

# Islamabad Post

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### Sri Lanka, Pakistan ties strengthened thru defense and trust

Detailed News On Page-08

### Punjab govt launches plan for homeless

Detailed News On Page-04



### Novak Djokovic reaches semis after victory

Detailed News On Page-06



## DG ISPR says

# 54 India-backed terrorists killed in Balochistan

### 42 security personnel martyred; "We will hunt down every terrorist and all their facilitators," says Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry

**RAWALPINDI:** Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry on Wednesday said that 54 India-backed terrorists were killed, while 42, including troops and civilians, embraced martyrdom while defending the motherland during three major terrorist incidents in Balochistan over the past four days. Addressing a press conference, Lt Gen Chaudhry said the first incident took place on the night between July 4 and 5 in Hanna Urak, where militants belonging to Fiza al-Khwarji attacked the local population. "Local residents fought back very valiantly and forced those terrorists belonging to Indian proxy Fiza al-Khwarji to flee," he said, adding that four civilians were martyred and six others were injured during the attack. The ISPR DG further said the second incident occurred on July 6 at a police checkpoint near the Mangi Dam pumping station. He said India-backed terrorists attacked the checkpoint, but police personnel fought the terrorists bravely and killed 15 militants during the initial engagement. The military spokesperson said nine police personnel

## Field Marshal says terrorism to be crushed

MEHTEAB FIRZADA

**RAWALPINDI:** Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces visited National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad today where he addressed the graduating officers of the National Security and War Course comprising participants from all services. In his address, the Field Marshal highlighted the evolving character of warfare and underscored centrality of strategic clarity and institutional professionalism in navigating complex strategic issues. He lauded the role of premier institutions like NDU in nurturing future military-civil leadership capable of mitigating hybrid, conventional and sub-conventional threats with foresight, confidence and resolve. The Field Marshal also highlighted that Pakistan Armed Forces were recalibrating their employment

and development strategies in line with the evolved character of warfare. The Field Marshal remarked that the Armed Forces remain fully cognizant of state-sponsored attempts by hostile intelligence agencies to destabilize Pakistan. Efforts of such proxies and networks, who operate under the tutelage of hostile intelligence agencies are futile and will not be allowed to undermine Pakistan's internal security and economic prosperity. He reiterated that terrorism emanating from across the borders will be crushed with full might of the state. The Armed Forces, with the support of the nation, will ensure that terrorist sanctuaries of these proxies along with their facilitators are completely dismantled. The Field Marshal remarked that there are not won through mere rhetoric or political sloganeering but through faith, unity and discipline.

## Briefs

### Croatian FM arrives today

**MAHNOOR ANSAR**  
**ISLAMABAD:** Visit of the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia H.E. Dr. Gordon Grlic Radman to Pakistan (09 July 2026). At the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/PM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, H.E. Dr. Gordon Grlic Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, will undertake an official visit to Pakistan on 09 July 2026. This will be the first-ever visit by a Croatian Foreign Minister to Pakistan. The DPM/PM and the visiting Foreign Minister will hold talks on the entire range of bilateral ties. They would discuss ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest including trade, investment, visa facilitation, education, defence, IT and maritime cooperation.

### PSX tumbles by 4600 points

**DNA**  
**KARACHI:** The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 index tumbled by over 4,600 points on Wednesday as US President Donald Trump said the ceasefire with Iran was "over". The KSE-100 index dropped by 4,628.19 points, or 2.48 per cent, to close at 181,629.26 points from the previous close of 186,255.55. The market saw a sharp decline after 1:30pm, reaching an intraday low of 179,504.34, down by 6,751.21 points compared to the previous close. The decline followed Trump's statement that the Pakistan-mediated memorandum of understanding to end the war with Iran was "over". Awais Akbar, director of research at AKD Securities, noted that investor sentiment weakened following Trump's comments, reigniting concerns over potential disruptions to oil supplies from the Middle East.

## Ziarat police officials suspended following terrorist attack on Dam

### Balochistan chief minister's aide for media and political affairs Shahid Rind, confirmed the SP's suspension said that the government had issued a notification in this regard

**BUREAU REPORT**  
**QUETTA:** The Ziarat superintendent of police (SP) has been suspended following a terrorist attack on the Mangi Dam police post, it emerged on Wednesday. On Tuesday, at least nine police officials, including two station house officers, embraced martyrdom in the attack, while 15 alleged terrorists were killed in a clear operation after the attack. Balochistan chief minister's aide for media and political affairs Shahid Rind, confirmed the SP's suspension said that the government had issued a notification in this regard. Separately, the provincial government also constituted a four-member inquiry committee to probe the incident. According to a notification dated July 7 and available, the committee was tasked with establishing the "complete sequence of events leading to, during and after the terrorist attack". The committee will also ascertain the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident and evaluate the deployment, preparedness, response, command, control and co-ordination of all concerned law enforcement and security agencies. It will also investigate if there was any "negligence, dereliction of duty, operational lapse, failure of command and control, lack of coordination or cowardice" by law enforcement officials. The committee was further tasked with assessing whether the current "standard operating procedures (SOPs) and security arrangements for the protection of the installation were adequate and strictly implemented". It will also fix responsibility on an individual or organisation, "wherever warranted, in accordance with the applicable law, rules and service regulations" and recommend subsequent disciplinary, administrative or legal action against the responsible actors. The committee will also "recommend immediate, medium-term and long-term measures for strengthening the security of Mangi Dam and other critical infrastructure across the province". The notification further added that the committee

## Pakistan Navy finds wreckage of cargo plane

### PM Shehbaz expresses sorrow over tragic incident in which "cargo aircraft crashed into Arabian sea and went missing"

**NAZIR SIVAL**  
**KARACHI:** The Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) are conducting a joint search operation to locate a missing private cargo aircraft. During the operation, which has been ongoing for more than 12 hours at sea, the wreckage of the aircraft was discovered approximately 53 nautical miles south of Ormara's coast. Rescue efforts remain underway to recover further evidence and search for the crew members. Both naval and aerial assets of the Pakistan Navy and PMSA are actively engaged in the operation. The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) said late on Tuesday that the cargo aircraft, carrying five crew members, went missing around 155 nautical miles west of Karachi after losing contact while flying from Sharjah. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed "deep sorrow, grief, and regret over the tragic incident in which a private cargo aircraft (K2 Airways) flying from Sharjah to Karachi crashed into the Arabian Sea and went missing". He offered condolences to the families of the five crew members on board and directed Pakistan's civil aviation authorities, the navy and the air force to intensify search and rescue operations and use all available resources. According to sources, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force and merchant vessels are participating in the ongoing search and rescue operation, with maritime and aerial resources deployed to locate the missing aircraft. The Pakistan Navy has dispatched the warship PNS Zulfiqar to join the search and rescue effort, while a Pakistan Air Force Saab surveillance aircraft is also taking part in the operation, according to sources. A Navy ATR aircraft has flown out from Turbat to assist, joining the wider search from the air. PNS Haman has also been dispatched to the affected area to take part in the search and rescue operation, sources said. In a statement, the cargo company's spokesperson said the aircraft was travelling from



**ISLAMABAD:** Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces visited National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad today where he addressed the graduating officers of the National Security and War Course comprising participants from all services. - DNA

## Karzai may help stabilize Afghanistan

SHAMIM SHAHID

**PESHAWAR:** One may disagree with former Afghan president Hamid Karzai's political approach or policies, but it is difficult to dismiss his enduring popularity and acceptability among many Afghans. At a time when Afghanistan continues to grapple with political isolation, economic hardship and humanitarian challenges, some observers believe the country requires a broadly acceptable political figure capable of engaging both domestic stakeholders and the international community.

## Middle East tensions

# Trump says interim accord with Iran to end war is "over"

### "To me, I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them," Trump said ahead of a NATO summit in the Turkish capital Ankara

**DNA**  
**ANKARA:** US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that the memorandum of understanding signed with Iran to end the conflict was "over", adding he didn't want to engage with Tehran. The interim ceasefire agreement signed between Washington and Tehran - under the mediation of Pakistan - was intended to provide a 60-day window for negotiations on a permanent agreement, but indirect talks in Qatar ended last week with no sign of headway and the US military unleashed a new wave of strikes against Iran on Tuesday. "To me, I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them," Trump said ahead of a NATO summit in the Turkish capital Ankara. "They're scum. They're sick people."

## NATO chief defends attacks on Iran

### Rutte said there could be no doubt over the "complete commitment of the United States to NATO"

**NEWS DESK**  
**ANKARA:** The new attacks by the US on Iran were "absolutely necessary," NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said on Wednesday. The US military unleashed a new wave of strikes against Iran on Tuesday and revoked a license allowing Tehran to sell oil after three tankers were hit by projectiles in the Strait of Hormuz, putting pressure on an already fragile ceasefire. "When you have a ceasefire and Iran is basically violating the ceasefire, I think it is totally crucial that the US forcefully react,"

**dunyo X Islamabad POST CENTRAL LINE DNA**

## JOINING HANDS FOR A CAUSE

Daily Islamabad POST / DNA News Agency & DUNYO News Agency Sign Historic MOU



**H.E. Ambassador Alisher Tukhtakov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan (L) and Mr. Anwar Muhammad Bhatti, Chief Editor Daily Islamabad POST / DNA News Agency (R) exchange MOU documents marking a landmark media partnership between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.**

Daily Islamabad POST/Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) and Uzbekistan's Official News Agency DUNYO have joined hands in a historic Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen bilateral media ties and promote diplomatic journalism between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

# Govt expands global skills drive for youth

He said investment in young people is essential for Pakistan's economic growth and long term competitiveness

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Chairman Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan attended a ceremony in Islamabad as the chief guest where honorary doctorate degrees were conferred. Addressing the gathering, he said the government is expanding cooperation with leading international institutions for youth development. He said the PMYP aims to equip Pakistani youth with world class skills in technical education, information technology and innovation. He added that the initiative is intended to create greater employment opportunities. The PMYP Chairman said the government is also working to build a future ready and globally competitive workforce. Rana Mashood said youth empowerment remains one of the government's top priorities. He said investment in young people is essential for Pakistan's economic growth and long term competitiveness.

