tests conducted at the free medical camp so far. Many people received a medical check-up for the first time in their lives. He added that such camps are very important for the people due to the lack of hospitals and diagnostic facilities in the area.—DNA

Pak-China TVET coop boosted thru partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), in collaboration with the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, organized the Pakistan-China TVET Partnership Forum on the sidelines of the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference on Pharmaceuticals, Healthcare & Biotechnology at the Marriott Hotel, Islamabad. The Forum brought together government representatives, leading Chinese Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, industry leaders, healthcare organizations, academia and development partners from Pakistan and China to strengthen bilateral cooperation in skills development, industrial collaboration and workforce

transformation. The Forum was attended by H.E. Syed Mustafa Kamal, Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, H.E. Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Chairman NAVTTTC Engr. Qamar ul Islam Raja, Executive Director

NAVTTTC Mr. Muhammad Aamir Jan, representatives of leading Chinese TVET institutions, Provincial TEVTAs, healthcare and pharmaceutical authorities, public and private healthcare organizations, industry associations and academia. In his keynote address,

H.E. Syed Mustafa Kamal, Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, emphasized the importance of developing a skilled workforce to meet the growing demands of Pakistan's healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors. He highlighted

that stronger Pakistan-China cooperation, enhanced investment, technology transfer and institutional partnerships are essential for improving healthcare services, strengthening the pharmaceutical industry and promoting sustainable economic growth.



The Smooth Moving Connection

freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING

Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage

Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92-51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2874289 - Fax: (+92-51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

Karachi Room No. 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Kalkashan Mall, Main Tang Road, 17D Block-2, P.E.C.H.S, Karachi. Tel: (+92-21) 34030628, 34010478. Fax: (+92-21) 34031747. E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore F-4 Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92-42) 3579861, 35791085. Fax: (+92-42) 35719623. E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-6, 2nd Floor, Zohar Plaza, Left Aftab, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92-91) 2582778. Fax: (+92-91) 2582696. E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House #4, Street #4, Chahar Ansan Road, Shahr-e-Naw, Kabul - Afghanistan. Tel: (+92-902) 772, 62 797958. Fax: 93 779469 208. E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
--	--	--	---

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

Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122
& Rescue Services.....	4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	561116
Cantt Hospital..	9270907-11
DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666



Departments

CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
Met Office.....	9250360-6
RDA.....	5555864
TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Workers begin reconstruction and rebuilding of shops at H-9 weekly Bazaar.

Pakistan closer to EUA therapy for HDV patients

Speaking on the importance of the initiative, Minister Mustafa Kamal emphasized that Hepatitis Delta remains one of the most serious forms of viral hepatitis. He warned that without timely intervention, the disease could continue to spread and place individuals with weakened immune systems at particularly high risk of severe liver complications

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has taken a major step toward improving access to treatment for Hepatitis Delta (HDV), following the Pakistan-China B2B Health Conference, where efforts led by Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, advanced plans to introduce a breakthrough therapy for patients in Pakistan through the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) pathway. The therapy previously received Breakthrough Therapy Designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of Hepatitis Delta, reflecting its potential to address a serious disease with significant unmet medical need. For the past seven months, Federal Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal has been closely working with leading hepatologist Prof.

Dr Saeed Hamid and Pakistan's clinical research expert Syed Munawar Ali to address the growing burden of Hepatitis Delta in Pakistan and to accelerate access to innovative treatment options. Speaking on the importance of the initiative, Minister Mustafa Kamal emphasized that Hepatitis Delta remains one of the most serious forms of viral hepatitis. He warned that without timely intervention, the disease could continue to spread and place individuals with weakened immune systems at particularly high risk of severe liver complications. As a result of the Minister's continued engagement and follow-up, the Chief Executive Officer of the Chinese biotechnology company developing the therapy visited Pakistan during the B2B Health Conference. Discussions with DRAP Chief Executive Officer Dr

Obaid Ullah Malik focused on facilitating the Phase III clinical development program in Pakistan through an accelerated regulatory pathway while simultaneously advancing the legal and scientific review required for Emergency Use Authorization. These efforts are being undertaken in close collaboration with LCI Pharma, led by Chief Executive Officer Mr Atif Siddiqui, to support the regulatory process and help make the treatment available to Pakistani patients at the earliest possible opportunity. Health experts estimate that Pakistan may have more than one million suspected Hepatitis Delta patients, many of whom remain undiagnosed. The initiative is expected to significantly strengthen Pakistan's response to this life-threatening disease by improving access to innovative therapies

and expanding clinical research capacity. The breakthrough medicine has already undergone Phase II clinical evaluation in China, the United States, Mongolia, and Pakistan, where it demonstrated a favorable safety profile during clinical development. Pakistan's participation in the clinical program highlights the country's growing contribution to international medical research and its commitment to bringing advanced treatments to patients. The Ministry of National Health Services, DRAP, clinical researchers, and industry partners reaffirmed their shared commitment to completing the remaining regulatory requirements as quickly as possible while ensuring that all scientific, safety, and legal standards are fully met before the therapy becomes available to patients in Pakistan.—DNA

Gilani reaffirms Pak's unwavering support for Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said Youm-e-Ilhaq-e-Pakistan symbolises the enduring bond between the people of Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir and reflects the Kashmiri people's steadfast commitment to their internationally recognised right to self-determination. In his message on the occasion of Youm-e-Ilhaq-e-Pakistan, the Senate chairman said the Jammu and Kashmir dispute remained an internationally recognised issue and that its peaceful and lasting resolution, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, was essential for sustainable peace and stability in South Asia. He urged the international community to take meaningful notice of the human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and support efforts to ensure the realisation of the Kashmiri people's legitimate rights. Gilani reaffirmed that Pakistan's Par-

liament had consistently stood with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and would continue to raise their voice at national, regional and international parliamentary forums. He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic and moral support for the just cause of the Kashmiri people, emphasising that their sacrifices for freedom, justice and dignity would never be forgotten. Moreover, Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Sunday reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast political, diplomatic and moral support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), saying that their struggle for freedom and right to self-determination could not be suppressed by force. In a message on Accession to Pakistan Day, observed on July 19, the minister said the day symbolized the renewal of Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmiri people's just struggle for freedom and their internationally recognized right to self-determination. He said every citizen of Pakistan

stood shoulder to shoulder with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and would continue extending unwavering support to their legitimate cause. Hanif Abbasi stressed that a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, was essential for ensuring lasting peace and stability in South Asia. He urged the international community to take immediate notice of the ongoing human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and fulfill its responsibility by helping ensure the Kashmiri people are granted their inalienable right to self-determination. The minister reiterated that Pakistan would continue extending diplomatic, political and moral support to the Kashmiri people at every international forum. He said the sacrifices rendered by the Kashmiri people would not go in vain, adding that Pakistan would always stand by their legitimate struggle for freedom.—DNA

Railways emerging as symbol of reform

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi Sunday that Pakistan Railways was emerging as a symbol of reform, innovation and improved public service delivery under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In a post on X, the minister said the government's unwavering focus on performance, transparency and public welfare had paved the way for transforming Pakistan Railways into a modern institution, ensuring that every citizen benefits from improved rail services. He said a new chapter of modernisation and public service was being written under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, adding that comprehensive reforms were aimed at making the railway system more efficient, reliable and passenger-friendly. Hanif Abbasi also thanked Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for her strong support in improving railway infrastructure and services across the province. He said that under the Punjab government's "Suthra Punjab" campaign, cleanliness standards at railway stations were being significantly enhanced while better facilities were being provided to passengers. The minister said that with the cooperation of the Punjab government, eight of the province's busiest railway corridors were being revived through the introduction of modern multiple units. He further said that the deployment of staff at 117 railway level crossings had improved operational efficiency, enhanced passenger convenience and contributed to the protection of precious human lives.—APP

Two held for PSO pipeline tampering case

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone, in a joint operation with Pakistan State Oil (PSO), has busted a major diesel theft network operating through the main pipeline at the Sihala Depot and arrested two suspects red-handed. An FIA official told on Sunday that the raid was carried out near Jump Stop, Bhaga, Sihala, on the basis of credible intelligence, where the suspects had established an organized fuel theft network by installing an illegal underground secondary pipeline connected to the PSO-ARL Sihala main pipeline. The official said the accused were illegally extracting diesel from the main pipeline, transferring the stolen fuel into drums and selling it in the black market. Initial investigation revealed that the illegal network had remained operational for the past five to six months, siphoning off nearly 20,000 litres of diesel daily from the main pipeline. According to preliminary estimates by PSO, the theft has caused a financial loss of more than Rs100 million to the national exchequer. During the operation, the FIA recovered the illegal underground pipeline along with two Hyundai Shehzore pickup vehicles loaded with multiple drums and storage tanks filled with stolen diesel, all of which were taken into custody as evidence. The official said a case had been registered against the arrested suspects under the relevant laws, adding that the investigation would also determine the involvement of other members of the network as well as any public officials who may have facilitated the illegal operation. Further investigation is underway.—APP

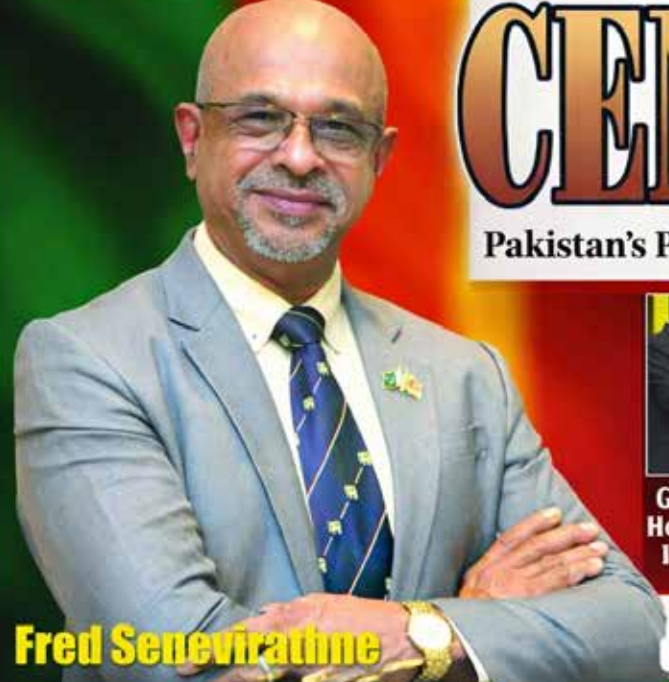
SSP reviews crime control strategy

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations) Qazi Ali Raza chaired an important meeting to review crime prevention measures, operational performance and policing strategies across the federal capital. An official told on Sunday that the meeting was attended by zonal Superintendents of Police (SPs), Sub-Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs) and Station House Officers (SHOs) from across the district. The meeting reviewed the performance of police officers, progress in the arrest of suspects involved in heinous crimes, proclaimed offenders and habitual criminals, besides discussing an effective strategy to curb criminal activities. SSP Qazi also reviewed service delivery at police stations under the SIPS protocol and issued necessary directions to further strengthen modern policing standards and improve public service. Addressing the participants, Qazi directed the officers to further intensify intelligence-based and targeted operations against criminal elements and ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and habitual criminals without delay.—APP