He added that the PMYP is creating educational, technical and employment opportunities across the country. Recalling his tenure in Punjab, he said the province introduced Pakistan's first youth policy to empower young people. He said the policy focused on education and skills development. Khan said the Punjab Endowment Fund and Daanish Schools were established to provide access to quality education for deserving students. The PMYP Chairman said the programme is strengthening cooperation with leading international institutions to provide advanced training in technical education, information technology and innovation. He said several new skill development programmes have been launched to prepare young Pakistanis for emerging industries. Highlighting rapid technological change, he said Pakistan is

among the few countries developing an artificial intelligence curriculum. He said the initiative will help young Pakistanis compete in the global digital economy. Turning to agriculture, Rana Mashood said Pakistan has significantly increased olive cultivation and production. He said Pakistani olives are recognised among the world's finest. Stressing the need for greater value addition to agricultural products, he said it would boost exports and improve farmers' incomes. He also highlighted the importance of startups and innovation. He said the government has made both sectors a key priority. He added that Pakistan is establishing partnerships with Chinese technical universities to strengthen knowledge transfer and skills development. He concluded by saying that a highly skilled workforce is essential to maximise the benefits of these partnerships.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Maliki called on Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, on Wednesday. DNA

**More than 200 passengers rescued in Lower Chitral**

DNA

PESHAWAR: Rescue 1122 in Lower Chitral safely evacuated more than 200 passengers after flash floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains blocked the Dosh-Ashret Road at several locations with debris and mudslides, leaving numerous vehicles stranded. According to Rescue 1122 on Wednesday, under the supervision of the District Emergency Officer, Rescue 1122 launched an immediate response operation. First responders stationed at the Sheshi Koh and Deegusar watch points initiated rescue efforts, while additional teams from the district headquarters were dispatched to the affected areas.

## Lok Virsa starts singing training programme

The initiative forms part of Lok Virsa's continued efforts to preserve the country's intangible cultural heritage and encourage young talent to pursue traditional and contemporary music through structured learning

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa), working under National Heritage and Culture Division, has launched a three-month singing training programme aimed at preserving and promoting Pakistan's rich musical heritage by providing aspiring vocalists with professional training in diverse musical genres. The programme is open to beginners as well as aspiring singers and will offer instruction in classical singing, traditional ghazals, Pakistani folk music, modern songs and contemporary singing. The initiative forms part of Lok Virsa's continued

efforts to preserve the country's intangible cultural heritage and encourage young talent to pursue traditional and contemporary music through structured learning. According to Lok Virsa, music instructor Waiz Ali will conduct classes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, while Sohail Jehangir will hold sessions on Saturdays and Sundays. The three-month course will comprise two classes per week, providing participants with practical vocal training and exposure to different styles of Pakistani music. The monthly fee has been fixed at Rs5,000 per student. Lok Virsa said the programme is designed to help participants improve their vocal techniques, build confidence in performance and develop a deeper understanding of Pakistan's musical traditions. The interested candidates can register through the online registration form available at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1F8MjQLSc0YpRnRkGCA-02UGABSDyqyAWIXE2Lnit7YkHjV5X4g/viewform>. Lok Virsa has encouraged aspiring singers and music enthusiasts to apply for the programme, describing it as an opportunity to receive professional training. — AFP

**Over 101 companies registered to facilitate potato exports**

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research was informed on Wednesday that, in compliance with its earlier directions, 101 companies had been registered with the Russian Federation by July 7, 2026, to facilitate potato exports following the earlier import restrictions. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Syed Tariq Hussain in the chair and discussed matters relating to agriculture sector development as well as promoting the exports of the agro-based commodities from the country, said a press release. The committee directed the ministry to take immediate measures to export the existing surplus potato stock to the Russian market to ensure farmers receive fair and remunerative prices. To improve national food security and institutional coordination, the committee recommended the establishment of a centralized inter-ministerial and inter-provincial coordination cell at the federal level to strengthen collaboration on food security, regulatory oversight, market monitoring, export facilitation and the prevention of cross-border smuggling. The Secretary, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, informed the committee that the PCI for the proposed initiative had been finalized and would be implemented within three months. The committee decided to review progress on the initiative after the stipulated period. The committee also sought an explanation from the ministry regarding the exclusion of the joint project of PAFRC and Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, for the establishment of the Dates Research Center at Khairpur from the PSDP 2026-27.—AFP

## PARD trains govt officials on disaster risk reduction

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) here on Wednesday organized a daylong training session for officials from federal and provincial government departments on strengthening community resilience through disaster risk reduction (DRR), emergency response, and relief management. Officials from various federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government organizations including Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs), and district administrations attended the training. Participants were briefed on the identification and resolution of issues related to disaster risk reduction, government policies for mitigating natural and man-made disasters, and strategies for responding to hazards such as earthquakes, floods, forest fires, and Glacial Lake

Outburst Floods (GLOFs). PDMA Adviser on disaster risk management, Ismail Khan Yousafzai, highlighted various types of disasters as well as hazards and outlined the government's efforts to mitigate their impact. He said that in the event of disasters such as floods or earthquakes, the immediate priority is rescue operations, followed by rehabilitation and reconstruction. He stressed that enhanced coordination, effective planning, and close collaboration among government departments and relief organizations could significantly reduce human casualties and economic losses during natural and man-made disasters. The impact of major disasters such as the devastating 2005 earthquake, the 2019 floods, TTPs and the COVID-19 pandemic could be minimized through collective efforts by communities and government institutions," he said. Ismail Yousafzai said the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the country's relief disaster management system were established under the National Disaster Management Act, 2016. He said the primary role of PDMA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is to strengthen disaster preparedness and management across the province, with emphasis on prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. He added that the authority also serves as the lead agency for coordinating relief operations, providing assistance to affected communities, and managing emergency situations. Ismail Yousafzai said that districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are vulnerable to disasters, including floods, forest fires, GLOFs, heatwaves and droughts, due to the province's geography and climate-induced weather variations. He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the first province to approve a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policy through its provincial cabinet. Under the policy, a Disaster Risk Management Fund (DRMF) will be established to ensure the timely provision of relief to disaster-affected people in future.—APP

## Awareness campaign to prevent drowning incidents in KP

ABBOTABAD: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Department has launched a province-wide awareness campaign to promote water safety among tourists following recent drowning incidents in Swat, Narun, and other tourist destinations. As part of the campaign, an awareness drive was conducted at the Harro River in Aboottabad under the supervision of Culture and Tourism Officer Saima Inzran. Tourism Police officers and Rescue 1122 personnel participated in the activity, educating visitors about the dangers of flash floods and strong water currents. During the campaign, Tourism Police and Rescue 1122 officials evacuated children and women who were present in the river and shifted them to safer locations. They also distributed informational material and urged tourists to avoid entering fast-flowing water. Speaking to the media, Culture and Tourism Officer Saima Inzran said the campaign had been launched on the directives of the Advisor to the Chief Minister for Tourism, Malik Aijaz, Secretary Tourism Saeed Hassan, and the Director General of Tourism, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She said the initiative aims to prevent tragic incidents like those reported in Swat, Saifallah Lake, Narun, and other tourist destinations by raising awareness among visitors. She warned that heavy monsoon rains and flooding in rivers and streams have been forecast and advised tourists to stay away from swollen water bodies. She noted that several fatal incidents have occurred in recent years when visitors ventured into rivers to take photographs, selfies, or record TikTok videos.—APP

## PRCS, WWF launch Nature based climate solutions

ISLAMABAD: Recognizing the growing role of Nature-based Solutions (NBS) in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and disaster risks, WWF-Pakistan in collaboration with Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), brought together senior government leaders, policymakers, development partners, academics, civil society organizations, and the private sector, to identify practical pathways for scaling up Nature-based Solutions (NBS) across Pakistan during a two-day national seminar held in Islamabad. The seminar provided a national platform to strengthen partnerships and accelerate the integration of NBS into climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development efforts. Amir Mohyuddin, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination MoCC & EC, the chief guest of the session, highlighted the changing flood dynamics in Pakistan with monsoon patterns shifting westwards and floods increasingly occurring as GLOFs and urban flooding. He outlined the Ministry's efforts to address these challenges, appreciated the contributions of WWF-Pakistan and PRCS in promoting innovative Nature-based Solutions (NBS), and emphasized that healthy forests, rangelands, wetlands, and protected areas are vital for biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. Speaking on the occasion, Hamid Naqi Khan, Director General, WWF-Pakistan, said that WWF-Pakistan has been developing and scaling Nature-based Solutions, including floating treatment wetlands, gabion bands, check dams and recharge wells, to improve water security, reduce flood risks, restore ecosystems and strengthen climate resilience.—APP

**MILITARY LANDS & CANTONMENTS DEPT**  
**RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT BOARD**  
The Mall, Rawalpindi Cantt  
Tel: 051-9274401-04 Fax No.: 051-9274407

**RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT BOARD (RCB)**  
**E-AUCTION NOTICE**

**E-AUCTION FOR DISPOSAL OF PARKING FEE COLLECTION RIGHTS - YEAR 2026-2027 THROUGH EPADS (PPRA)(D10250)**

Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) invites electronic bids through the E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (EPADS) Version 2.0 for the auction/disposal of Parking Fee Collection Rights for the Year 2026-2027 at various locations of Rawalpindi Cantonment, in accordance with the provisions of PPRA Rules, 2004, and other applicable Government regulations. Interested bidders/firms shall submit their bids electronically through EPADS only. Detailed bidding documents, reserve prices, bid security requirements, auction schedule, eligibility criteria, and complete terms & conditions are available on the EPADS and PPRA websites. Only those bidders who are registered with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), appearing on the Active Taxpayer List (ATL), and registered on EPADS Version 2.0 shall be eligible to participate in the e-auction process. The detailed information, reserve prices, bid security, auction schedule, and terms & conditions are available on EPADS and PPRA websites.

| Parking Fee                                 |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Bus @ Rs.200/- per day                   | 3. MiniBus/Wagon @ Rs.150/- per day |  |
| 2. Suzuki/Pickup @ Rs.100/- per day         | 4. Taxi/Rickshaw @ Rs.30/- per day  |  |
| Points                                      |                                     |  |
| 1. G.P.O Chowk on road leading Mall Plaza   | 5. Baraf Khana Chowk                |  |
| 2. G.P.O Chowk Haider Road Saddar Rwp Cantt | 6. Kiyam Road                       |  |
| 3. Railway Station Road                     | 7. O.P. No.22                       |  |
| 4. Chur Chowk                               | 8. -                                |  |

**TERMS & CONDITIONS**

- All interested bidders must be registered with EPADS Version 2.0 before participation in the auction. Registration can be completed at <https://www.epads.gov.pk/register>
- Bids shall be submitted electronically through EPADS only. Manual, physical, or hardcopy bids shall not be accepted.
- Bidders shall participate online in the e-auction through their EPADS v2.0 accounts.
- The e-auction shall remain open till Monday, 28 Jul 2026 at 02:00 PM and the bids shall be opened/evaluated online on the same day at 02:00 PM.
- During the e-auction process, bidders may improve/increase their bids multiple times until the closing time. After expiry of the closing time, EPADS v2.0 shall automatically declare the highest evaluated responsive bidder as the successful bidder, subject to approval of the competent authority.
- Each bidder shall submit a Bid Security amounting to Rs. 1,200,000/- in the form of Pay Order / Bank Draft / Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) in favor of:
  - "Cantonment Executive Officer, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board"
  - The original bid security instrument must reach the office of RCB before the bid closing date and time. Cash payments shall not be accepted.
- The auction shall be conducted for a period of one (01) year.
- The successful bidder shall deposit 25% (one-fourth) of the annual auction amount immediately after approval of the bid. In case of failure, the bid shall be rejected and the bid security shall be forfeited in favor of RCB.
- The security deposit shall be returned after successful completion of the contract and shall not be adjusted against monthly installments.
- The bid security of the second highest bidder shall be returned after approval of the bid by the competent authority.
- After approval of the bid, the first monthly installment shall be deposited within seven (07) days. The successful bidder shall execute a contract agreement with Rawalpindi Cantonment Board at its own cost and expense.
- In case of non-execution of the agreement or non-compliance with contractual obligations, the bid security shall be forfeited.
- If the contractor defaults during the contract period, the contract may be re-auctioned. Any financial loss incurred due to re-auction at a lower amount shall be recoverable from the defaulting contractor.
- Parking fee shall be collected strictly according to the approved rates fixed by Rawalpindi Cantonment Board.
- The successful bidder shall provide post dated cheques for the remaining eleven (11) monthly installments before execution of the contract agreement.
- In case any cheque is dishonored, the contractor's security deposit shall be forfeited and further legal/contractual action may be initiated.
- No claim for compensation or damages shall be entertained from the successful bidder under any circumstances.
- In case of overcharging from the public, the contractor shall be liable to penalty/fine, and in case of repeated violations, the contract may be cancelled and the security deposit forfeited.
- Bid securities of unsuccessful bidders shall be returned without interest after completion of the auction process in accordance with PPRA Rules.
- The highest evaluated responsive bidder shall be declared successful subject to approval by the competent authority.
- In case the successful bidder fails to deposit the required auction amount within the prescribed time, the bid security shall be forfeited and the bidder may be blacklisted/debarred under PPRA Rules.
- All applicable taxes, duties, levies, stamp duties, and Government charges including Income Tax shall be deducted/recovered as per prevailing Government rules and regulations.
- RCB reserves the right to reject any or all bids, cancel the auction process, or annul any bid in accordance with PPRA Rules without assigning any reason prior to acceptance of the bid.
- Any bidder found involved in fraudulent practices, submission of false documents, collusion, or violation of PPRA Rules shall be liable for blacklisting/debarment under applicable laws and PPRA regulations.
- In accordance with Rule 48 of PPRA Rules, 2004, a Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) has been constituted. The notification is available on the procuring agency's website and EPADS portal.
- This E-Auction Notice is also available on PPRA Website: <https://ppra.gov.pk> and EPADS Portal: <https://eprocure.gov.pk>

**Cantonment Executive Officer**  
**Rawalpindi Cantt** PID(1)249/26

**National Days and Armed Forces Days**

**JULY**

- July 01/Japan Self Defence Day
- July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day
- July 01 / Canada National Day
- July 01/Somalia Independence Day
- July 04/USA Independence Day
- July 05/Algeria Independence Day
- July 09/Argentine Independence Day
- July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day
- July 14/France National Day
- July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday
- 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-445122
- Motorway Police.....92866044
- Motorway Police-9270601-20
- Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
- Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

- Enquiry**
- Edhi Ambulance.....315
  - PIA Flight Info.....114
  - PIA Cargo.....9280979
  - Railway Enquiry.....117
  - Railway Exchange 9270831-5
  - WASA Rawalpindi: 5555489
  - CAA.....9281062

- Hospitals**
- CMH.....5611111
  - MH.....551116
  - Coast Hospital.....9270907-11
  - DIQ.....5556311-4
  - RCH.....9290301-7
  - Holy Family.....9290322-7
  - PIMS.....9281170-79
  - Polyclinic.....9218300-09
  - Shifa International 4603666

- Departments**
- CDA.....9221334-43
  - CDA.....9208301-44
  - Met Office.....9256360-6
  - RIDA.....5555864
  - TMA.....5770886
  - Costume Board 9270151-3
- Islamabad Metropolitan**
- Corporation.....9209224
  - Potstar Town.....9209224
  - Rawal Town.....5773343
- Water Tank**
- Islamabad.....03215744480



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Indonesia stood by his wife as she donated blood during a blood donation camp organized at the Indonesian Embassy. The event highlighted the importance of humanitarian service and community support, with embassy staff and participants joining in the effort to encourage voluntary blood donation.—DNA

## ICCI lauds PM 's initiative to build robust SME ecosystem

ICCI Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry also appreciated the Prime Minister's proactive approach towards strengthening the SME sector, stating that timely and affordable financing is indispensable for the survival and expansion of small businesses

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Acting President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Tahir Ayub, has warmly welcomed Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's directives for formulating a comprehensive strategy, in co-ordination with the State Bank of Pakistan and commercial banks, to improve Small and Medium Enterprises' (SMEs) access to finance. He termed the Prime Minister's vision a timely and encouraging step towards revitalizing the SME sector, which serves as the backbone of Pakistan's economy and plays a pivotal role in employment generation, exports and sustainable economic growth. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Tahir Ayub said that easier access to affordable financing has long remained one of the biggest challenges confront-



ing SMEs. He noted that the Prime Minister's emphasis on facilitating bank lending, developing dedicated financial products for SMEs and removing impediments to their growth reflects a clear commitment to creating a business-friendly environment. He expressed confidence that these initiatives would enable thousands of small businesses to modernize their operations, enhance productivity and strengthen Pakistan's export competitiveness. The Acting President appreciated the Prime Minister's special focus on supporting farmers engaged in value addition and processing of agricultural produce and fruits. He observed that facilitating agro-based SMEs through financial access, technical guidance and awareness would significantly increase rural incomes, reduce post-harvest losses and expand the country's export basket. He reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to working closely with the government, SMEEDA, the State Bank of Pakistan and the banking sector to promote entrepreneurship.

## BS Programs expansion in govt colleges welcomed

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Directorate of Education's (FDE) decision to open admissions for the 2026 academic session and restore several discontinued BS programmes in Federal Government colleges has been widely welcomed by teachers, who describe the move as a major step towards strengthening affordable higher education in Islamabad. FDE recently invited online applications for its 4-Year BS and 2-Year BS Lateral Entry programmes in 17 public colleges af-

filiated with Quaid-i-Azam University. Applications will remain open until 15 July 2026. Resultawaiting students of HNSC have also been allowed to apply for admission. Teachers particularly appreciated the restoration of several BS programmes in boys' colleges of the former Federal Government (FGO) setup, saying the decision would significantly benefit male students of Islamabad by providing access to quality, globally competitive education at a fraction of the cost charged by many

universities. Under the new admissions plan, Islamabad Model Postgraduate College H8 has been allowed to resume BS Geography alongside continuing BS Environmental Sciences. Similarly, Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) H9 has been permitted to restart BS Islamic Studies after a one-year gap, while IMCB H10 will relaunch BS English and introduce a new BS Data Science programme in addition to its existing Statistics discipline.—APP

## E-sports policy launched to drive digital economy

It added that the initiative will help enhance Pakistan's global standing in the fast growing E sports industry while supporting the country's broader digital transformation agenda

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet on Wednesday approved Pakistan's first National E sports Policy, paving the way for the formal recognition and regulation of competitive gaming as a professional, educational and economic sector. Developed by the Pakistan E sports Task Force under the chairmanship of Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, the policy aims to strengthen the digital economy, create employment opportunities and position Pakistan as a regional hub for E sports. The policy establishes a comprehensive national framework for the growth of the E sports sector through collaboration among government institutions, the private sector, academia, telecom operators, game publishers and professional players. It seeks to build a modern, inclusive and internationally competitive E sports ecosystem by strengthening digital and institutional infrastructure and introducing a structured governance mechanism. Under the policy, the government will establish the E sports Federation of Pakistan to regulate and promote the sector. It also envisages structured competitive pathways for players, stronger institutional support and measures to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and digital skills development. The policy places particular emphasis on education and training in game development, animation, visual effects (VFX) and other emerging technologies to prepare young Pakistanis for careers in the rapidly expanding digital economy. It also promotes responsible gaming practices and includes measures to safeguard the wellbeing of young players while encouraging wider youth participation. According to the PMYP, the policy was developed under the guidance of the Pakistan E-sports Task Force constituted by the Prime Minister. Its formulation also benefited from technical input and international best practices shared by the British E-sports Federation and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The government aims to position Pakistan as a leading regional destination for E-sports by expanding digital infrastructure, strengthening governance, attracting international partnerships and supporting the growth of the local gaming industry. The Prime Minister's Youth Programme said the approval of the policy marks a major step towards creating new opportunities for skills development, employment and entrepreneurship. It added that the initiative will help enhance Pakistan's global standing in the fast growing E sports industry while supporting the country's broader digital transformation agenda.—APP

## EPCO turns Rs 36b loss into Rs1.05b profit

ISLAMABAD: The Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) has achieved a remarkable financial turnaround, converting a loss of Rs 36 billion in 2023-24 into a profit of Rs 1.05 billion in 2025-26. As per the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), the turnaround of one of Pakistan's largest and most difficult power distribution companies was done under the leadership of Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, said a press release issued on Wednesday. The recovery was gradual and sustained rather than a one-off correction, it added. "Line losses reduced from 15.2 percent to 11.9 percent over the same period, while recovery improved from 98.6 percent to 104.8 percent — figures that reflect tighter billing, reduced theft, and stronger consumer confidence." The turnaround is attributed to a deliberate set of reforms, including the appointment of an independent Board of Directors insulated from day-to-day interference, consistent policy guidance and performance monitoring from the Ministry, automation and meterization of the network, and a renewed focus on consumer service. The approach marks a shift from ad hoc intervention to structural, governance-led reform across the DISCO. The Minister said MEPCO's result is a template rather than an exception, and that the same combination of independent governance, transparency, and technology-led monitoring is being extended across other distribution companies as part of a wider effort to end circular debt and put the power sector on a sustainable path of growth. —APP