Painting workshop held

ISLAMABAD: Art Fusion by Mishal, in collaboration with Chaaye Khana (Park Road, Islamabad), has hosted a special art workshop for art enthusiasts and invited some talented orphans from Noreen Zindagi Welfare Trust. The initiative aimed to provide the artists from all age group with a platform to express their creativity within a warm, welcoming, and inspiring environment. The event brought together everyone from diverse backgrounds, offering them the chance to explore painting, learn new artistic techniques, and showcase their imagination through vibrant, colorful artworks. According to the organizers, the workshop was designed to nurture creativity, build self-confidence, and provide participants with a joyful and meaningful learning experience. They emphasized that such activities play a vital role in promoting the arts, encouraging young talent, and supporting emerging artists in the community. Participants and attendees highly praised Chaaye Khana Park Road for its ongoing commitment to promoting cultural activities and providing an ideal venue for creative expression. The management and staff were also commended for their exceptional hospitality, professionalism, and wholehearted support, which ensured the smooth and successful execution of the event. Mishal Mughal, the event's organizer and moderator, expressed hope that similar painting workshops and art exhibitions would become regular fixtures. "Cultivating artistic talent and strengthening appreciation for the arts within the community requires continuous effort," Mishal remarked. "This initiative ensures that those orphan children enjoy the same creative opportunities as their peers, making the event both inclusive and enriching," she stated.—APP

Pakistan's largest circulated diplomatic magazine



Fred Seneviratne
Sri Lanka: Climbing global rankings in governance and integrity

CENTRELINE
Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine



Global CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Booolani Inat ih Aziz envoys



Legendary Nepali mountaineer talks to Centreline



Chairman Moani Group Luqman Ali Afzal hostin'a dinner

July 2026

Editor: Ansar M Bhatti

A sister publication of daily Islamabad POST & DNA News Agency. www.centreline.com.pk • xCentreline13

Briefs

China-Pakistan microbial research coop deepens

ISLAMABAD: Representatives from the College of Life Sciences, Shihezi University and the University of Haripur held a symposium on microbiomics, unveiling plans for joint frontier academic exploration. Professor Syeda Asma Bano from the University of Haripur shared her team's latest breakthroughs in molecular plant pathology, biocontrol, and beneficial microbes targeting soil-borne crop diseases. According to China Economic Net, Professor Sun Yanfei from Shihezi University exchanged insights on plant-microbe interaction mechanisms and rhizobacteria functional analysis. The two sides agreed to leverage their respective strengths in arid-region microbiology and molecular biology to advance practical cooperation. Planned initiatives include applying for joint international research grants, establishing joint postgraduate training programs, and conducting academic exchanges. As China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) enters its 2.0 version, the growing academic ties between China and Pakistan have been reflected in the practices of Shihezi University. To date, it has built extensive partnerships with the University of Haripur, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University and other Pakistani institutions across life sciences, information technology, agriculture and basic sciences, covering covering joint research, faculty and student exchanges, joint graduate programs, and the co-construction of laboratories. Besides institutional cooperation, the university has also run training programmes on agricultural water-saving technologies for Pakistani professionals.—APP

FIA secures 17-year jail terms for five

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has secured 17-year rigorous imprisonment for five convicted officials in the Rs104.75 million IESCO bribery case, with a special court also ordering confiscation of the recovered amount in favour of the national exchequer. An FIA official told APP on Sunday that the case originated from a successful raid conducted by the FIA Anti-Corruption Circle Islamabad on August 30, 2024, during which three IESCO Divisional Accounts Officers and two audit officers were arrested red-handed. The official said Rs104.75 million was recovered from the accused, which was allegedly being paid as a bribe to external audit officers in return for preparing favourable audit reports covering the period from 2019 to 2024. Following the raid, FIR No. 153/2024 was registered under Sections 161, 162, 163 and 109 of the Pakistan Penal Code, along with Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947. On July 17, 2026, Special Judge Central Rawalpindi Abdul Rehman Muhammad Arif, after concluding the trial, sentenced Zeeshan Ali Akbar, Nazir Hussain, Ishtiaq Ahmed, Jahangir Ahmed and Saqib Zaeher to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment each.—APP

Accountability will continue: Aqeel

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik said on Saturday that on the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the government is running a strong campaign against corruption and no one will be given any concessions in this regard. He warned that those trying to obstruct this campaign are being closely watched. Speaking to a private TV channel, he said the government is fully committed to ensuring transparency and accountability. He added that this campaign to eliminate corruption will continue effectively at all levels. He also stressed that the government is actively working to solve public problems and improve the country's overall social and economic situation. On a question about petrol prices, the minister said that petroleum prices are mainly linked to global market trends.—APP

Livestock sector holds key to Pakistan's export growth

Pakistan Can Become a Leading Halal Meat Exporter With Right Policies: Experts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's livestock and meat sector has the potential to become one of the country's strongest pillars of economic growth, export diversification, employment generation, and foreign exchange earnings, provided it is supported through progressive policies, technological innovation, value addition, and compliance with international quality standards. This was emphasized at a seminar on the "Future of Livestock and Meat Business" organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Signature Skills and Certifications. Addressing the seminar, Acting President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Tahir Ayub, said that Pakistan is blessed with enormous livestock resources and possesses all the ingredients required to become a leading exporter of halal meat. However, he observed that the sector has yet to realize its true potential due to structural challenges, inadequate infrastructure, and limited adoption of modern technologies. He said that greater investment in value-added meat processing, cold chain logistics, traceability systems, research, innovation, and internationally recognized certifications would significantly enhance Pakistan's competitiveness in the global halal meat market. He reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to serving as a bridge between the government and the private sector to facilitate policy reforms and promote sustainable growth of the livestock and meat industry. Speaking on the occasion, Brig.(Retd) Adil Ashraf Naveed, CEO of Fauji Meat Limited, said that livestock is one of the largest contributors to



Pakistan's economy and has the capacity to become a major source of export earnings if supported through modern processing facilities, quality assurance, and market-oriented policies. He noted that despite its vast livestock population, Pakistan continues to face challenges including outdated farming practices, inadequate cold chain infrastructure, limited value addition, rising production costs, and difficulties in meeting international compliance requirements. Addressing these issues, he said, is essential for unlocking the sector's full export potential. Dr. Shehzad Ja-

doon, CEO/Director of Alltech Pakistan (Private) Limited, highlighted the importance of scientific livestock management, balanced animal nutrition, and modern farming practices in enhancing productivity and profitability. He emphasized that investment in research, technology, and farmer capacity building is indispensable for producing premium-quality meat capable of competing successfully in international markets. Peerzada Wajid Hussain Shah, former WTO Chief and Policy Analyst, said Pakistan enjoys a natural comparative advantage in livestock production but has yet

to capitalize on emerging opportunities in global meat trade. He stressed the need to strengthen sanitary and phytosanitary compliance, establish effective traceability systems, obtain internationally recognized certifications, and ensure consistency in trade policies to enable exporters to penetrate high-value international markets. Raja Tahir Lateef, CEO of Signature Meat, said the steadily growing global demand for halal meat presents Pakistan with a remarkable opportunity to increase its exports.

Trichoderma app recommended for climate-resilient farming

ISLAMABAD: Chinese and Pakistani agricultural experts highlighted the potential of introducing China's Trichoderma biofertilizer technology to Pakistan, saying scientific knowledge transfer and localized adaptation could help farmers improve crop yields, restore soil health and reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers. The recommendations emerged during an online technical webinar on the commercialization and localization of Trichoderma biofertilizer in Pakistan under CPEC Phase II. The event was jointly organized by the China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) and the Pakistan-China Agriculture Cooperation Exchange Center, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro. Representative of the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi highlighted the importance of environmentally friendly agricultural practices and Pakistan-China cooperation in advancing sustainable agriculture and food security. Experts said Pakistan has already demonstrated the potential of Trichoderma through field trials in crops such as cotton, vegetables and orchards. They noted that drawing on China's experience in commercialization and large-scale application could accelerate its adoption and support climate-resilient agriculture in the country. The webinar featured an extensive question-and-answer session, during which participants sought practical guidance on adapting China's experience with Trichoderma to Pakistan's diverse climatic conditions and cropping systems. Responding to concerns about Pakistan's high summer temperatures, renowned Chinese microbiologist Prof. Dr. Shen Qirong of the Chinese Academy of Engineering explained that soil temperature remains significantly lower than atmospheric temperature, allowing Trichoderma to perform effectively under local conditions. He emphasized that soil moisture, rather than air temperature, is the critical factor determining the biofertilizer's effectiveness. Prof. Shen advised that Trichoderma should be incorporated directly into the soil instead of being applied on the surface, enabling beneficial microorganisms to colonize the root zone more efficiently. He further recommended maintaining adequate soil moisture for at least three days after application and avoiding chemical fertilizers for five to ten days to maximize the biofertilizer's performance. For improved results, he suggested applying Trichoderma together with organic manure and preferably during the evening, when environmental conditions are more favorable for microbial activity. Sharing local field experience, Kashif Khan, Co-founder of Green Agri Marketing, said demonstration trials had recorded a 30 to 40 percent increase in cotton yields following the application of Trichoderma biofertilizer, highlighting its potential under Pakistani farming conditions. Meanwhile, Dr. M. Ayaz, Chief Executive Officer of Phyto Doctor Pvt. Limited, expressed interest in establishing a joint venture or import agreement with Chinese manufacturers to introduce registered Trichoderma biopesticide products into Pakistan, reflecting growing private-sector interest in bringing the technology to the Pakistani market. Experts agreed that localized field trials across different agro-ecological zones would be essential to identify the most suitable application methods and crop-specific recommendations for farmers. Participants said wider adoption of Trichoderma could help farmers lower production costs, improve soil fertility and strengthen resilience against soil-borne diseases, while advancing sustainable and climate-smart agriculture.—DNA

51st Int'l Nathiagali Summer College concludes

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Dr. Raja Anwar, on Saturday urged Pakistan's young scientists to become creators of technology rather than mere consumers of innovations developed elsewhere, stressing that sustained investment in science, research and human resource development is essential for securing the country's future competitiveness. He was addressing the closing ceremony of the 51st International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) on Physics and Contemporary Needs. The Summer College concluded after two weeks of scientific deliberations on emerging frontiers of science and technology. Organized by PAEC from July 6 to 18, the prestigious event brought together leading scientists, researchers and young scholars from Pakistan and around the world to exchange knowledge and explore emerging technologies shaping the future. Addressing the