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Briefs Edhi role model for youth

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, paying tribute to renowned humanitarian and social figure Abdul Sattar Edhi on his 10th death anniversary, said that personalities like him served as a role model for the younger generation to drive social reform. The prime minister, in his message on the anniversary, said that the late Edhi proved that every individual in the society could play a constructive role in social reform on their own. Laying his valuable national and welfare services, the prime minister said that a humanitarian and advocate for public service like Abdul Sattar Edhi was undoubtedly a matter of pride and a national asset for the country. The prime minister said that Edhi's sincere commitment to public welfare helped highlight the social dimensions of problem-solving, calling his remarkable services a remarkable part of Pakistan's social fabric. He said that Edhi's public services held a prominent position in promoting positive values in society, such as empathy, tolerance, and mutual harmony. Praying for peace for the departed soul of Edhi, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that his social services would always be remembered. —APP

AJGL monthly match 2026

ISLAMABAD: The Ace Junior Golf League (AJGL) will organise its Monthly Match 2026 at the Lahore Garrison Golf Club on July 21, providing a competitive platform for young golfers from across the country. According to the organisers, the event is open to both AJGL members and non-members from any city. Entries will be accepted until July 20, while the tournament committee reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning a reason. The championship will feature four age-based categories: Birdie (6-10 years), Eagle (10-14 years), Albatross (14-18 years), and Elite (18-21 years). The Birdie category will be played over nine holes with a yardage of 2,000-3,000 yards, while the Eagle and Albatross categories will compete over 18 holes with yardages of 4,500-5,000 and 5,000-6,000 yards, respectively. The Elite category will also be contested over 18 holes on a course exceeding 6,000 yards. —APP

Punjab govt to launch 'Apna Ghar, Manfooz Ghar scheme

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired an important meeting on 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' and 'Apni Zameen Apna Ghar' programmes; in which she was presented a report on the remarkable success of 'Punjab Pakistan Pavilion' in Baku; and a special documentary in this regard was screened

DNA

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gramme has been further expanded, as 02 new categories have been introduced under 'Apna Ghar, Manfooz Ghar' programme, under which Rs. 5 lakh will be given for renovation of dilapidated houses with weak roofs and damaged structures; and Rs. 10 lakh will be given on interest-free easy instalments for construction of a new building storey or additional floor. Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired an important meeting on 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' and 'Apni Zameen Apna Ghar' programmes; in which she was presented a report on the remarkable success of 'Punjab Pakistan Pavilion' in Baku; and a special documentary in this regard was screened. She noted that after Kahna incident, neither a fake committee was formed nor was the file buried, rather a straight decision was taken and relief was provided straight to the bereaved families. She said that with the success of 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar', a new chapter has begun in the history of Punjab, as over 100,000 homes have been built across the province; and now existing homes will be made safe. She added that scope of 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' pro-

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ISLAMABAD: A worker busy installing CCTV camera for safety purpose on bridge near zero point

Pakistan, Sri Lanka agree to deepen cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi, held a bilateral meeting with his Sri Lankan counterpart, Anand Wijesingha, at the United Nations Headquarters, where the two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation across a range of security and law enforcement sectors. The meeting focused on enhancing coordination in the fight against narcotics trafficking, with both ministers reaffirming their commitment to closer collaboration to curb the transnational drug trade. Recognizing the im-

portance of capacity building, the two sides also agreed to expand cooperation in police training through the exchange of expertise and professional development initiatives. Pakistan and Sri Lanka further agreed to intensify joint efforts to combat illegal immigration and prevent travel on forged passports. As part of the understanding, the heads of immigration authorities of both countries will establish immediate contact to improve operational coordination and information sharing. The ministers also discussed the possibility of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening cooperation against or-

ganized criminal networks and money laundering, reflecting a shared resolve to tackle cross-border crime through institutional collaboration. To ensure sustained engagement, both sides agreed to establish a Joint Working Group between their respective interior ministries to oversee and advance bilateral cooperation in security-related matters. The meeting also concluded with an understanding to address visa-related issues on a priority basis, underscoring the commitment of both countries to facilitate smoother bilateral engagement while reinforcing security cooperation.

Pakistani student wins Progress Star Award at Chinese University

With countries around the world, including Pakistan, rapidly advancing digitalization, he sees immense potential for youth from Balochistan and other under-served regions to contribute to this transformation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 20-year-old Pakistani student has been recognized for academic excellence in China, receiving a "Progress Star" award for outstanding preparatory overseas students at Northeast Normal University (NENU) for the second semester of the 2025-2026 academic year. China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday, Sanaulah, a native of Musakhel district in Balochistan, was honored by the university's preparatory school for overseas students on July 1 for his hard working performance and dedication during his Chinese language studies at NENU from September 2025 to July 2026. NENU is the first institution in Northeast China authorized to administer the national HSK and among the first to offer the Business Chinese Test. Sanaulah has already passed HSK4, demonstrating his readiness for academic studies in Chinese. "Our curriculum is comprehensive, improving all skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing," Sanaulah said of his learning experience. Beyond the classroom, the university has built an immersive learning environment that integrates calligraphy competitions, recitation contests, singing competitions, traditional Chinese cultural experiences and visits to historical sites. He noted that these activities helped him apply Chinese in practice and deepened his interest in the language, as well as his understanding and appreciation of China. He will begin his undergraduate studies in Computer Science at Harbin Engineering University (HEU), which is renowned for its strengths in marine engineering and computer science, this September. "I want to work for space missions in the future," Sanaulah said, explaining his choice of computer science as his major. His special fields of interest are machine learning, robotics, and cybersecurity. With countries around the world, including Pakistan, rapidly advancing digitalization, he sees immense potential for youth from Balochistan and other under-served regions to contribute to this transformation.

PAC organizes calligraphy workshop

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi organized a specialized calligraphy workshop as part of its ongoing summer activities to provide traditional art forms among the youth. The workshop was conducted by renowned calligrapher Azeem Iqbal, who highlighted the rich history and cultural significance of Islamic calligraphy while providing hands-on training to the participants. The attendees enthusiastically took part in the practical sessions and appreciated the opportunity to learn the intricacies of the craft under expert guidance. Speaking on the occasion, Director of the Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi, Muhammad Shakoor, announced that more creative workshops and cultural activities are in the pipeline as part of the council's extensive summer program aimed at fostering creativity and artistic skills among the younger generation. —APP

President, PM offer condolences to China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of lives and widespread destruction caused by devastating storms, tornadoes, landslides and heavy rains in China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, as well as Hubei and Gansu provinces. "Deeply saddened by the devastating floods and heavy rains afflicting our Chinese brothers and sisters, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones and express Pakistan's full solidarity with the people of China during this difficult time. Our ironclad friendship remains steadfast," President Asif Zardari said in a statement. The prime minister, in a separate statement extended, on behalf of the people of Pakistan, heartfelt condolences to President Xi Jinping, the Government and the people of China, especially the bereaved families. "We stand in solidarity with our Chinese brothers and sisters during this difficult time and pray for the swift recovery of the injured and the success of ongoing rescue efforts," the prime minister added.

HEC, Wuhan varsity to expand Pak-China University coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and China's Wuhan Textile University (WTU) have agreed to facilitate new institutional partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to expand academic and research collaboration between universities in the two countries. The understanding was reached during a meeting in Islamabad between HEC officials and a high-level delegation from WTU's School of Biomedical Engineering, led by HEC Executive Director Dr. Zia Ul Haq. Under the agreed framework, HEC will identify Pakistani universities interested in establishing undergraduate academic collaboration with WTU. Gender Pro reported on Wednesday. The participating institutions will subsequently formalize their partnerships through MoUs covering academic cooperation, research, and exchange programs. The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation through joint research, faculty and student exchanges, joint supervision of postgraduate students, sandwich programs, and undergraduate-level collaboration. Dr. Zia Ul Haq

reaffirmed HEC's commitment to expanding strategic international partnerships that support academic excellence, research, institutional capacity building, and knowledge exchange. He highlighted the importance of closer engagement between Pakistani and Chinese higher education institutions. The WTU delegation presented the university's academic strengths in textile and fibre technology, sensor technology, and genetic engineering. It also highlighted its existing collaborations with the National University of Technology (NUTECH) and the Institute of Space Technology (IST), while expressing interest in establishing partnerships with more Pakistani universities. The Chinese delegation also proposed promoting Chinese language programs in Pakistani universities to improve access to undergraduate education opportunities in China and enhance graduates' employment prospects. Both sides also agreed to explore faculty exchange opportunities, collaboration on Chinese language programs—including possible cooperation with the National University of Modern Languages (NUML)—and short-term certification and technical training programs for university technicians.

IRS hosts seminar to mark Communist Party of China 105th anniversary

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted a special seminar to commemorate the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), titled "China's Remarkable Socioeconomic Transformation under the Leadership of the CPC and its Growing Contributions to Global Public Good". Moderated by Mr. Nadeem Jaffer, Head of the China Program, the seminar brought together senior diplomats, government officials, scholars, youth, and media. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, described China's rise as one of the most remarkable transformations in contemporary history, lifting around 800 million people out of poverty and

raising per capita income from about 156 US dollars in the 1970s to close to 13400 US dollars today, and leaping towards modernization. He identified mercantilism as the single most important lesson of China's development, noting that several of its top leaders had engineering backgrounds, and pointed to Beijing's dramatic improvement in air quality as a symbol of the change. Pakistan and China, he said, were "partners in peace, partners in progress, and development partners." Professor Gao Jun, Secretary General at Shanghai International Studies University, stated that China's path to modernization, achieved through a governance model rooted in China's own realities, has proved Putunghua's claim wrong that modernization would ultimately take the form of Westernization. Chinese modernization, he stressed, is not a template to be copied but an

example that every nation must adapt to its own social realities. Professor Gao drew a philosophical distinction between Western and Chinese governance under CPC, saying that instead of falling into the trap of a confrontational relationship, a civilian versus state, Chinese governance adheres to a "people-oriented" principle which centers on "the people" as a collective rather than on the individual citizen, and which measures policy by whether the people as a whole support and approve of it. Ambassador Masood Khalid, Pakistan's former ambassador to China, traced the CPC's journey from its founding in Shanghai in 1921 to the current 10th Five-Year Plan. He highlighted China's system of five-year planning, begun in 1953, as systematic, scientific, and pragmatic, with built-in course correction and a strong emphasis on data accuracy.