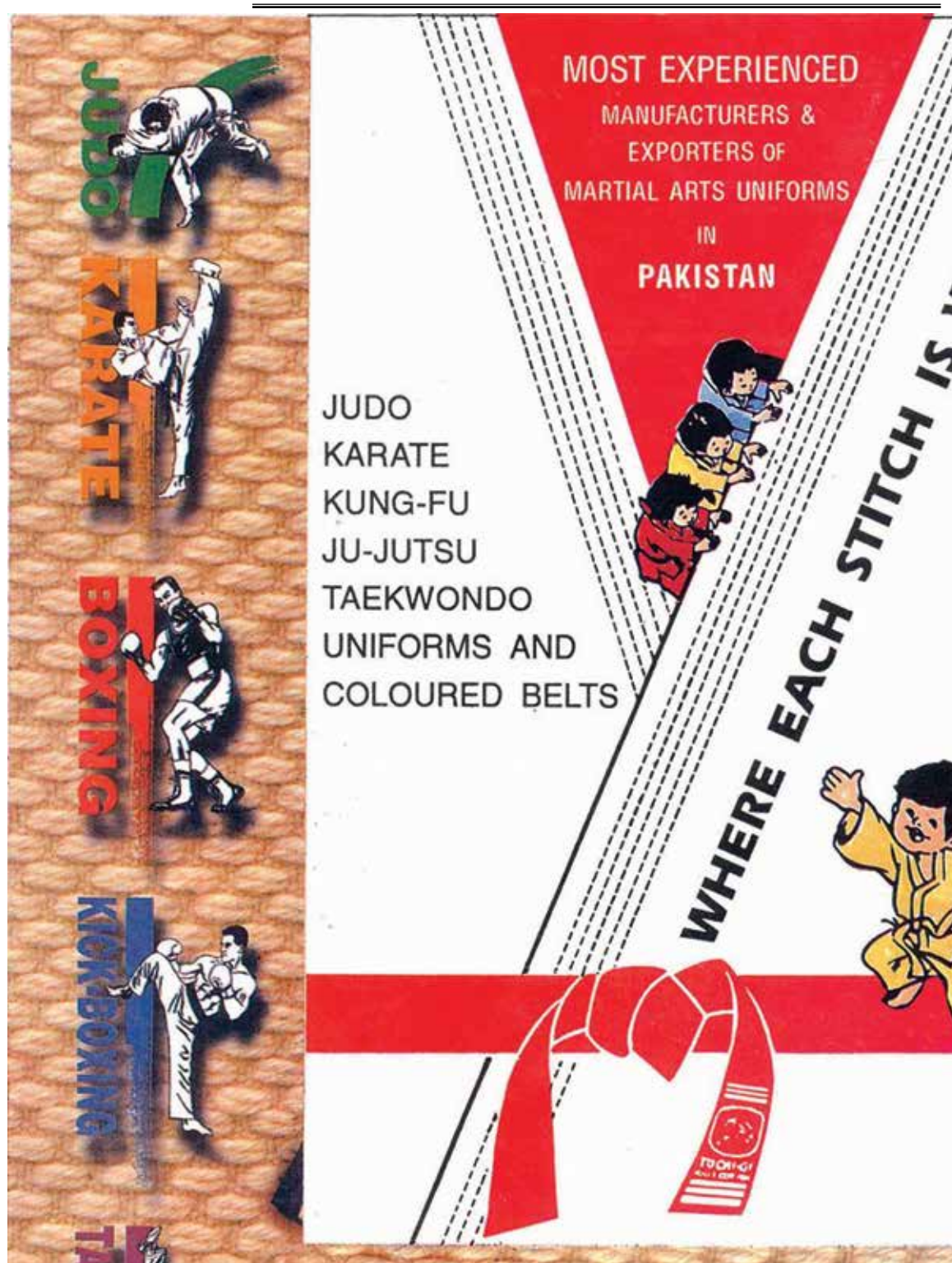
participants, the Chairman said the world is undergoing a defining technological transformation driven by artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology and clean energy technologies, where nations increasingly compete through ideas, innovation, talent and technology rather than natural resources. He said Pakistan possesses the talent, institutions and determination to emerge as a knowledge-producing nation capable of developing indigenous technologies and contributing solutions to global challenges. Dr. Raja Anwar said the International Nathiagali Summer College has, for more than five decades, played a vital role in nurturing a scientific culture by connecting young researchers with world-renowned scientists and promoting innovation, collaboration and critical thinking. He noted that many former participants now serve in leading research institutions, universities, industries.—APP

Pakistan, China ink 9 pharma MoUs worth over \$440m

ISLAMABAD: Pharmaceutical companies from Pakistan and China signed nine agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) valued at over \$440 million, covering local vaccine production, biotechnology, drug manufacturing, technology transfer and hepatitis prevention, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. A separate cooperation agreement supporting Pakistan's national immunization program was also concluded at the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference on Pharmaceutical, Healthcare and Biotechnology, held here and witnessed by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zai-

dong. The conference was the culmination of nearly two months of structured business matchmaking. Following Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China, officials from Pakistan's Ministry of National Health Services, the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing pre-mapped and paired companies from both sides, with firms entering consultations weeks before arriving at the table. More than 450 companies participated in the B2B conference, including over 300 Pakistani pharmaceutical, healthcare and biotechnology firms and around 150 Chinese companies represented by nearly 180 dele-

gates. The venue featured reserve bilateral meeting rooms and dedicated MoU facilitation desks to convert discussions into signed commitments on the spot. Pakistanis diplomats mentioned that cooperation was structured around seven priority investment areas backed by data-driven pitch books: Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) to reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported raw materials; biotechnology products and human and veterinary vaccines, leveraging Pakistan's newly approved National Vaccine Policy; medical devices; specialized generic formulations and injectables; clinical trials and research; and traditional herbal.—DNA



Mart STEP program highlights youth business achievements

ISLAMABAD: IRM has hosted the "Alumni Success Stories Showcase: The Power of Possibility" under the IRM Smart STEP (Social Transformation and Empowerment Programme) & Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project (SPPAP), bringing together development leaders, partners especially IFAD, and stakeholders to celebrate the remarkable achievements of young entrepreneurs from across Pakistan.

IRM celebrates youth entrepreneurs at alumni success stories showcase

The event recognized young women & men graduates who successfully completed specialized training in Technical and Vocational Skills, Digital Marketing, and E-Commerce and have gone on to establish thriving businesses, secure sustainable livelihoods, and contribute actively to Pakistan's evolving economy.

Many of these successful entrepreneurs hailed from remote and underserved areas, demonstrating that access to quality skills training and opportunities can unlock extraordinary potential regardless of geography, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

IRM celebrates youth entrepreneurs at alumni success stories showcase.—DNA

IT industry achieve historic success

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Information Technology industry has achieved historic export success during fiscal year as the sector's exports have reached record high of \$4.6 billion. According to the data released by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, the IT exports recorded a 21 percent increase compared to last year, whereas the trade surplus reached 85 percent. The IT sector has become the fastest growing export sector of the country due to the special focus of the Prime Minister, the government's patronage and the industry-friendly policies that played a major role in this success. The IT ministry said the government provided training in modern IT skills to more than 100,000 youth during the last year. The ministry organized participation in more than 20 international exhibitions around the world. It provided an opportunity to over 250 Pakistani IT companies and startups to introduce their products and services to the global market.—APP

China accounts for over half of Pakistan's Net FDI

ISLAMABAD: China accounted for more than half of Pakistan's net foreign direct investment (FDI) in fiscal year 2025-26, reaffirming its position as the country's dominant investment partner despite an overall decline in foreign investment, according to a provisional data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The analysis shows Pakistan attracted net FDI of \$1.637 billion during FY 2025-26, down from \$2.477 billion in the previous fiscal year. Of the total, China contributed \$862 million, representing 52.7% of Pakistan's net FDI. Chinese gross inflows reached \$1.198 billion, while outflows amounted to \$336.3 million, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Sunday. The figures underscore China's continued central role in Pakistan's investment landscape at a time when overall FDI slowed. Chinese investment alone exceeded the combined net inflows from several of Pakistan's other major foreign investors. A similar trend emerged in June 2026. Pakistan recorded net FDI of just \$13.5 million, as gross inflows of \$294.4 million were largely offset by \$280.9 million in outflows. China contributed \$43 million in net FDI during the month, equivalent to about 318.5% of Pakistan's monthly net FDI. The share exceeded 100% because investment inflows from China offset net capital withdrawals from several other countries, significantly reducing Pakistan's overall monthly net FDI. The SBP data also indicate that Pakistan received gross FDI inflows of \$3.568 billion during FY 2025-26, while outflows climbed to \$1.931 billion, leaving net FDI at \$1.637 billion. Overall foreign investment, including portfolio investment, declined to \$450.6 million as portfolio outflows continued throughout the fiscal year. Sector-wise, the data reveal that foreign investment remained heavily concentrated in a handful of industries.—DNA

A Journey into Pakistan's Pink Treasure



DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEER

ON the morning of 10 July 2026, five friends set out on a journey that promised both recreation and discovery. Our small group Abdul Rehman Chishti, Khan Shahbaz Ahmad, Malik Sabir Hussain, Burhan Chishti and I had planned a visit to the Khewra Salt Mine, one of Pakistan's most remarkable natural and historical landmarks. Located in the Salt Range of Punjab, the mine has long attracted visitors from across the country and abroad for its breathtaking underground landscape and centuries-old legacy. We began our journey shortly after sunrise. The cool morning breeze and the quiet roads made the drive pleasant, while conversations about the history of the mine and the places we hoped to see kept everyone in high spirits. As the sun climbed higher, the scenic landscape of the Potohar region unfolded before us. After several hours on the road, we finally reached Khewra, where the bustling entrance of the mine welcomed us with a lively atmosphere. The area around the entrance was filled with tourists of all ages. Families, students, photographers and visitors from different parts of Pakistan were eagerly waiting to explore the underground marvel. The steady flow of visitors reflected the enduring popularity of the site, which remains one of the country's leading tourist attractions. One of the most enjoyable features of the visit was the narrow-gauge train that carries visitors into the heart of the mine. The small train, originally designed for transporting salt, now serves as a convenient means of taking tourists deep inside the tunnels. As it slowly moved through the underground passage, excitement grew among the passengers. The cool air replaced the summer heat outside, while the walls of pink and white rock salt appeared on both sides, creating a striking first impression. Stepping out of the train, we immediately noticed the refreshing atmosphere inside the mine. The temperature remained comfortably cool despite the intense heat outside. The air felt clean, naturally dry and remarkably pleasant, making it easy to walk through the extensive network of tunnels. Soft lighting illuminated the walls and ceilings, allowing the natural colours of the salt to sparkle gently. Shades of pink, white and reddish salt blended beautifully, creating an underground landscape unlike any other. Walking through the chambers, one could appreciate both the beauty of nature and the remarkable engineering that has sustained mining operations for centuries. The calm environment and the silence of the underground passages created a peaceful setting that encouraged visitors to pause and admire their surroundings. Many people believe that the salt-rich environment has therapeutic qualities, particularly for respiratory health, although for most visitors the fresh atmosphere alone makes the experience enjoyable.

IslamabadPOST

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 339

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Among the many attractions inside the mine, the beautifully constructed mosque carved from salt remains one of the most impressive. Built entirely from blocks of salt, the mosque reflects both architectural skill and spiritual significance. Its illuminated walls and delicate craftsmanship leave a lasting impression on visitors regardless of their background. Further inside, we came across small lakes formed by naturally occurring salt water. The still water reflected the surrounding lights, creating mirror-like images of the salt walls. The sight was both peaceful and captivating. Another popular attraction was the model of Minar-i-Pakistan, carefully crafted from pink salt. The detailed workmanship demonstrated the creativity of local artisans and highlighted the cultural significance attached to the mine. The visit also offered an opportunity to learn about the history of Khewra. A pictorial display presented the story of the mine, tracing its origins from the time of Alexander the Great to its development during the Sikh and British periods and its continued importance after Pakistan's independence. The historical photographs, maps and explanatory panels provided valuable insight into one of the world's oldest working salt mines. Despite its popularity, however, there remains significant potential to improve the visitor experience and strengthen tourism at Khewra Salt Mine. Better road infrastructure leading to the site would make travel more convenient, while modern visitor facilities and quality accommodation near the mine would encourage tourists to extend their stay. Interactive museums equipped with digital displays, multilingual guided tours and audio guides could provide visitors with a richer understanding of the mine's geological and historical significance. Similarly, cultural festivals, educational programmes, light-and-sound presentations and carefully planned adventure activities could make the destination more attractive throughout the year. Stronger promotional campaigns at both national and international levels, supported by partnerships with travel agencies and online tourism platforms, would significantly enhance the visibility of the mine among global travelers. There is also considerable scope for expanding the range of souvenirs and locally manufactured salt products available for purchase. Greater emphasis on wellness tourism, highlighting the mine's unique environment, could attract visitors seeking health-oriented experiences. At the same time, maintaining high standards of cleanliness, safety, accessibility and environmental conservation would ensure that tourism growth remains sustainable. As evening approached, we began our return journey carrying not only bags filled with salt souvenirs but also memories of a truly remarkable experience. The visit offered far more than a sightseeing excursion. It provided an opportunity to appreciate Pakistan's geological heritage, the dedication of generations of miners and the country's untapped tourism potential. Our day at the Khewra Salt Mine ended with a shared sense of satisfaction. The conversations on our drive home centred on the spectacular underground chambers, the remarkable craftsmanship displayed throughout the mine and the hospitality extended by the local community. For all five of us Abdul Rehman Chishti, Khan Shahbaz Ahmad, Malik Sabir Hussain, Burhan Chishti and myself the journey became a memorable reminder that some of Pakistan's greatest treasures lie beneath its surface, waiting to be explored, appreciated and preserved for future generations.

America's Iran Strategy in Disarray

Qamar Bashir



President Trump later announced that the United States, acting as the "Guardian of the Hormuz Strait," would charge a fee equal to 20 percent of the value of cargo moving through the waterway as compensation for American protection. He subsequently reversed that proposal and said Gulf states would instead provide trade and investment commitments to the United States. The Memorandum of Understanding was supposed to create a pathway back from war. Iran claimed that Washington had breached the agreement through renewed sanctions, attacks in southern Iran and continued support for Israeli military action

THE United States' confrontation with Iran has entered a dangerous and increasingly incoherent phase as after months of military action, diplomacy, renewed bombing and contradictory declarations from Washington, the central question remains unanswered: What, precisely, does the United States seek to achieve? President Donald Trump had already warned that Iran would be hit hard. Yet, almost in the same breath, he indicated that he did not expect the wider war to restart, that any further action would end quickly and that negotiations involving Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner could continue. These are not merely variations in tone. They represent fundamentally different strategic paths: renewed diplomacy, limited punitive strikes, prolonged coercion, comprehensive military defeat or regime change. A great power can keep its adversary guessing as a deliberate tactic. But unpredictability becomes dangerous when allies, markets, military commanders, diplomats and citizens cannot determine whether the ambiguity is calculated or whether policy itself is being improvised from one crisis to the next. The original justification for military action centered on the assertion that Iran was approaching nuclear weapons capability and posed an urgent threat to Israel and the United States. However, Vice President J.D. Vance later suggested that Iran remained far from developing an immediate nuclear threat. Such a statement inevitably weakens the urgency that was invoked to justify the war. If the threat was not imminent, why was a large-scale attack necessary? If it was imminent, why has the conflict now narrowed primarily to tankers, tolls and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz? The war's declared goals have repeatedly shifted. Preventing nuclear weaponization was followed by demands to destroy missile and drone infrastructure. The contradiction became especially visible in Washington's position on transit charges. Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated unequivocally that no country may impose tolls or fees on an international waterway. President Trump later announced that the United States, acting as the "Guardian of the Hormuz Strait," would charge a fee equal to 20 percent of the value of cargo moving through the waterway as compensation for American protection. He subsequently reversed that proposal and said Gulf states would instead provide trade and investment commitments to the United States. The Memorandum of Understanding was supposed to create a pathway back from war. Iran claimed that Washington had breached the agreement through renewed sanctions, attacks in southern Iran and continued support for Israeli military action. American officials accused Tehran of attacking commercial shipping and violating the spirit of the ceasefire. Rather than serving as a bridge toward a comprehensive settlement, the

MOU became another contested document interpreted differently by each side. The crisis also exposed major differences between Washington and Israel. Vice President Vance accused elements within the Israeli government of attempting to manipulate American public opinion and derail U.S.-Iran diplomacy. He argued that a well-funded influence campaign was designed to keep the war going and shift U.S. policy away from negotiation. His remarks were extraordinary. Disagreements between American and Israeli governments are not unprecedented, but a sitting vice president publicly alleging that figures within an allied government were attempting to manipulate U.S. political judgment marked a profound rupture. Vance went even further by suggesting that, without Israeli influence, the United States might not have entered the conflict in the same manner. This raises a question that can no longer be avoided: Is American policy toward Iran being determined primarily by the independent national interests of the United States, or is it being shaped by Israel's separate strategic objective of permanently weakening Iran? Israel may consider a fragmented, militarily devastated and politically unstable Iran advantageous because it would remove its strongest regional rival. But such an outcome would impose enormous costs on the United States, Europe and the wider Middle East. Iran is not a small or institutionally hollow state. It has nearly 95 million people, a substantial industrial base, deep historical institutions, strategic geography and a complex society. Destroying Iran without a credible plan for what follows could produce state fragmentation, insurgency, terrorism, economic collapse, refugee flows and prolonged regional warfare. The consequences would not remain confined to Israel's immediate security environment. They would affect global energy supplies, European migration, shipping insurance, American military deployments and international markets. Trump himself now appears trapped between escalation and restraint. Weeks of American and Israeli attacks failed to force Iran into unconditional surrender. The economic reality limits Washington's freedom of action. A prolonged conflict in the Strait of Hormuz could raise fuel, transportation, manufacturing and food costs across the United States. Trump must therefore reconcile his promise to demonstrate military strength with his domestic political need to avoid another inflationary shock before congressional elections. The war has never commanded overwhelming public support. Influential conservative voices, including Tucker Carlson and Megyn Kelly, have argued that Trump was manipulated into pursuing Israel's war. Meanwhile, hawkish conservatives attacked the MOU for conceding too much to Iran and questioned why the conflict had been fought if Washington was ultimately

prepared to compromise. Trump is thus pressured from both directions. Restraint invites criticism from hawks who demand Iran's defeat. Escalation risks alienating anti-war elements of his political base, increasing oil prices and dragging the country into another open-ended Middle Eastern conflict. Congress is reflecting this transformation. In July 2026, 103 House Democrats voted to remove approximately \$3.3 billion in military assistance to Israel from a spending measure. The amendment failed because almost every Republican and a substantial number of Democrats voted to retain the aid. Nevertheless, it was the first time in modern memory that a majority of House Democrats voting on such an amendment supported eliminating Israel's military funding. At the same time, Section 219 of the National Defense Authorization Act, which seeks deeper U.S.-Israel integration in artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, biotechnology, data fusion and defense networks, has generated concerns that Israel could gain excessive access to sensitive American technology and greater influence over U.S. defense policy. The absence of coherence is now evident across the American leadership. Trump alternates between threats, negotiations, economic demands and talk of decisive victory. Rubio invokes international law against Iranian tolls while serving an administration that briefly proposed its own 20 percent maritime charge. Vance supports diplomacy and publicly accuses Israeli figures of undermining American policy. Congress is divided over aid, technology sharing and the legality of military action. These are not minor messaging differences. They suggest that competing power centers are pursuing different diagnoses of the conflict, different priorities and different endgames. The latest reported pause in attacks, following diplomatic intervention involving Pakistan and Field Marshal Asim Munir, may offer another opportunity to return to negotiations. But another temporary pause will not be enough. The United States needs a comprehensive strategy with clearly stated objectives, enforceable obligations, a realistic exit mechanism and a distinction between American and Israeli national interests. The writing is now on the wall. American society is increasingly skeptical of wars without clear objectives, aid without accountability and alliances that appear to constrain independent policy. Unless Washington restores coherence, the Iran conflict will deepen public distrust, unsettle markets, weaken diplomatic credibility and create lasting psychological and economic costs at home.

Press Secretary to the President (Rtd.)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

Pakistan's Youth Dividend and the Future Economy

T.M Awan



Agriculture, which remains a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, also offers significant opportunities for youth engagement. Modern farming techniques, agritech solutions, value-added production, and agribusiness ventures can attract young talent to a sector that is essential for food security and economic stability

PAKISTAN'S greatest strategic asset is not found beneath the ground or along its borders. It is the energy, talent, and potential of its young people. With nearly 70 percent of the population under the age of 30, Pakistan possesses one of the largest youth populations in the world. The challenge is ensuring that this demographic advantage becomes a driver of economic growth rather than a missed opportunity. Recognizing this reality, the federal budget for FY 2026-27 has placed considerable emphasis on youth development through allocations for education, skills training, entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and employment generation. Such investments reflect a growing understanding that sustainable economic progress depends on empowering the country's younger generation. Across the world, economic success is increasingly linked to human capital. The modern economy rewards skills, innovation, adaptability, and technological competence. Nations that have invested in their youth through education and workforce development have been able to accelerate growth, attract investment, and compete effectively in the global marketplace. Pakistan must pursue a similar path if it wishes to realize its economic potential. One of the most significant aspects of the government's youth agenda is the emphasis on skills development. Traditional educational qualifications alone are no longer sufficient to meet the demands of a rapidly changing labour market. Employers increasingly seek expertise in digital technologies, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and other emerging fields. Expanding technical and vocational training programmes can help bridge the gap between education and employment while preparing young Pakistanis for opportunities both at home and abroad. Entrepreneurship represents another critical pillar

of youth empowerment. In many developing economies, small and medium-sized enterprises serve as engines of job creation and innovation. Providing young entrepreneurs with access to financing, mentoring, and business development support can help transform promising ideas into productive enterprises. More importantly, entrepreneurship encourages a shift from job-seeking to job-creation, generating opportunities not only for business owners but also for others entering the workforce. Agriculture, which remains a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, also offers significant opportunities for youth engagement. Modern farming techniques, agritech solutions, value-added production, and agribusiness ventures can attract young talent to a sector that is essential for food security and economic stability. Supporting youth-led agricultural enterprises can contribute to both rural development and national growth. Digital transformation is equally important. Technology has become a powerful equalizer, enabling talented individuals to access opportunities regardless of geography. Digital platforms connecting young people with scholarships, internships, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial resources can help reduce information barriers and promote merit-based access. Expanding digital inclusion will be critical for ensuring that opportunities reach youth across all regions of the country. An encouraging feature of current youth initiatives is the focus on inclusion. Women, particularly in rural and underserved communities, often face barriers to education, employment, and entrepreneurship. Expanding access to economic opportunities for young women is not only a matter of social justice but also an economic imperative. Greater female participation in the workforce can contribute significantly to productivity, household incomes, and national development.

Youth development also extends beyond economics. Programmes focused on sports, volunteerism, leadership, and community engagement help foster responsible citizenship and social cohesion. Young people who are actively involved in constructive activities are better equipped to contribute positively to society and national development. However, budgetary allocations alone cannot guarantee success. Effective implementation remains the key challenge. Pakistan continues to face issues of youth unemployment, underemployment, and skills mismatches. Addressing these concerns requires close coordination between government institutions, educational organizations, and the private sector. Training programmes must remain aligned with market needs, and policies should be regularly evaluated to ensure measurable outcomes. The private sector's role is particularly important. Sustainable employment opportunities ultimately emerge from economic growth and business expansion. Strong partnerships between industry and educational institutions can help ensure that graduates possess the skills employers actually require. Pakistan's demographic profile presents a rare opportunity. Few countries enjoy such a large and dynamic youth population. If properly educated, skilled, and empowered, today's young Pakistanis can become tomorrow's entrepreneurs, innovators, professionals, and leaders. The true measure of success will not be the size of budget allocations but the opportunities created and the lives transformed. Investing in youth is ultimately an investment in Pakistan's future prosperity. If managed wisely, the country's demographic advantage can become one of its greatest strengths in the decades ahead.

— THE WRITER IS A MEDIA, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROFESSIONAL.
HE POSTS ON X: @TMAWANOFFICIAL)

Briefs

Iran warns
US of
'decisive...'