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## Revisiting Hobbes in Pakistan's Constitutional Debate

Dr. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEDI

THE 26th Constitutional Amendment has entered Pakistan's constitutional discourse at a moment when questions of institutional balance, governance efficiency and political stability remain deeply contested. Beyond legal drafting and parliamentary arithmetic, it invites a broader intellectual reflection on the nature of authority itself and the conditions under which a state sustains order. Read through the lens of Thomas Hobbes, the amendment becomes more than a procedural adjustment; it appears as part of an enduring struggle to reconcile power, legitimacy and stability within an evolving constitutional framework. Hobbes wrote in a time of civil war and political fragmentation in England, where competing centres of power produced instability and fear. His central concern was not liberty in abstraction, but the avoidance of disorder. In his famous formulation, life without a strong and recognised sovereign authority would descend into a condition where uncertainty dominates and collective life becomes fragile. In such a "state of nature," political actors act primarily in pursuit of their own interests, and the absence of a binding authority makes resolution of disputes difficult, if not impossible. This perspective offers a useful, though not complete, way of reading Pakistan's constitutional development. The state has repeatedly experienced tensions among institutions, shifting alignments of political forces, and periodic confrontations over the limits of authority. In such an environment, constitutional amendments are often justified as mechanisms to clarify roles, reduce friction and strengthen governance. The 26th Constitutional Amendment is no exception. Its supporters present it as an attempt to streamline institutional functioning, reduce ambiguity in decision-making structures, and reinforce the capacity of the state to govern effectively. From a Hobbesian standpoint, such arguments carry a certain logical appeal. For Hobbes, political order precedes all other political goods. Economic development, civil liberties and institutional refinement all depend on a prior condition of stability. Where institutions are locked in confrontation, governance becomes inconsistent and authority fragmented. In that sense, any constitutional intervention that reduces institutional conflict and enhances predictability in governance could be seen as moving in the direction Hobbes would have considered desirable: the preservation of peace through consolidated authority. Yet Hobbesian reasoning does not imply blind endorsement of authority for its own sake. The legitimacy of sovereignty, in Hobbes's framework, is grounded in an implicit contract. Individuals surrender certain freedoms to the state in exchange for protection from disorder and violence. The state, therefore, is not merely an instrument of power but a provider of security and predictability.

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Negotiation track...



## NATO Confronts Trump's Bullying

Qamar Bashir



Türkiye's position is equally important. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has directly opposed the provision of F-35 fighter aircraft and advanced fighter engines to Türkiye, warning that such transfers could disturb the Middle Eastern balance of power and weaken Israel's air superiority. Yet Trump arrived in Ankara signalling openness to restoring Türkiye's access to advanced American combat aircraft. On July 7, he announced the lifting of US defence sanctions on Türkiye and said Washington would consider the F-35 sale

increasingly forced to manage the temperament of the American presidency while struggling to manage the security of the Western world. The very architecture of the Ankara Summit reveals NATO's political discomfort. The alliance has already established the precedent of allowing its high-level meetings to President Donald Trump's well-reported aversion to prolonged diplomatic sessions. At The Hague, diplomats deliberately designed a single two-and-a-half-hour working session around his limited attention span and the fear of disruptive outbursts or an early departure. Ankara has retained the same philosophy of concession: although the summit formally stretches across July 7 and 8, the principal leaders' working session is expected to last only about three hours.

This is extraordinary for an alliance confronting simultaneous crises in Ukraine, Iran, the Strait of Hormuz, Greenland, the American military drawdown from Europe and growing uncertainty over the future of Article 5. NATO is not short of issues to discuss; it is short of political confidence that its most powerful leader will tolerate a prolonged and potentially contentious discussion. The compressed format is therefore not an administrative convenience. It is a symptom of an alliance increasingly managing the temperament of the American presidency while struggling to manage the security of the Western world. The official agenda sounds conventional: defence investment, increased military production and continued support for Ukraine. NATO's own summit programme emphasises progress towards the historic 5 per cent defence investment plan and the conversion of increased spending into production, cooperation and joint procurement. Leaders are expected to reaffirm collective defence while demonstrating that Europe is finally responding to Washington's demand for greater burden-sharing. But the real Ankara agenda is much larger than the official document. President Trump arrived with open grievances against European allies over their refusal to materially support the American-led war against Iran. He has publicly questioned the value of America's existing NATO commitment and argued that Washington gives far more to Europe than it receives in return. The Iran war has transformed an old argument over defence spending into a deeper dispute over political legitimacy. Europe's answer is equally significant. NATO's Article 5 is not a blank cheque obligating every ally to participate in every war initiated by one member outside the alliance's treaty area. Washington did not seek collective NATO authorisation before the Iran conflict. Several European governments therefore refused to convert an American-Israeli military

campaign into a NATO war. Trump interpreted their refusal as abandonment. Europeans viewed their decision as an exercise of sovereign judgement.

This difference goes to the heart of NATO's emerging crisis. The United States increasingly appears to define alliance solidarity as support for its global military priorities. Europe still sees NATO primarily as the shield of the Euro-Atlantic area against Russia. Washington wants burden-sharing, military access and political loyalty. Europe wants American deterrence but greater freedom to decide when and where it fights. These are no longer minor diplomatic differences. They are fundamental interpretations of the alliance itself. The Strait of Hormuz has now forced the Middle East directly onto the Ankara table. NATO foreign ministers are meeting Gulf counterparts from Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates amid continuing tensions over the strategic waterway. France and Britain have proposed a multinational maritime mission to facilitate safe navigation. The emerging U.S.-Iran peace framework has further complicated the strategic picture. Iran is no longer being treated merely as an isolated regional state. The war and the struggle over Hormuz have demonstrated its capacity to disrupt maritime trade, absorb enormous military punishment and impose costs on adversaries. Whether one supports Tehran or opposes it, this strategic reality cannot be ignored. The question confronting NATO is whether the West continues attempting to militarily break Iran or whether that durable Middle Eastern security architecture will eventually require negotiations with it. Türkiye's position is equally important. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has directly opposed the provision of F-35 fighter aircraft and advanced fighter engines to Türkiye, warning that such transfers could disturb the Middle Eastern balance of power and weaken Israel's air superiority. Yet Trump arrived in Ankara signalling openness to restoring Türkiye's access to advanced American combat aircraft. On July 7, he announced the lifting of U.S. defence sanctions on Türkiye and said Washington would consider the F-35 sale. The political language between Ankara and Israel has become exceptionally harsh. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan described Israel as a burden on humanity, prompting Israeli accusations of genocidal incitement. Netanyahu has simultaneously intensified his campaign against advanced weapons transfers to Türkiye. Behind these verbal exchanges lies a much larger strategic struggle: who will shape the post-Iran-war Middle East? The Gaza peace process adds another layer to this confrontation. Hamas, despite all the controversy surrounding it, has now taken a visible administrative step required by the peace framework. Israel, mean-

while, continues military operations in Gaza, and Netanyahu has previously directed Israeli forces to expand their territorial control. If a peace plan guaranteed and promoted by Washington is continuously eroded on the ground, the credibility of American diplomacy itself comes into question.

The widening distance between Trump and Netanyahu therefore deserves closer attention. Their relationship remains strategically important, but disagreement over Iran and Türkiye is becoming increasingly visible. Netanyahu has acknowledged occasional differences with Trump over Iran but has repeatedly opposed Washington's possible F-35 sale to Ankara. Trump's willingness to lift sanctions on Türkiye despite Israeli objections is an unmistakable demonstration that the American President is prepared, at least on certain issues, to pursue interests that do not fully correspond to Netanyahu's preferences. While the Middle East consumes NATO's attention, Ukraine remains the alliance's most immediate European security crisis. Russian missile and drone attacks have intensified, with deadly strikes around Kyiv immediately before the summit. Ukraine urgently needs advanced interceptors, particularly against ballistic missiles. Yet the Iran war has exposed Western shortages of sophisticated air-defence systems and precision munitions. The same limited stocks are required to protect Israel, defend American forces and support Ukraine. The summit may approve billions in arms contracts. NATO has already showcased at least \$50 billion in defence deals. Leaders may reaffirm their "ironclad commitment" to collective defence. They will speak of Ukraine, industrial production and the percent spending target. The photographs will display unity. But photographs cannot conceal strategic drift. The most revealing features of Ankara may be its compressed working session, the carefully managed encounters with Trump, the anxiety over American troop reductions, the disagreement over Iran, the contest between Türkiye and Israel, the struggle over Hormuz, the shortage of weapons for Ukraine and the extraordinary unresolved dispute over Greenland. History may therefore remember Ankara not as the summit where NATO collapsed, but as the moment when Europe quietly began imagining NATO—and its own security—without unquestioned American leadership.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
Former Press Minister,  
Embassy of Pakistan to France  
Former Press Secretary,  
Former MD, SRRC | Michigan, USA

## The Perils of Power in Sports: From Biased Umpires to Presidential Calls

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Critics rightly observe that FIFA appears to have strained its own regulations. The automatic suspension following a red card stands enshrined in multiple articles of the disciplinary code and World Cup regulations. By setting aside this provision after presidential intercession, the governing body has invited accusations of bending rules to accommodate...

IN the 1980s, when bilateral cricket between India and Pakistan burned with unmatched intensity, the two nations met not only as rivals on the field but as embodiments of national pride. Series were contested on home soil, featuring five Test matches and a handful of One-Day Internationals, with local umpires presiding over the proceedings. On the 13th of March 1987, at Bangalore's Chinnayana Stadium, Pakistan, led by Imran Khan, faced India in a Test match overseen by umpires RB Gupta and WK Ramaswamy. Pakistan's spinners, Iqbal Qasim and Tauseef Ahmed, delivered masterly spells, their every appeal for leg-before-wicket or caught behind resounding through the ground. Yet the umpires appeared resolute in their reluctance to dismiss the Indian stalwarts Sun Gavaskar and Gundappa Viswanath. Despite such apparent partiality, Pakistan prevailed by a narrow margin of sixteen runs and claimed the series by a single victory. The episode laid bare a troubling truth: when officials from the host nation wield the power of decision, fairness may yield to favouritism. Another Indian umpire, long remembered in cricketing lore as "Umpire Ambaji," earned notoriety for his readiness to raise his finger against Pakistani batsmen while sparing his countrymen. Such conduct wounds the very soul of sport, breeding resentment among fans and eroding the trust that binds competitors and spectators alike. In time, the outcry compelled the appointment of neutral umpires, a reform born of necessity to restore credibility to the game. Decades later, the world finds itself once more confronting the spectre of interference in sport, this time on the grand stage of the FIFA World Cup. Co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, the tournament had unfolded with considerable promise until a recent controversy cast a long shadow over its integrity.