FROM PAGE 01
that risks dragging America into another prolonged conflict. Her remarks reflect growing unease among some US political figures about the potential consequences of escalating hostilities in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Iranian officials highlighted recent developments as evidence of US aggression. The missile strikes near Qeshm Island were described as part of a broader campaign targeting Iran's infrastructure and civilian areas. Local sources reported panic among residents, though details about casualties from the missile attacks remain unclear. Iran's military leadership has sought to project strength in the face of these challenges. The top commander emphasized that Iran would not tolerate violations of its sovereignty and pledged retaliation if attacks continue. "Our response will be decisive and devastating," he declared, signaling Tehran's readiness to escalate if provoked further. The crisis comes against the backdrop of strained US-Iran relations, already burdened by disputes over nuclear policy, sanctions, and regional influence. Analysts warn that the latest incidents could derail fragile diplomatic efforts and push both sides closer to direct confrontation. Regional observers note that the Gulf remains a flashpoint, with strategic waterways and energy routes at risk. The deaths of civilians in Bandar Khamir have added a humanitarian dimension to the crisis, fueling anger among Iranians and raising concerns internationally about the protection of non-combatants. As tensions mount, the international community is urging restraint. Calls for dialogue and de-escalation are growing louder, but with both Washington and Tehran hardening their positions, prospects for immediate relief appear uncertain.

More
stringent
steps...

FROM PAGE 01
children already enjoy the same entitlement. An official press statement released by the Senate Secretariat earlier this month noted that Chaudhry had "also agreed on the passing of the bill". However, he later claimed he had opposed the bill during the July 10 proceedings of the Senate committee. He said he had informed the Senate Standing Committee on Interior that the issue should first be discussed with the federal cabinet and other stakeholders. "Despite my reservations, they proceeded to pass the bill," he had said. He has now told that each application for a blue passport would be processed only after the interior ministry's approval here onwards. "Each case will be referred to the interior secretary, and if need be, to the interior minister," he said. He also acknowledged that Pakistan had a "large number of blue passport holders", which he said was a "major impediment" in the signing of visa abolition agreements with other countries. "Our focus is on having agreements for visa-free entry with as many countries as possible," he said.

Trump
vows
retaliation
against Iran

FROM PAGE 01
Iran has yet to issue an official response to Trump's comments, but regional observers warn that the situation could deteriorate rapidly if retaliatory measures are taken. The international community has urged restraint, fearing that a cycle of violence could destabilize the already volatile region. Trump's vow underscores the fragile state of US-Iran relations, with both sides locked in a confrontation that shows little sign of easing.

England edge France 6-4 in
chaotic WC bronze match

Mbappe becomes World Cup's all-time leading scorer despite France's defeat

ENGLAND beat France 6-4 in a chaotic World Cup third-place playoff on Saturday as Kylian Mbappe became the all-time leading scorer in World Cup history. Both teams had higher aspirations at the 2026 tournament but suffered painful semi-final exits – France were outplayed by Spain while England suffered a late collapse against Argentina. Both coaches made multiple changes for the match in the oppressive heat of Miami, with a host of stars on the bench at the start. England boss Thomas Tuchel left out Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham from his starting line-up while Deschamps, stepping down after 14 years at the helm, omitted Bradley Barcola and Ousmane Dembele. Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice put England ahead with a goal from distance in the third minute and Ezri Konsa headed home to make it 2-0. Kylian Mbappe and Michael Olise were a threat as France searched for a way back into the game but they found England's second-choice goalkeeper Dean Henderson in top form. The game threatened to become embarrassing for France when Bukayo Saka made it 3-0 after a swift break. And it was 4-0 in first-half stoppage time when Saka



scored his second goal of the game, celebrated with a fist pump by Tuchel. France coach Didier Deschamps told French TV channel M6 that the first-half display had been "catastrophic", urging his men to show pride. He made four changes, bringing on Dembele, Dayot Upamecano, Lu-

cas Digne and Barcola and was rewarded almost instantly when Mbappe scored his ninth goal of the tournament to move clear of Lionel Messi at the top of the Golden Boot standings. The game had now totally changed complexion and Barcola pulled another goal back, with Des-

champs clenching his fist on the bench. Mbappe then netted his second of the game to become the all-time leading World Cup goalscorer with 22 goals – slotting home from Olise's pass. That put him two ahead of Messi in the race to finish as top scorer at the 2026 tournament.

France squandered a number of chances to equalise and England were handed a chance to extend their lead when Malo Gusto brought down Djed Spence in the penalty area. Saka stepped up to the spot and converted to complete his hat-trick. There was still time for Dembele to grab a fourth for France but Bellingham then strode forward to score the 10th goal of the match with an individual effort. In doing so Bellingham became the first England player to score seven goals at a World Cup. By finishing third, England secured their best result at a World Cup since winning the tournament in 1966, though they will carry bitter memories of their defeat by defending champions Argentina. Deschamps led France to World Cup glory in 2018 and finished as runners-up four years ago. Les Bleus were favourites to win the 2026 tournament after a sensational start but were well-beaten 2-0 by Spain in the semi-finals. – APP

Pakistan moves closer to
introduce breakthrough EUA
therapy for HDV patients

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has taken a major step toward improving access to treatment for Hepatitis Delta (HDV), following the Pakistan-China B2B Health Conference, where efforts led by Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, advanced plans to introduce a breakthrough therapy for patients in Pakistan through EUA pathway. The therapy previously received Breakthrough Therapy Designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of Hepatitis Delta, reflecting its potential to address a serious disease with significant unmet medical need. For the past seven months, Federal Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal has been closely working with leading hepatologist Prof. Dr. Saeed Hamid and Pakistan's clinical research expert Syed Munawar Ali to address the growing burden of Hepatitis Delta in Pakistan and to accelerate access to innovative treatment options. Speaking on the importance of the initiative, Minister Mustafa Kamal emphasized

that Hepatitis Delta remains one of the most serious forms of viral hepatitis. He warned that without timely intervention, the disease could continue to spread and place individuals with weakened immune systems at particularly high risk of severe liver complications. As a result of the Minister's continued engagement and follow-up, the Chief Executive Officer of the Chinese biotechnology company developing the therapy visited Pakistan during the B2B Health Conference. Discussions with DRAP Chief Executive Officer Dr. Obaid Ullah Malik focused on facilitating the Phase III clinical development program in Pakistan through an accelerated regulatory pathway while simultaneously advancing the legal and scientific review required for Emergency Use Authorization. These efforts are being undertaken in close collaboration with LCI Pharma, led by Chief Executive Officer Mr. Atif Siddiqui, to support the regulatory process and help make the treatment available to Pakistani patients at the earliest possible opportunity.

Health experts estimate that Pakistan may have more than one million suspected Hepatitis Delta patients, many of whom remain undiagnosed. The initiative is expected to significantly strengthen Pakistan's response to this life-threatening disease by improving access to innovative therapies and expanding clinical research capacity. The breakthrough medicine has already undergone Phase II clinical evaluation in China, the United States, Mongolia, and Pakistan, where it demonstrated a favorable safety profile during clinical development. Pakistan's participation in the clinical program highlights the country's growing contribution to international medical research and its commitment to bring advanced treatments to patients. The Ministry of National Health Services, DRAP, clinical researchers, and industry partners reaffirmed their shared commitment to completing the remaining regulatory requirements as quickly as possible while ensuring that all scientific, safety, and legal standards are fully met before the therapy becomes available to patients in Pakistan. – APP

FIA Busts
major
diesel theft
network

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone, in a joint operation with Pakistan State Oil (PSO), has busted a major diesel theft network operating through the main pipeline at the Sihala Depot and arrested two suspects red-handed. An FIA official told APP on Sunday that the raid was carried out near Jump Stop, Bhaga, Sihala, on the basis of credible intelligence, where the suspects had established an organized fuel theft network by installing an illegal underground secondary pipeline connected to the PSO-ARL Sihala main pipeline. The official said the accused were illegally extracting diesel from the main pipeline, transferring the stolen fuel into drums and selling it in the black market. Initial investigation revealed that the illegal network had remained operational for past five to six months, siphoning off nearly 20,000 litres of diesel daily from the main pipeline. According to preliminary estimates by PSO, the theft has caused a financial loss of more than Rs100 million to the national exchequer. – APP

Britain's Kerr sets
new world record
in men's mile

The 28-year-old US-based Scot clocked 3min 42.66sec at London Stadium to smash previous best of 3:43.13

LONDON: Britain's Josh Kerr etched his name into the pantheon of milers when he set a new world record in the men's mile at the London Diamond League on Saturday. The 28-year-old US-based Scot clocked 3 minutes 42.66 seconds at London Stadium to smash the previous best of 3:43.13 set by Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj in Rome in 1999. Kerr has built his season around going after El Guerrouj's previous best mark.

The Scot had threatened pre-race that his body was "capable of the mark". British record holder Kerr, the Olympic 1,500m silver medalist, went into the race with a personal best of 3:45.34, sixth on the all-time list. A two-time world indoor 3,000m winner, Kerr was paced to perfection by his training partner Brannon Kidder and Slovenian Zan Rudolph. Olympic bronze medalist Yared Nuguse, the North American record holder and fourth in the all-time mile list, clung on to Kerr until the final 200 metres. The Scot then put on the afterburners in front of a near 60,000-capacity crowd at a raucous stadium built for the 2012 London Olympics. He roared through the line, punching the air in ecstasy, the exultant crowd on their feet in a deafening welcome for their new hero. Before El Guerrouj installed himself as world record holder, British milers were an institution on the track. Roger Bannister was the first man to run a sub-4min mile in 1954. Then came middle-distance legends Steve Ovett, Sebastian Coe and Steve Cram, who dominated the event from 1979-93. World Athletics president Coe was on hand to present Kerr with a cheque for \$50,000 and a book on winning milers. – APP

US renews
strikes
on Iran

FROM PAGE 01
according to a statement carried by the state broadcaster. Before the US strikes, Iran's supreme leader said Washington would pay for "seeking to escalate the conflict".

Pak, Egypt
mull naval
cooperation

FROM PAGE 01
The visit included inspections of several newly commissioned Egyptian naval vessels to review their operational capabilities and advanced weapons systems. The delegation also visited the Naval Academy, where they were briefed on the institution's education and training programs, which are based on modern military training standards. The visit comes as Pakistan has been expanding defense cooperation with several regional countries. Reuters reported on Friday that Pakistan is in talks with Kuwait to broaden defense ties.

One
terrorist
killed, 8
others...

FROM PAGE 01
Bannu police said joint operations with law enforcement and security agencies will continue to eliminate terrorism, maintain law and order and protect the lives and property of the public. According to the statement, police officials commended the DPO's leadership and unwavering commitment to protect the lives and property of the public. Bannu Police reaffirmed their commitment to continuing operations against terrorists, working alongside law enforcement and security agencies to maintain law and order.

Iranian
delegation
due in...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who recently visited Tehran, will host the delegation and chair joint meetings. Beyond the official agenda, the visit carries wider diplomatic significance. Islamabad is increasingly being viewed as a potential venue for indirect talks between Iran and the United States, with July 11 mentioned as a possible date for the next round. These talks would build on the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding signed on June 18, which set a 60-day framework for progress on Iran's nuclear program and sanctions relief. Pakistan's role as a facilitator is notable, given its balanced ties with both Tehran and Washington, and its coordination with Qatar in regional diplomacy. For Pakistan, the visit offers multiple benefits. Economically, it opens doors for expanded trade and investment, particularly in agriculture and energy. Diplomatically, hosting Iran-US talks would elevate Pakistan's standing as a regional mediator.

Canadian
FM
arrives in
Islamabad...

FROM PAGE 01
"The discussions will focus on strengthening cooperation in trade and investment, education, and people-to-people exchanges. The two ministers will also exchange views on regional and global developments of mutual interest," the FO said. It added that Anand will also call on the leadership of Pakistan. According to GAC, Anand is also expected to meet with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "Canada-Pakistan relations are underpinned by extensive people-to-people ties, with more than 300,000 Canadians of Pakistani origin in Canada and approximately 20,000 Canadians in Pakistan," GAC noted. Meanwhile, the FO stated that both Pakistan and Canada "maintain cordial bilateral relations anchored in close people-to-people ties enriched by the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in Canada".

Kylian Mbappé
passes Lionel Messi
for career WC scoring
record with 22 goals

France pulled within 4-3 on Mbappé's second goal. Les Bleus missed out on a chance at playing in their third straight World Cup final when they lost to Spain in the semifinals

MIAMI GARDENS, Florida: Kylian Mbappé moved past Lionel Messi for the career World Cup scoring record on Saturday, scoring twice for France in the third-place match against England to reach 22 goals. Mbappé has 10 goals in this World Cup, two more than Messi in the race for the Golden Boot, which is awarded to the tournament's top scorer. France trailed England 4-0 when Mbappé flicked a shot past goalkeeper Dean Henderson in the 48th minute. Then he beat Henderson again with a left-footed strike from about 14 yards in the 66th minute to pass Messi's career mark of 21 goals. France pulled within 4-3 on Mbappé's second goal. Les Bleus missed out on a chance at playing in their third straight World Cup final when they lost to Spain in the semifinals. Mbappé scored eight goals to win the Golden Boot four years ago in Qatar, where France lost to Messi and Argentina in a penalty shootout in the final. Mbappé started Saturday's match for third place – which, outside of potentially allowing him to win his second Golden Boot award, can provide little more than moral victories. England stars Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham were not in their squad's starting lineup and did not enter at the start of the second half. – APP

Chelsea
agree club-
record
£117m deal

LONDON: Chelsea are set to sign Aston Villa's England midfielder Morgan Rogers on a six-year contract for £117 million (\$157 million), a record transfer fee for the west London side, after the Premier League clubs agreed a deal, British media said on Saturday. Rogers, who can play as a winger or attacking midfielder, will complete his medical at Chelsea on Monday, the reports added, ending a two-year spell at Villa that culminated in a Europa League triumph. Chelsea, whose previous record signing was the £115 million paid for Ecuador midfielder Moises Caicedo in 2023, beat English champions Arsenal in the race for the 23-year-old, according to the reports. Rogers, who joined Villa in 2024 from Middlesbrough, made his England debut in November that year. – APP

Lahore Qalandars
Reach Guyana for GSL

The Global Super League will be held from July 23 to August 1 at the Guyana National Stadium, featuring champion franchise teams from around the world

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Lahore Qalandars have arrived in Guyana ahead of the ExxonMobil Global Super League (GSL) 2026, with franchise owner Atif Ranau reaffirming the team's long-term commitment to developing Pakistan's next generation of cricketers through international exposure. Speaking as the team reached Guyana, Atif Rana said the GSL squad has been built around young and emerging talent, providing promising Pakistani players with the opportunity to showcase their abilities on the global stage and prepare for future international careers. "Our squad is based on youth and emerging talent. These players will gain invaluable international exposure, helping them develop into future stars and valuable assets for Pakistan cricket," Atif Rana said. He added that another key objective of the

tour is to strengthen Pakistan's fast-bowling resources under the guidance of head coach Shaun Tait. The former Australian fast bowler's vast coaching experience, particularly in developing pace bowlers, will play an important role in nurturing the country's next generation of fast bowlers. The Lahore Qalandars will be led by experienced New Zealand all-rounder Michael Bracewell, whose appointment as captain was described by Team Director Sameen Rana as a strategic decision. The Global Super League will be held from July 23 to August 1 at the Guyana National Stadium, featuring champion franchise teams from around the world. Lahore Qalandars will begin their campaign against Perth Scorchers on July 23, followed by matches against Desert Vipers (July 24), Guyana Amazon Warriors (July 26) and San Francisco Unicorns (July 29). The tournament final is scheduled for August 1.

UN Hails Pakistan's Football for Mental Health Initiative

Pakistan's delegation also included Pakistan Women's National Futsal Team player Sibal Fawad Tariq, reflecting the growing role of athletes as ambassadors for mental health awareness and youth engagement

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's pioneering Football for Mental Health initiative received high-level international recognition at the United Nations (UN), with global leaders applauding the Pakistan Football Federation's innovative use of football to promote mental health awareness, empower young people and drive positive social change. Representing Pakistan at the UN's prestigious "One World, One Game, One Goal: Football as a Catalyst for Youth Mental Health and Well-being" forum, Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani showcased the country's success story, earning widespread appreciation for transforming football into a powerful tool for youth well-being and community development.

The high-level event, jointly organised by the United Nations in Pakistan, the UN Youth Office and UNESCO, brought together government representatives, football administrators, athletes and youth advocates from Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria, England and Pakistan to discuss how football can be harnessed to improve mental health, resilience, social inclusion and youth empowerment. Addressing the forum, Gilani shared Pakistan's experience of implementing the Football for Mental Health initiative, highlighting how the programme has successfully used the game's universal appeal to create awareness about mental health and inspire positive change across communities. "Using football as a tool for mental health did not just inspire us—it transformed us," Gilani said. "We have reached thousands

of children across Pakistan with the message of mental health, trained more than 300 Youth Mental Health Ambassadors, and engaged over 80 current and former Pakistan international footballers in this campaign. We believe the responsibility of a football federation goes beyond producing talented players—it is also about developing responsible, healthy and resilient citizens." Launched in partnership with the United Nations in Pakistan and the UN Youth Office, the initiative has emerged as one of the Pakistan Football Federation's flagship social impact programmes, demonstrating how football can extend beyond the pitch to deliver meaningful and measurable social change. Gilani said the programme's greatest achievement was not only its success in Pakistan but also its potential to inspire international collaboration. "What excites me is not only what

we have achieved but what we can accomplish together. Pakistan has demonstrated that football can create real social impact, and we remain committed to expanding that impact through global partnerships," he said. Representing the Government of Pakistan, Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting football and sport as effective tools for healthy lifestyles, positive youth development and community engagement. During the event, he also highlighted Pakistan's contribution to world football by presenting the Trionda, the official FIFA World Cup match ball manufactured in Pakistan. Pakistan's delegation also included Pakistan Women's National Futsal Team player Sibal Fawad Tariq, reflecting the growing role of athletes as ambassadors for mental health awareness and youth engagement.

Briefs

PHC organizes
Mango
festival in
Australia

ISLAMABAD: The High Commission of Pakistan, Australia and the Consulate General of Pakistan, Melbourne, organized 'Pakistani Mango and Multicultural Food Festival 2026', which brought together more than 30,000 visitors in a vibrant celebration of culture, community and friendship. Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allen was the chief guest, while a large number of ministers and members of the parliament were in attendance, a press release on Sunday said. A special highlight was the multicultural pavilions, featuring captivating cultural displays from Pakistan, China, Türkiye, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. "The festival celebrated the sweetness of Pakistani mangoes, the richness of multiculturalism, and the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Australia," it was further added.—APP

Jordan
intercepted
Iranian
missile

AMMAN: Israeli and Jordanian forces intercepted an Iranian missile aimed at the Jordanian city of Aqaba on Sunday, the Israeli military said, after Amman denied the city's airport and seaport were evacuated over a threat. When asked by AFP about reports of explosions near the Israeli city of Eilat, an Israeli military spokeswoman said both Israeli and Jordanian forces had intercepted a projectile. Minutes before the interception, the Israeli military said it had detected missiles launched from Iran towards Aqaba and warned of the possibility of "spillover" into Israeli territory. The Jordanian military meanwhile said it had downed "three Iranian missiles that targeted the kingdom's territory," while a fourth fell in a deserted area, without specifying where. Air raid sirens were also activated in the Jordanian capital, Amman, and other parts of the kingdom. However, the Jordanian government had earlier denied reports that authorities ordered the evacuation of Aqaba's airport and seaport, after the US embassy said they had been evacuated over a "credible threat." Jordanian government spokesman Mohammad al-Momani told AFP that "authorities have not issued any decisions to evacuate Aqaba Airport or the seaport, and both are operating normally," adding that no "potential threats" had been detected. His comments came after the US embassy in Amman said Jordanian authorities had evacuated the airport and the seaport in Aqaba, citing an unspecified threat. Al-Momani rejected the claim, saying "the relevant Jordanian authorities did not monitor any possible threats over the past hours." The US embassy statement came after the US military announced that two service members were killed in Jordan and one went missing following a barrage of Iranian strikes on Friday. It marked the first fatalities among its forces since fighting with Iran resumed this month.—APP

LOLC Microfinance Bank
Pakistan opens new head office

Guided by the global expertise of the LOLC Group and driven by a clear purpose, the Bank remains focused on creating lasting economic opportunities and contributing to Pakistan's continued development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: LOLC Microfinance Bank Pakistan marked a significant milestone in its growth journey with the relocation to its new Head Office premises in Gulberg Greens, Islamabad. The new facility was formally inaugurated, reaffirming the Bank's long-term commitment to expanding financial inclusion and supporting Pakistan's micro and small business sector. The inauguration ceremony was graced by H.E. Admiral Fred Seneviratne (Retd.), High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, and Mr. Krishan Thilakarathne, Chairman of LOLC Microfinance Bank Pakistan, as the Chief Guests. The event brought together the Board of Directors, the management team of LOLC Microfinance Bank Pakistan, regional and field leadership from across the country, and Head Office employees to celebrate this landmark achievement. The new Head Office reflects the Bank's continued expansion and its ambition to strengthen its presence across Pakistan while delivering greater access to responsible financial services for individuals, micro-entrepreneurs, and small businesses. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Farooq Rashid, Chief Executive Officer of LOLC Microfinance Bank Pakistan, expressed his gratitude to the LOLC Group leadership and the Board of Directors for their un-



wavering support and guidance throughout the Bank's growth journey. "I sincerely thank Mr. Ishara Nanayakkara, Executive Chairman of the LOLC Group, Mr. Krishan Thilakarathne, Chairman of LOLC Microfinance Bank Pakistan, and our Board of Directors for their trust in our vision. Over the past year, we have witnessed exceptional progress driven by the dedication of our teams across the country. We remain committed to delivering our best and achieving many more milestones." Mr. Krishan Thilakarathne, Chairman of LOLC Microfinance Bank Pakistan,

highlighted Pakistan's strategic importance within the Group's global vision and emphasized the transformative role of financial inclusion. "Today's achievement represents only a small part of what the LOLC Group envisions for Pakistan. Sri Lanka and Pakistan share a longstanding and valued relationship, and we are proud to strengthen that bond through sustainable investment. Having successfully transformed the microfinance model across 26 countries, the LOLC Group believes Pakistan offers tremendous opportunities to expand access to finance, particularly for

micro-enterprises and SMEs. Financial inclusion remains one of the most effective tools for poverty alleviation, and we are committed to extending our reach to communities that need it most." Addressing the audience, H.E. Admiral Fred Seneviratne (Retd.), High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, congratulated the Bank on its remarkable progress and acknowledged the significance of the investment for both countries. "The relationship between Sri Lanka and Pakistan continues to grow through meaningful partnerships such as this. LOLC Microfinance Bank

Pakistan is making an important contribution by supporting entrepreneurs, strengthening the SME sector, and expanding financial access where it is needed the most. Institutions like these play a vital role in empowering communities and supporting sustainable economic growth." The ceremony celebrated not only the inauguration of a new corporate office but also the remarkable progress the Bank has made in recent years. The presence of senior management from the Group, regional leadership, field teams, and Head Office employees reflected the collec-

tive effort behind the Bank's success and its shared vision for the future. As LOLC Microfinance Bank Pakistan enters its next phase of growth, the new Head Office stands as a symbol of ambition, resilience, and the Bank's commitment to empowering individuals, businesses, and communities through greater financial inclusion. Guided by the global expertise of the LOLC Group and driven by a clear purpose, the Bank remains focused on creating lasting economic opportunities and contributing to Pakistan's continued development.