In the Round of 32, American forward Polaris Balogun, who had already scored three goals and emerged as his side's chief threat, received a red card for planting his foot awkwardly upon the ankle of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Tarik Muharemovic. The offence, witnessed by referee Raphael Claus, triggered an automatic one-match suspension under established rules. Many viewed the decision as harsh. Balogun himself suggested a yellow card might have sufficed for what appeared an accidental collision born of imbalance. Yet the laws of the game were clear. What followed has shaken the foundations of fair play. United States President Donald Trump, declaring the incident no foul at all but merely two athletes colliding at speed, instructed FIFA President Gianni Infantino to urge a review. FIFA, invoking Article 27 of its disciplinary code, suspended the implementation of the ban for a probationary period, permitting Balogun to line up against Belgium in the last sixteen. 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Briefs Ziarat police officials Suspended...

FROM PAGE 01 may also recommend policy, institutional or operational reforms to prevent the future occurrence of such incidents and directed the committee to submit its report within 15 days...

Pakistan Navy finds wreckage...

FROM PAGE 01 Sharjah to Karachi when contact with air traffic control was lost at 521 km on Wednesday...

Trump says interim accord...

FROM PAGE 01 They're led by sick people," he added alongside NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte...

NATO chief defends attacks...

FROM PAGE 01 which I think is completely fair," he added. "The good news is that this is the big win today..."

Switzerland reach first World Cup quarter-final since 1954

Switzerland beat Colombia 4-3 on penalties after a goalless 120 minutes

DNA VANCOUVER: Switzerland's Ruben Vargas scored the decisive penalty to beat Colombia 4-3 in a shootout after a goalless 120 minutes...



Colombia entered the game in Vancouver, the last to be hosted by Canada at the tournament, boasting one of the tournament's stingiest defences...

of a model of consistency in qualification, but progress beyond the round of 16 had remained stubbornly out of reach in recent editions...

gas converted the winning penalty. The entire Swiss squad sprinted towards him as celebrations erupted in Vancouver...

IOC lifts Russia suspension

THE International Olympic Committee (IOC) provisionally lifted its suspension of the Russian Olympic Committee...

this started. But I don't believe athletes should pay the price," IOC President Kirsty Coventry told a press conference...

competition comes against the backdrop of one of the most damaging doping scandals in Olympic history. The country has been under scrutiny since a 2015 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report...

Shabab Al-Ahli to host UAE National MMA Championship 9

DNA ABU DHABI: Preparations are complete for the ninth edition of the UAE National MMA Championship, which will take place on July 11 and 12 at Shabab Al-Ahli Club in Dubai...

54 India-backed...

FROM PAGE 01 entrenched martyrdom in the initial fighting. He added that before security forces reached the area, the militants had taken police personnel hostage...

entrenched martyrdom in the initial fighting. He added that before security forces reached the area, the militants had taken police personnel hostage...

Berlin court sentences a doctor to life for murdering 15 patients

The Berlin court found the physician administered a lethal mixture of various medications to 12 women and three men, German news agency dpa reported

he eligible for release. The ruling also aligned with the prosecutors' request for a finding of serious guilt and a call for him to face a lifetime ban from practicing medicine...

Djokovic outlast Auger-Aliassime in fire-four battle, cruises into semi

LONDON: Novak Djokovic battled through Wimbledon's longest ever quarter-final to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime in a free-set epic on Tuesday as the former champion set up a titanic clash with defending champion Janik Sinner...

tank to beat Sinner. Asked how he saw off Auger-Aliassime, Djokovic said: "With racquet and a lot of heart. I have management of the nerves and the extreme tension you feel in these kind of matches."

Djokovic is only the second player in the Open era to reach the men's semi-finals at Wimbledon aged 39 or older after Ken Rosewall in 1974...

the first time. Seven years after she became the youngest player to reach the Wimbledon main draw aged 15 and then stunned Venus Williams on her debut, Gauff is two years away from an even more impressive feat...

Field Marshal says...

FROM PAGE 01 The Field Marshal concluded by expressing full confidence in the professionalism, morale and operational readiness of the battle-hardened Armed Forces of Pakistan...

Karzai may help stabilize...

FROM PAGE 01 The continued reluctance of many United Nations member states to formally recognise the Taliban administration reflects Afghanistan's complex diplomatic situation...

Iran targets sites in Bahrain...

FROM PAGE 01 Kuwait, and shot down a US MQ-9 Reaper drone attempting to interfere in the operation. Air raid sirens sounded in Bahrain and Kuwait...

## Briefs

Rupee gains  
03 paise  
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.07 as compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.10. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 278.95 and Rs 279.15, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.17 and closed at Rs 317.68 from the previous day's closing of Rs 317.85, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.71, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a surge of Rs 0.29 and closed at Rs 371.76 compared to the previous day's Rs 372.05. The exchange rate of the Emirati Dirham came down 01 paise and closed at Rs 75.71, while the Saudi Riyal stood stagnant to close at Rs 74.06.—APP

PSX stays  
bearish, loses  
over 4,626  
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a sharp bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 4,626.18 points, a negative change of 2.48 per cent, closing at 181,629.37 points against 186,255.55 points on the last trading day. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 1.51 billion shares with a traded value of Rs 62,437 billion, compared to 984,847 million shares valuing Rs 45,795 billion in the previous day. The market capitalization declined to Rs 20,383 trillion from Rs 20,857 trillion a day earlier. Out of 498 active companies in the ready market, 87 advanced, 396 declined, and 13 remained unchanged. WorldCall Telecom topped the volume chart with 228,440 million shares, followed by Genesys PK with 111,673 million shares and K&E Electric Limited with 90,576 million shares. The top gainers included Bata Fariq Sugar Mills Limited, which increased by Rs 35.65 to close at Rs 922.15, and Fateh Industries Limited, which gained Rs 35.47 to settle at Rs 980.13.—APP

Gold prices  
fall by Rs  
4,700 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a significant decline in the local market on Wednesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola decreasing by Rs 4,700 to settle at Rs 430,236, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold fell by Rs 4,029 to Rs 68,858, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs 3,893 to Rs 38,132. In the international market, the price of gold dropped by \$47 to settle at \$4,078 per ounce. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola decreased by Rs 38 to Rs 6,121, while the price of 10 grams of silver went down by Rs 119 to Rs 5,504. The price of silver in the international market also declined by \$1.38 to \$50.42 per ounce, the association reported.—APP

Shaza invites  
Bahrain to  
invest in Pak

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday invited Bahrain to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's food security, information technology and tourism sectors. During a meeting with Bahrain's Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, on the sidelines of Geneva Digital Week and AI Week 2026, the minister highlighted the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a dedicated one-stop platform to facilitate and support foreign investment in Pakistan. The two ministers discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the fields of information technology.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) local hotel Aziz Boolani inaugurating the art exhibition of Ali Muzaffar "REENTRY" at Satrang Gallery, in the Federal Capital.

US-based Pakistani invited  
to invest in homeland

CHICAGO: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday called upon the Pakistan-American business community to play a leading role in Pakistan's economic transformation by investing in priority sectors and contributing expertise to support the country's long-term development agenda. Addressing a gathering of around 20 Pakistan-American entrepreneurs, technologists, financiers and investors in Chicago, including several former Fortune 500 executives, the minister said Pakistan had reached a defining stage where improvements in national security, diplomacy and macroeconomic stability must now be translated into sustained economic growth. He said overseas Pakistanis, particularly the Pakistan-American community, had established themselves in diverse fields, including technology, finance, healthcare, energy and academia, and could make a significant contribution to Pakistan's economic future. Ahsan said that following difficult but necessary economic reforms under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan had restored macroeconomic stability, reduced inflation, lowered policy rates and earned international recognition for its economic recovery.

"The vision is there. The economy has been rebuilt. What we need now is your capital, your networks and your expertise," he said. The minister said Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional peace had strengthened investor confidence and created fresh opportunities for trade, investment and international partnerships, urging overseas Pakistanis to include Pakistan in their professional and investment portfolios. He noted that many members of the delegation were already engaged in investment and philanthropic initiatives in Pakistan, adding that the government's objective was to transform these individual efforts into structured partnerships under the URAAN Pakistan economic agenda. Highlighting the government's long-term vision, Ahsan said URAAN Pakistan aims to transform the country into a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2035 and a three-trillion-dollar economy by 2047 through its 5Es framework comprising Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change, Energy and Infrastructure, and Equity and Employment. He identified information technology, agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, mining and minerals, the blue economy, skilled manpower and creative industries as key sectors for export-led growth. The minister assured the diaspora that the government was committed to providing an enabling environment for investment, innovation and entrepreneurship, expressing confidence that active participation by overseas Pakistanis would help Pakistan emerge as a globally competitive, knowledge-based economy. He also reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening Pakistan's knowledge economy through partnerships with leading US academic institutions, including the University of Illinois Chicago, the Illinois Institute of Technology, the University of Chicago and the wider US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor. The minister highlighted ongoing efforts to engage overseas Pakistanis in advancing Pakistan's artificial intelligence capabilities and broader technological transformation. Earlier, Ahsan held three separate meetings with representatives of the University of Chicago, where both sides agreed to expand collaboration on emissions trading, undertake a federal electricity tariff study to promote energy inclusion, sign a new memorandum of understanding with PIDE and strengthen Pakistan's weather forecasting and early warning systems through specialised training.—DNA

students to undertake coursework in Chicago while completing research in Pakistan, besides jointly designing a modern public-sector transformation programme for Pakistani civil servants. The minister said improving human capital remained the government's foremost priority and addressed the need to equip the civil service with modern scientific knowledge, technological expertise and contemporary skills to improve governance and service delivery. In another meeting with development economist Dr. Christina Brown and Research Director Zohab Hassan, both sides agreed to collaborate with the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) on comprehensive curriculum reforms aimed at modernising Pakistan's education system and making learning more accessible and relevant to students. Ahsan also met Sam Ori, Executive Director of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Growth, where both sides agreed to expand collaboration on emissions trading, undertake a federal electricity tariff study to promote energy inclusion, sign a new memorandum of understanding with PIDE and strengthen Pakistan's weather forecasting and early warning systems through specialised training.—DNA

Jordan buys  
60,000 tons of  
feed barley in  
tender

HAMBURG: Jordan's state gains barley after purchased about 60,000 metric tons of animal feed barley in an international tender that closed on Wednesday. European traders said the seller was said to be trading house Louis Dreyfus, with the barley sold at \$252.60 a ton, cost and freight (c&f), for shipment in the first half of September, the traders said. Reports reflect assessments from traders and further estimates of prices and volumes are still possible later. A tender is expected to be held in two weeks, traders added.—APP

Lebanon okays  
release of  
singer-turned-  
militant

BEIRUT: The Lebanese judiciary on Wednesday approved the release of cross-border fugitive militant Fadi Shaker months after he surrendered himself to authorities, a judicial official told AFP.

The entertainer, born to a Lebanese father and a Palestinian mother, turned himself over to authorities in October after more than a decade in hiding in a Palestinian refugee camp. Shaker was accused of taking part in 2013 clashes in the south Lebanon city of Sidon between the military and supporters of Salafist Sheikh Ahmad Al-Assir, which left more than a dozen soldiers dead. While Shaker was a supporter of Assir, he denied involvement in the violence. The judicial official, who was questioning anonymously, said the judiciary "approved the release of artist Fadi Shaker in the four security cases filed against him, most notably the Abra case," referring to the Sidon clashes. "The court released Fadi Shaker in three cases on a bail of 100 million Lebanese pounds (\$117) for each case, and 200 million Lebanese pounds for the Abra case," the official added. According to the official, Shaker is expected to leave prison on Wednesday after his legal team posted the bail in 2026. Lebanon's military tribunal sentenced Shaker to 22 years in prison for providing financial and logistical support to the "terrorist" Assirist group. During his years on the run, courts convicted him in absentia and imposed sentences ranging from five to 15 years of hard labor. Shaker was also accused, alongside Assir, of the attempted murder of Hial Hammoud, a local official with the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese Resistance Brigades, who were all acquitted in this case in May due to "insufficient evidence." In the months leading up to his surrender in October, Shaker released new songs, recorded in the refugee camp, that topped charts in the Arab world.—APP

Danish PM says her  
country is 'ready to  
defend' Greenland

ANKARA: Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Wednesday rejected President Donald Trump's renewed demands that the US should take control of Greenland from NATO ally Denmark, saying that "Greenland is of course not for sale." "We hope that all, including all allies, will respect the Greenland people's right for self-determination," Frederiksen said ahead of a meeting of the leaders of NATO member countries in Turkey. "We are sovereign states and we need everybody to respect our territorial integrity and our sovereignty." Trump reopened old wounds over Greenland on the eve of the meeting by insisting that the United States should control the semi-autonomous island. NATO is founded on the principle that its 32 members will defend each other's territory, not threaten to seize it. Frederiksen said Denmark is "ready to defend every inch of NATO including our own territory" in the event of an attack, and would rely on NATO allies to honor their commitment to defend each other. Iceland's Prime Minister, Kristin Frustadottir, said Greenland "belongs to the people of Greenland," and called for unity among the NATO allies in the face of external dangers. "We have threats coming from outside the alliance," Frustadottir said.—APP

Taiwan warns China  
'expansionism' to persist  
without global action

TAIPEI: China's "authoritarian expansionism" in regional waters will persist if the world fails to act, a senior Taiwanese security official warned on Wednesday, describing Beijing's strategy as "incremental salami slicing." Chinese ships regularly ply the East China Sea, Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea to assert Beijing's maritime claims over disputed waters and islands China is "constantly pushing the limits through an incremental salami-slicing approach." Li Wen, a deputy secretary-general of the National Security Council, told an international forum. Li said China's "authoritarian expansionism" involved the use of military coast guard, research and maritime militia vessels to press its claims and attempt to "transform international waters into internal waters." "If the world fails to voice our concerns or take action, this expansionism will only continue," Li warned. Ocean Affairs Minister Kuan Bing told the forum that "Japan, the Philippines and the Philippines faced the 'same pattern of actions' but were 'deliberately controlled to remain below the threshold of conventional warfare.' When a series of actions accumulates, it may create an entirely new status quo," Kuan said. Kuan said international partners need to have "shared understanding of the status quo" and prepare coordinated response measures "before the next crisis occurs." Their remarks came a day after ships from Japan and China's coast guard faced off near disputed islands claimed as the Senkaku in Japan and the Diaoyu in China. Each side claimed they drew on the other's vessels that had intruded into their territorial waters. Last month, China started patrolling waters to the east of Taiwan for the first time following talks between Japan and the Philippines to draw a boundary in that area, which Beijing called "illegal." China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and also asserts that waters around the island democracy come under its jurisdiction, which Taipei rejects. Ocean Affairs Deputy Minister Sung Chen-tsun said he would ensure China's patrol was not "permanent," noting the affected waters were "within our exclusive economic zone." "They don't have rights here, no matter what are their excuses," Sung told AFP on the sidelines of the forum. At the forum, US Democratic Senator Tammy Duckworth said the international community needed to keep transiting waters claimed by China and "overly reject attempts by the Communist Party to force us to adhere to their norms and the new rules that they want to set up."—APP

FM for regulatory reforms,  
ease of doing business

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, visited the headquarters of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), where he chaired a high-level review meeting. Chairman SECP, Dr. Kabir Ahmed Siddiqi, along with the Commissioners and senior officers, gave a detailed presentation on the Commission's performance and key reform initiatives undertaken during the period from January 2026 to June 30, 2026. The Finance Minister was briefed on SECP's initiatives to promote investment, strengthen capital markets, improve corporate governance, facilitate ease of doing business, and modernize the regulatory framework through digital transformation and process improvements. Progress on legislative reforms, investor facilitation, and enforcement measures was also reviewed. Appreciating the Com-

mission's progress, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb underscored the importance of maintaining an effective balance between facilitating businesses and ensuring a robust regulatory environment. He emphasized that technological advancements should be accompanied by comprehensive process re-engineering to simplify regulatory procedures, enhance service delivery, and improve the overall ease of doing busi-

ness while reducing cost of doing business. The Finance Minister also encouraged SECP to continue its proactive regulatory engagement with businesses, investors, and other stakeholders through focused consultations to obtain practical feedback and ensure that regulatory reforms remain responsive to the needs of market participants. During the presentation, the meeting was informed that over 18,000 new companies had been registered during the review period, alongside significant progress in post-incorporation services, licensing, and digital regulatory processes. The Commission also highlighted ongoing work on an artificial intelligence-based company registration system, transforming regional SECP offices into Business Facilitation Centres, development of a Central UBO Registry Portal, and digitization of shareholding records of unlisted companies.—DNA

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Briefs

US to take Israel into confidence on F35s sale

JERUSALEM: US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth will discuss the possible sale of F-35 fighter jets to Turkey on Wednesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters, a sale likely to anger Israeli officials. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter, said Hegseth was scheduled to meet Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz and that Iran would feature in their discussions. In an interview with CNN on Tuesday, Netanyahu said he opposed the sale of F-35s to Turkey, and that he had made his opposition clear to Trump. "It would destroy the power balance in the Middle East because Turkey has aggressive aspirations," Netanyahu told CNN. Turkey, a NATO member, has long criticized Israeli operations in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, and it has repeatedly accused Israel of trying to undermine the US-Iran ceasefire deal mediated by Pakistan. President Donald Trump, who is attending a NATO summit in Turkey, announced on Tuesday he would lift US sanctions imposed on Ankara over its 2019 purchase of Russian air defense missiles, and he signalled a willingness to sell the NATO ally F-35 fighter jets, a move likely to face strong resistance in Congress as well as in Israel. - Agencies

Foreign women rape case: outlaws handed over to police for 5 days

ABID RAZA LAHORE: A judicial magistrate on Wednesday granted police custody of four suspects, including the relative of a senior political figure, for another five days in the alleged abduction and rape case involving two foreign women. The suspects were produced before the magistrate at the Courtroom Courts following the expiry of the five-day physical remand granted earlier. During the hearing, the prosecution sought an extension of the remand, informing the court that the suspects' DNA and fingerprint tests had been conducted. A prosecutor told the court that the police still needed to recover the vehicle allegedly used in the crime, along with a laptop, cash and weapons believed to be linked to the case. Advocate Salman Shahid, the counsel for two of the suspects, opposed the request for further physical remand, arguing that his clients had no connection with the alleged offences. The counsel stated that, according to the police's own version, the matter was not one of rape or abduction but was related to a crypto-currency dispute. He said the matter fell within the jurisdiction of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The lawyer further argued that one of his clients worked as a security guard and had no connection with cryptocurrency. At the same time, the other was employed in Islamabad and also had no role in the matter. He alleged that the suspects had been implicated due to media coverage of the case. He claimed that his clients were being subjected to a "media trial". The counsel also questioned the status of another suspect, identified as "Boss", asking whether he had been produced before any court despite his arrest. He argued that even if the suspects were eventually acquitted, the damage caused to their reputations by extensive media coverage would be irreversible. After hearing arguments from both sides, the magistrate extended the physical remand of all four suspects for five more days till July 13.

Sri Lanka-Pakistan Friendship Bilateral ties strengthened through defense and trust

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Fred Seneviratne talks to Daily Islamabad POST

EXCLUSIVE ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Fred Seneviratne has emphasized the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, rooted in mutual trust and support. He expressed these views in an exclusive interview with Daily Islamabad POST. He acknowledged disruptions in consultations due to COVID-19, Sri Lanka's economic crisis, and regional developments but stressed that his mission is working to harness untapped potential. Defense ties remain strong, with regular talks between Defense Secretaries and Service Chiefs, training of Sri Lankan personnel in Pakistan, and goodwill naval visits and joint exercises.