Foreign investors
favor Saudi market
as GCC peers see
outflows

RIYADH: Foreign investors poured \$1.6 billion into the Saudi Exchange during the second quarter of this year, the highest net buying in the Gulf Cooperation Council, according to an analysis. In its latest report, Kamco Invest revealed that the Kingdom was the only market in the GCC to register net foreign buying during the second quarter, while all the other exchanges recorded net selling by foreign investors. The report said the key factors affecting foreign investment flows in the region included geopolitical conflicts, disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz that affected oil price movements, global interest rate trends, and seasonal factors such as Eid holidays, which reduced market activity and trading volumes. The steady performance of the Saudi Exchange comes as the Kingdom continues to attract global capital, buoyed by strong corporate earnings and ongoing economic reforms. The government aims to attract \$100 billion in annual foreign direct investment by 2030. "The quarterly data on trading activity on GCC exchanges showed all the exchanges recorded foreigners as net sellers during the second quarter of 2026, barring Saudi Arabia, which showed foreigners as net buyers to the tune of \$1.6 billion during the quarter, partially offsetting the overall net sales," said Kamco Invest. The report also said the monthly trading trend, excluding Bahrain due to the unavailability of data, showed that Saudi Arabia recorded consistent net foreign buying throughout all three months of the second quarter of 2026. In contrast, the Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman exchanges experienced consistent net selling across each of the three months during the quarter. Foreign investors, including institutional and retail investors, turned net sellers across GCC stock markets in the second quarter of 2026, recording net sales of \$298.3 million, following net purchases of \$1.5 billion in the first quarter, according to Kamco Invest. Dubai witnessed the heaviest foreign selling in the second quarter at \$641.5 million, followed by Kuwait at \$480.3 million, Qatar at \$375.4 million, and Abu Dhabi at \$187.3 million. In Oman, net selling stood at \$161.3 million, while Bahrain recorded \$3.1 million. For the first half of 2026, foreign investors still recorded net buying of \$1.2 billion across the GCC, though this represented an 83.1 percent year-on-year decline compared with the first half of 2025. According to the report, aggregate trading volume across GCC stock markets declined by 21.7 percent quarter on quarter to 64 billion shares in the second quarter.—APP

Saudi real
estate
transactions
hit \$427b

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's real estate market has recorded SR1.6 trillion (\$426.6 billion) in transactions over the three years since the Kingdom's Real Estate Brokerage Law took effect, a senior official said. Speaking at the third Real Estate Brokerage Forum in Riyadh, Tayseer Al-Mufarrej, general manager of strategic communications and official spokesperson for the Real Estate General Authority, said the Kingdom has licensed 117,691 real estate brokers, who have collectively facilitated more than 1.11 million brokerage contracts. Introduced by REGA in 2022, the Real Estate Brokerage Law came fully into force nationwide in January 2023 following a six-month grace period for practitioners to regularize their status. The legislation forms part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strategy to modernize the real estate sector by strengthening regulation, professional standards and transparency, while complementing broader reforms, including updated rules governing foreign ownership and investment, that aim to attract international capital while safeguarding national interests. Al-Mufarrej said the sector has recorded more than 13 million sales and rental transactions since the brokerage law took effect, adding that the authority is now focused on improving industry standards rather than simply increasing participation.—DNA

Police shift
fasting Indian
activist to hospital
against his will

NEW DELHI: Authorities in India's capital Delhi moved social activist Sonam Wangchuk to hospital against his wish on Saturday, after his condition worsened on the 21st day of a hunger strike launched to demand the resignation of the federal education minister. Wangchuk, 59, had been fasting since June 28 in solidarity with India's youth Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), which is demanding Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan step down over exam paper leaks in May that affected millions of students. Wangchuk's campaign has emerged as a rare public challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, drawing support across India and amplifying the activist's demands through millions of views and shares on social media. Television footage on Saturday showed dozens of security personnel, some in plain clothes, holding large white cloth sheets like a curtain on a stage that had been created for the protest before Wangchuk was taken away. Wangchuk had told government doctors on Friday that he did not wish to be moved to a hospital. On Saturday, he was refusing treatment, hospital authorities said. In compliance with the court's order, and based on health conditions and medical advice, Mr. Sonam Wangchuk has been moved from here to an appropriate government hospital for much-needed medical intervention," Deputy Commissioner of Police Sachin Sharma told reporters at the site. Wangchuk is weak due to prolonged fasting and dehydration, the state-run Safdarjung Hospital said in a statement. "Although intravenous fluids were advised ... the patient has refused all intravenous fluids, oral rehydration fluid or any other medication," it said. "He is being continuously monitored and counselled for treatment in (the) best interest of his health." Satish Lamba, Wangchuk's personal physician, told reporters he had heard from the doctor monitoring him at hospital that the current concern was the risk of hypokalemia. Hypokalemia refers to low levels of potassium in the blood, and a severe or sudden drop can be life-threatening. Potassium can be replaced in a hospital through intravenous therapy. On Thursday, the Delhi High Court asked authorities to watch Wangchuk's health closely and intervene if needed, in response to a petition asking authorities to force-feed him as his health weakened. Police also moved some CJP supporters who were staging a sit-in at the venue, asking them to vacate the area. But a few hundred returned later in the day as CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke began an indefinite hunger strike after Wangchuk was taken away. Protesters from the CJP said they would march to India's parliament on July 20, when the monsoon session begins, to press their demand for Pradhan's resignation and seek exam reforms. Wangchuk had been at the center of CJP's protests, lying on a mattress in the middle of a stage, as supporters and visitors to the protest site milled about. Last year, Modi's government accused Wangchuk of inciting people through what it said were provocative statements during violent protests in the federal Himalayan territory of Ladakh, to which he belongs. Wangchuk, who had staged another hunger strike at the time, spent about six months in jail before being released in March this year. He has denied the allegations against him, and said the violent protests were a reflection of frustration with the federal government. On the third day of his fast, Wangchuk told Reuters his fast would last six weeks unless he died first. "But hopefully, we don't have to go that far," he had said. "A sensitive government in a democracy listens to the pains of the people, and I hope they will take action.—DNA

Japan warns
of possible
rapid security
deterioration
in ME

TOKYO: The Japanese Foreign Ministry sounded the alarm about the unpredictable security situation in the Middle East, citing escalating tensions between the US and Iran and a surge of attacks reported in Iran, the Gulf states, and Jordan. On Friday, the Ministry's Japanese Nationals Emergency Response Division updated the region's danger level and urged anyone in the Middle East or planning to travel there to stay vigilant and check travel advisories frequently. Travelers are encouraged to seek updates from various sources about the evolving situation and potential flight delays. Those already present should remain alert, heed local evacuation orders, and steer clear of military sites. The ministry also cautioned that photographing or filming military areas or damage caused by attacks could lead to legal trouble with local authorities. For assistance, Japanese citizens should contact their nearest embassy or consulate, or the Consular Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry maintained the travel advisory levels for the region. Level 4, an immediate evacuation advisory, applies to Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian Territories (Gaza). Level 3, advising against travel, applies to Israel and parts of the Palestinian Territories. Level 2, which suggests avoiding non-essential travel, applies to Kuwait, Jordan.—APP



Credible News. Global Reach. Trusted by All.

DNA delivers fast, accurate and balanced news from Pakistan and around the world and the source for real-time updates on diplomacy, politics, economy and more.

DNA

DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY

Connecting Pakistan to the World



FOLLOW DNA

Stay informed.
Stay connected.
Stay ahead.



**REAL-TIME
UPDATES**

Fast and timely
news from around
the world.



**CREDIBLE &
DEPENDABLE**

Committed to
accuracy, fairness
and integrity.



**GLOBAL
PERSPECTIVE**

In-depth coverage
with a diplomatic
lens.



**WIDEST
NETWORK**

Connecting
sources, stories
and societies.



**DIVERSE
COVERAGE**

Politics, diplomacy,
economy, culture
and beyond.



DNA

DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY

Connecting Pakistan to the World

Briefs

DG ISPR
holds special
interactive
session

RAWALPINDI: Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, held a special interactive session with participants of the ISPR Summer Camp 2026, focusing on Pakistan's security environment and emerging challenges. Addressing the students, the DG ISPR provided an overview of the country's internal and external security dynamics, counterterrorism efforts, and the evolving threats confronting Pakistan. He also discussed the measures being taken to safeguard national stability and strengthen security institutions. The students described the session as informative and insightful, saying it enhanced their understanding of the complex security issues facing the country. They said that the briefing shed light on various factors contributing to instability, including the activities of Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khwarij, particularly in Balochistan. The participants appreciated the opportunity to engage directly with the military's spokesperson and gain a deeper perspective on national security affairs. The students emphasized that, in the current era, awareness about misinformation and propaganda is essential as both spread rapidly. They reaffirmed their resolve that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Armed Forces in fight against terrorism. — APP

NCCIA
summons
Imran Khan
sister

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has summoned Noreen Niazi, sister of former incarcerated prime minister Imran Khan, to appear before it on Monday, July 20, over allegations of disseminating "false, offensive and inflammatory" content against state institutions. "You have been found to have disseminated false, offensive and inflammatory social media content to defame state institutions and spread fake narratives," stated the NCCIA notice dated July 18. The agency directed her to appear at its G-13/3 office in Islamabad in connection with an inquiry. "In case of non-compliance, it will be assumed that you have nothing to present or state in your defence," the notice further stated, adding that non-compliance was punishable under Section 174 of the Pakistan Penal Code. — APP

Five rescued
as passenger
boat sinks
in Indonesia

JAKARTA: Five survivors from a passenger boat that sank off eastern Indonesia, including a seven-year-old girl, have been rescued after floating at sea for three days, a rescue official said on Sunday. The vessel, which was carrying more than 70 people, sank on Wednesday as it sailed near Selayar, a small island south of the larger Sulawesi. Survivors told rescuers they had been part of a group of 25 people earlier reported as missing before becoming separated from the others by heavy winds. "After the ship sank, each of them saved themselves using whatever equipment or makeshift flotation they could find," local search-and-rescue official Muhammad Arif Anwar told. "They rigged together jerry cans and pieces of cork tied up with rope, then climbed on top of them." The group was rescued on Saturday afternoon by local fishermen, who radioed officials for help, he said. The survivors appeared tired and weak after floating for days without enough food or water, Arif said, but had been able to sustain themselves with packets of instant noodles and biscuits. — APP

Farewell dinner honoring outgoing
envoys of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: A distinguished farewell dinner was hosted by Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG) and Chairman of D Watson Group, in honor of the outgoing ambassadors of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The event brought together prominent figures from Pakistan's business and diplomatic community, reflecting the deep ties between the nations. The dinner was attended by UBG Patron S.M. Tanir, FPCCI President Atif Ikram, ambassadors, high commissioners, and leading members of the business community. Among the notable speakers was Ahsan Bakhtawari, President of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who paid glowing tributes to the outgoing envoys. He acknowledged their invaluable contributions in strengthening bilateral relations and wished them success in their future endeavors. In his address, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Bakhtawari family for the warm farewell. He highlighted key achievements during his tenure, including the launch of direct flights between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, which he described as a milestone in enhancing connectivity. He also noted the growth in trade and economic activity, the exchange of high-level delegations, and the introduction of the ASAN visa scheme, which simplified travel through online applications. Farhadov emphasized that these initiatives had significantly boosted people-to-people and business-to-business ties. Speaking on the occasion, Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, said Pakistan is an important strategic partner in Central Asia and that tremendous opportunities exist for bilateral cooperation in trade, transport, logistics and investment. He said his diplomatic mission in Pakistan had been successful because of the support he received, especially from Zafar Bakhtawari and the Bakhtawari family,



whom he described as Pakistan's finest ambassadors. He said Kazakhstan and Pakistan are strategic partners with centuries-old historical ties that are being further revitalized. Referring to Kazakhstan as the world's largest landlocked country, he noted that it offers enormous economic opportunities. He praised Pakistan as a great host nation and assured that his services would always remain available for his Pakistani brothers. He emphasized that stronger people-to-people contacts and business cooperation would benefit both countries. FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh said the invaluable services rendered by both ambassadors in strengthening bilateral relations, people-to-people contacts and economic cooperation would always be remembered. He described Zafar Bakhtawari as a great business leader and an outstanding ambassador of Pakistan. He said Pakistan's business community is fully committed to expanding economic relations with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan through joint business forums, trade delegations, exhibitions and investment conferences.

Additional Foreign Secretary Hamid Asghar Khan also addressed the gathering, lauding the role of the outgoing ambassadors in advancing diplomatic and economic cooperation. He noted that their efforts had laid a strong foundation for future collaboration. In his concluding remarks, Zafar Bakhtawari praised the ambassadors for their dedication and service, emphasizing their role in fostering closer ties between Pakistan and their respective countries. The evening ended with the presentation of souvenirs to the ambassadors, symbolizing appreciation and goodwill. Later, while talking informally to journalists, UBG Patron-in-Chief S.M. Tanveer announced that a nationwide Traders' Convention will be held in Islamabad on July 29. He said representatives of the business community from across the country will participate in the convention to deliberate on proposals and recommendations aimed at strengthening Pakistan's economy and addressing key economic challenges.

Pakistan, Afghanistan
trade hits all time low

World Bank notes that prolonged closures of key Pakistan border crossings, coupled with conflict and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, have weakened Afghanistan's external trade by disrupting traditional transit routes and increasing transport and logistics costs

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Afghanistan-Pakistan transit trade has suffered one of its steepest declines, plunging to just 11,592 containers worth \$367 million in the outgoing fiscal year from nearly 89,000 containers valued at \$5 billion before the Taliban returned to power, as Kabul's growing reliance on Iranian routes and Pakistan's border curbs reshaped the decades-old trade corridor. At first glance, the collapse appears to validate the widely held view that Pakistan's decision to close its border with Afghanistan in October 2025 over security concerns brought bilateral transit trade to a standstill. However, while the border closure undoubtedly accelerated the decline, data shows that transit trade had already begun losing momentum well before Islamabad adopted its most strict restrictions. Trade analysts say the border closure did not initiate Kabul's search for alternative trade routes. Rather, it marked the culmination of a strategy the Afghan Taliban had already begun to reduce Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistani ports. Kabul has pursued a deliberate policy of expanding trade through Iran and strengthening commercial links with Central Asian neighbours. Pakistan served for decades as Afghanistan's cheapest and principal gateway to international markets. The latest transit trade data show that Afghan transit through Pakistan expanded steadily during the period of the democratically elected government. Container traffic increased from about 60,500 containers in FY17 to nearly 89,000 containers in FY21, immediately before the Taliban returned to power. This growth occurred despite often strained political relations between Pakistan and the government of former Afghanistan president Ashraf Ghani. Although diplomatic ties remained tense, Kabul continued to rely on Pakistani ports as its primary gateway for international trade and did not discourage importers from using them. One reason may have been to help Afghan businesses import essential goods at lower transport costs and limit inflationary pressure in a highly import-dependent economy. Following the Taliban's return to power, transit cargo via Pakistan

initially recovered, with container traffic reaching 102,886 and cargo valued at \$6.7bn in FY23. However, this marked the peak rather than the start of sustained growth. Transit volumes fell to 54,114 containers in FY24 and 42,959 containers worth \$1.36bn in FY25, well before Pakistan closed the border in October 2025. The decline suggests that the Taliban had already begun diverting part of Afghanistan's trade to alternative routes before Islamabad's decision to close the border on security grounds. he collapse in reverse transit was even more dramatic. Reverse transit, which allows Afghan exports to reach third countries, particularly India, through the Wagah border and Karachi ports, fell from \$454m in FY25 to just \$7m in FY26, bringing a decades-old trade corridor almost to a halt. However, while the Taliban managed to secure alternative import routes, especially through Iran, the shift came at a high economic cost. According to the World Bank's Afghanistan Economic Monitor 2026, Afghanistan's imports rose 15pc to \$13.2bn in FY25. Iran emerged as the largest source of imports with a 31.3pc share, while Iran's direct and transit corridors accounted for 48.6pc of Afghanistan's total imports, highlighting growing reliance on Iranian routes. This diversion reduced Pakistan's leverage but carried economic costs for Afghanistan. The country lost export opportunities, particularly for agricultural products and coal, while longer and more expensive supply routes increased import costs, adding to inflationary pressure on businesses and consumers. The World Bank notes that prolonged closures of key Pakistan border crossings, coupled with conflict and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, have weakened Afghanistan's external trade by disrupting traditional transit routes and increasing transport and logistics costs. The diversion of trade away from Pakistan has also imposed high costs on Afghanistan's economy through lower revenue collection and falling exports in FY25. Traders report sharp increases in the prices of essential goods, including rice, vegetable ghee and pharmaceutical products, as imports are increasingly routed through longer and more expensive corridors.

FM Dar, FM Venezuela resolve to
further strengthen bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Minister of Foreign Relations and Foreign Trade of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Felix Plasencia, Sunday, exchanged views on the longstanding friendly relations between Pakistan and Venezuela and reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties. They discussed opportunities to expand cooperation across a broad range of sectors, including trade, investment, business, agriculture, IT, and other areas of mutual interest. Both sides underscored the considerable potential for enhancing economic collaboration and fostering stronger people-to-people contacts for the mutual benefit of the two countries. The DPM/FM received a call from the newly appointed minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. The DPM/FM emphasized the importance of sustained high-level engagement to reinvigorate bilateral relations and further deepen cooperation. Both sides appreciated the continued close coordination between Pakistan and Venezuela at multilateral forums on issues of common interest. The DPM/FM extended his warm congratulations to Minister Plasencia on his appointment and conveyed Pakistan's heartfelt condolences over the devastating earthquakes that recently struck Venezuela. He reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the Government and the people of Venezuela during this difficult time and expressed confidence in their resilience and recovery. Minister Plasencia thanked the DPM/FM for Pakistan's message of sympathy and solidarity. He also expressed appreciation for Pakistan's support and humanitarian solidarity with the victims of the natural disasters, underscoring the importance of mutual support in times of need. — DNA

Govt. committed
to addressing
Balochistan issues

*Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination
Rana Sanaullah Khan and SAPM Tariq
Bajwa also attended the meeting*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Sunday, reiterated that the Federal Government was committed to addressing the challenges being faced by the people of Balochistan province, in achieving their legitimate aspirations for economic prosperity and development, within the confines of the Constitution of Pakistan. The deputy prime minister/foreign minister received President of the National Party Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, along with parliamentary members of his party, the DPM Office said in a press release. Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah Khan and SAPM Tariq Bajwa also attended the meeting. Dr. Baloch thanked the DPM/FM and said that the National Party was willing to work together with all for the betterment and welfare of the people of Balochistan, and highlighted that certain elements operating in the province had neither support nor legitimacy in the hearts of the people of Balochistan.

Govt manages to keep fiscal
deficit at 1.6% of GDP

ISLAMABAD: With the collection of petroleum and climate levy exceeding Rs1.478 trillion, the government has been able to restrict its federal budget deficit to Rs3.34 trillion, equivalent to 2.6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in the first 11 months (July-May) of FY 2025-26. In the wake of a revenue surplus of Rs1.31tr generated by the provinces in the first 11 months of FY 2025-26 — in line with the IMF agreement — the overall fiscal deficit was curtailed to Rs2.03tr, or 1.6% of GDP, during this period. For the whole fiscal year, the government had envisaged keeping the overall deficit at 3% of GDP (Rs3.77tr) in accordance with the revised estimates for the last fiscal year, against the initially envisaged target of 3.9% of GDP (an absolute figure of Rs5.03tr). The Ministry of Finance has not yet released the reconciled figures of fiscal operations for the whole fiscal year 2025-26, which ended on June 30, 2026, as the final figures will be worked out in the coming weeks. However, official data for the first 11 months of FY 2025-26 showed that three heads of non-tax revenue — including State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) profits, petroleum levy, and climate support levy — helped the government fetch Rs4.82tr in the first 11 months, against the overall target of Rs5.14tr for the whole fiscal year. The SBP's surplus profit stood at Rs2.428tr, the petroleum levy at Rs1.432tr and the climate levy at Rs45.968 billion in the first 11 months of the last fiscal year. The FBR's collection stood at Rs11.228tr in the July-May period of FY 2025-26, so gross federal revenue receipts stood at Rs16.08tr. — APP

Facebook,
Instagram
affected in
Pakistan

LONDON: Social media platforms Facebook and Instagram are experiencing outages, according to reports from real-time outage monitor Downdetector. Both platforms are owned by tech giant Meta. According to Downdetector.com, which tracks outages by collating status reports from a number of sources, Pakistani users have been reporting problems with Facebook since 12:26pm. Outage reports peaked at 191 reports at 1:29pm and are now beginning to decline to 174 at 1:44pm. In the United States, the reports peaked at 4,587 (12:58pm) and have begun to decline, with 3,161 as of the last update at 1:28pm. — APP



General Practice
HOSPITAL

Your Health. Our Priority - Every Step of the Way!



General Practice Hospital (GPH) is a state-of-the-art healthcare facility in the heart of Islamabad, offering international-standard medical care for individuals and families. From urgent care and specialized consultations to advanced diagnostics, surgery, and executive health packages — all services are available under one roof. Our concierge consultations, personalized care plans, and comprehensive health programs ensure a smooth and stress-free experience.

We understand that seeking medical care can be overwhelming, but you are never alone. With empathy at the heart of everything we do, we listen, guide, and support you every step of the way. In our clean, premium environment, you'll feel safe, valued, and cared for. Book your appointment today and experience healthcare with compassion.

Our Departments

 General Physician Services	 General Surgery	 Dental & Maxillofacial Surgery	 Plastic Surgery	 Ear, Nose & Throat	 Nutrition, Dietetics & Lifestyle
 Internal Medicine	 Pediatrics & Child Health	 Breast Surgery	 Anaesthesiology	 Pulmonology	 Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation
 Gynecology & Women's Health	 Cardiology	 Bariatric Surgery	 Gastroenterology & Hepatology	 Endocrinology	 Psychiatry & Mental Health
 Dermatology & Aesthetics	 Urology	 Pediatric Surgery	 Neurosurgery	 Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine	 Diagnostic Radiology

Our Services



Empathic & Caring for everyone

FOR APPOINTMENT ☎ +92 33 22 474 474

or Visit: Pakland Tower 2, New Blue Area, Islamabad

www.generalpractice.com.pk | generalpracticeislamabad | +92 51 6160 474 | +92 51 6161 474

Published by Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, Printed at Rohani Art Press, Islamabad Ph: 051-8488394 Email: newsroomisbpost@gmail.com