On regional security, he noted that both nations, as Indian Ocean littoral states, face non-traditional threats like piracy, narcotics trafficking, human smuggling, and illegal fishing. He advocated for maritime security collaboration and intelligence-sharing frameworks to counter these challenges. Regarding trade, he explained that the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement remains underutilized, with Sri Lanka's usage at 10% compared to Pakistan's 35%. He called for modernization of the FTA, reduction of negative lists, and inclusion of country-specific products. While conventional trade baskets are similar, he identified tourism, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, textiles, and apparel as promising sectors for joint ventures. On investment, he highlighted Sri Lanka's investor-friendly conditions: a corporate tax rate of 28% with reduced rates of 14% for SMEs, exports, IT, education, tourism, and agriculture; location of major maritime routes; deep-water ports with modern facilities; strong air connectivity through Sri Lanka Airlines and multiple international carriers; a literate, well-qualified workforce; two major road and rail networks; modern telecommunications; and 12

Export Processing Zones offering incentives and facilities. Cultural diplomacy, he said, can strengthen ties by showcasing Pakistan's Gandhara Buddhist heritage to Sri Lankan monks. Many Sri Lankans are unaware of this heritage, but those exposed to it value it deeply, such as the sacred relic at Taxila Museum. Events like Wesak Day commemorations at Dharmarajika Stupa impressed visiting monks, and Sri Lankan associations abroad expressed interest in visiting Gandhara. He urged Pakistan to leverage Gandhara as a pilgrimage site to attract Sri Lankan Buddhists, turning cultural diplomacy into religious tourism. On public diplomacy, he stressed the role of media collaborations in enhancing awareness and people-to-people bonds. He cited Sri Lanka Tourism Development Bureau's road shows in Karachi and Lahore and reciprocal media visits, hoping Pakistan will organize similar programs in Sri Lanka. Climate cooperation is another area of collaboration, with Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre working closely with Pakistan's NDMA. Both

countries conduct annual virtual exercises on anticipatory action for floods, cyclones, and droughts, aligning early warning systems. High-level exchanges have deepened cooperation, and Sri Lanka seeks Pakistan's expertise and equipment to strengthen its disaster management system. On terrorism and extremism, he recalled Sri Lanka's civil war against the LTTE and the Easter Sunday attacks, noting Pakistan faces similar threats. He acknowledged Pakistan's crucial assistance during Sri Lanka's war and suggested Sri Lanka could reciprocate by sharing its counterterrorism expertise. He proposed fostering links between defense academies and think tanks, joint research in artificial intelligence and defense production, and co-development of technologies like UAVs and naval modernization. Turning to Sri Lanka's internal situation, he reflected on the hardships of the civil war, Easter attacks, and the 2022-23 economic crisis. He said a new Sri Lanka has emerged, determined to rebuild with stability, transparency,

and forward-looking governance. Under President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and the National People's Power government, which won a two-thirds majority, Sri Lanka has regained macroeconomic stability with IMF guidance. The exchange rate is steady, reserves are healthier, export earnings have risen, and tourism has recovered strongly. Governance and anti-corruption reforms have gained international recognition, with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva praising efforts and Sri Lanka climbing 14 places in Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index to rank 107th. He invited Pakistani businesses to explore Sri Lanka's growing potential as a trusted investment destination. In sum, Fred Seneviratne underscored the resilience of Sri Lanka, its commitment to reform, and the opportunities for Pakistan and Sri Lanka to deepen ties across defense, trade, investment, culture, media, climate cooperation, and security, building on their historic friendship and shared challenges.

Oil rises as US strikes on Iran raise fears over shaky truce

Brent crude rises to \$76.08 while WTI gains 2.6% to \$72.26 a barrel

Oil prices gained more than 2% on Wednesday after the US military launched airstrikes against Iran and reimposed crude sales sanctions, raising fears their fragile truce was unraveling and Middle East supplies could be disrupted again. Brent crude futures gained \$1.92, or 2.6%, at \$76.08 a barrel on Wednesday after the US revoked the general licence authorising the sale of Iranian crude following the Iranian attacks. "While the revocation doesn't fundamentally change oil market dynamics, it's important from a sentiment perspective. It heightens the risk of a breakdown in the temporary deal between the US and Iran," ING commodity strategists said on Wednesday. The US strikes were a response to Iranian attacks on three commercial vessels that were transiting the Strait of Hormuz, US Central Command said on Tuesday. "The current conflagration is a reminder to the market of how fragile passage through the Strait still is," said Saul Kavnick, head of research at MST Marquee. "This presents a contrary indicator to the prevailing sentiment that the market could be flooded into oversupply, which may scare some of the record short positioning to cover," he said, adding that if tensions persist and traffic through the Strait resulting from the US strikes, the resulting supply constraints could support higher oil prices. After the US and Iran signed their truce agreement last month, oil prices tumbled back to prewar levels and traders assessed large short positions in oil futures, or bets that prices would fall further. Expectations of a wave of post-pandemic Middle East supply coming onto the market caused the price declines. Iran did not take responsibility for the vessel attacks, but Qatar blamed Iran for them, including one on a Qatar-based natural gas tanker, which reported being struck by a drone that caused a fire in its engine room. A Saudi-flagged crude oil tanker, believed to be the super-tanker Wodjan, was also damaged off Oman, maritime security sources said. The cause was not immediately clear. The attacks renewed concerns about tanker traffic through Strait of Hormuz, which carries cargoes equal to about one-fifth of global energy supply before the war began in February. - APP

Western nations urged to engage with Afghanistan

NEWS DESK

KABUL: It is crucial for Western nations to engage with Afghanistan to prevent the country from sliding back into instability that could have repercussions far beyond its borders, two top United Nations officials said. The lesson of the recent past is that ignoring Afghanistan is not a good thing to do," the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Barbara Sahlin, told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday alongside the head of the United Nations Development Program, Alexander De Croo, during a joint visit to the country. Although many challenges and difficulties remain, "it's wise to engage, to support and promote the right type of policies to making sure that Afghanistan remains safe and secure," Sahlin said, speaking via video link. "Without it, I think we may well risk instability, with all the implications of that instability," whether that is drugs, extremism, crim-

inal activity or the movement of refugees, he said. After four decades of conflict, the impoverished, aid-dependent country is now buffeted by multiple crises, from natural disasters and climate change to the largest influx of returning refugees the world has seen in decades. "In Afghanistan, there is never a crisis just on its own. It's always crisis on top of crisis," De Croo told the AP. "And that you see here." Nearly 6 million people have returned to Afghanistan since 2021, the vast majority from neighboring Pakistan and Iran since those countries began a crackdown on migrants living there. An estimated 2 million people are expected to return this year, the UN officials said. The returnees have strained local communities, many of which already have scant resources in a country where poverty is rife and malnutrition stalks the most vulnerable. This has been compounded by massive cuts in UN aid and a Taliban government that has sidelined half of Afghanistan's population, denying women and girls education beyond primary school and banning them from the vast majority of jobs. The country is also internationally isolated. No Western nation has formally recognized Afghanistan's government, since the Taliban seized power in the wake of a chaotic withdrawal of US-led forces in August 2021. Russia was the first country to officially do so, in 2022. Last month, a delegation from the Taliban government traveled to Brussels to meet European Union staff for talks on diplomatic services and the return of Afghans from European countries.

Russia tries to jam Musk's Starlink systems

ZAPORIZHZHIA REGION: Russian forces are trying to counter Ukraine's mid-strike drone attacks by jamming cargoes and installing powerful jamming systems to disrupt Elon Musk's Starlink satellite Internet system, Ukrainian drone commanders and pilots told Reuters. Kyiv's development of "mid-strike" drones that can hit targets dozens of kilometers behind front lines accurately and cheaply, and are often fired via Starlink, has transformed the war in Ukraine. In a concerted mid-strike campaign this year, Ukraine has attacked supply lines, fuel storage facilities, air-defense installations and command centers, disrupting Russian forces' logistics and causing fuel shortages in Russian-occupied Crimea. But Russia is now developing many ways to try to counter the mid-range strikes, four drone commanders and pilots told Reuters. "Russia's methods to protect fuel and other military supplies range from hiding shipments in civilian vehicles to using sophisticated electronic jamming devices to block connections used to pilot the drones, they said. Jamming devices have been installed by Russia near towns and military facilities, including some that can disrupt the Starlink systems operated by Musk's SpaceX, they said. Most of Ukraine's mid-strike missions are flown using Starlink, which allows a pilot to remotely communicate with a drone and had been considered largely immune to jamming. Serhiy Broshkretov, an adviser to Ukraine's defense ministry, said Russia was deploying a jamming system called the Volna Kujol Guard that emits a signal strong enough to destabilize the Starlink connection. No area of about 20 square km (7.7 square miles). He added that about 10 had been detected so far. However, the system is itself a prominent target for Ukrainian drone crews keen to knock out any impediment to their flights. The 422nd regiment has taken part in operations to hit two of these systems, including one that was struck several hours after being detected in a joint mission with the SBU security service. Kolesnyk said. A video of one attack showed a large explosion as a drone struck a site containing six large boxes resembling trailers. "As soon as we struck that installation, our Starlink-equipped (drones) flew without problems," said a crew commander who uses the call sign "Dryppent". Musk has meanwhile told Russian forces off from using Starlink to spy Moscow using it in its own drone strikes. SpaceX did not respond to a request for comment for this story, nor did Russia's defense ministry. Reuters was not able to independently verify the tactics being used by Russia to avoid strikes. - APP

Ukraine drones deal with three countries

Zelensky announced the deals in posts on social media on the sidelines of the NATO summit in the Turkish capital Ankara and said that Kyiv had now clinched nine such accords

ANKARA: President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday that Ukraine had signed three more "drone deals" with Denmark, Estonia and the Netherlands, making available its expertise gained from more than four years of war with Russia. Zelensky announced the deals in posts on social media on the sidelines of the NATO summit in the Turkish capital Ankara and said that Kyiv had now clinched nine such accords. Ukraine has developed a highly sophisticated drone industry after having only limited expertise in the sector when Russia invaded its smaller neighbor in February 2022. Zelensky has traveled widely to promote the deals, particularly in the Middle East, where Gulf countries were obliged this year to counter Iranian strikes. In announcing the deal with Denmark, Zelensky said the agreement "opens up great opportunities for joint defense production, the exchange of expertise, and transparency in weapons exports." He said Denmark had been the first country to offer joint production in Ukraine "and it is absolutely fair that Denmark will now have access to Ukrainian exports of weapons tested in war." In a post on X at the end of the first day of meetings, Zelensky said Ukraine "rightfully belongs here" and repeated that Kyiv's main aim at the gathering was to "secure more air defense and stronger diplomatic positions." Zelensky has pointed to Ukraine's need to boost defenses against Russian ballistic missiles after two attacks on the Ukrainian capital in the past week. Nineteen people died in Kyiv in the latest assault on Monday. - APP

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