



KP government speeds up legal reforms

Under the special directives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi, work on legal reforms to make the province's justice system more effective, transparent and people-friendly is progressing rapidly.

Detailed story on Page 2

Colombia beat DR Congo 1-0

Colombia finally broke down a stubborn DR Congo side on Tuesday to secure a 1-0 win that guaranteed their place in the World Cup knockout rounds.

— Story on Page 7

The Province

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Quote



With faith, discipline and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve.

— Muhammad Ali Jinnah

News DIGEST

Pakistan to continue efforts for regional stability, Naqvi tells Iranian counterpart

STAFF REPORTER



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met his Iranian counterpart, Dr Eskandar Momeni, on Wednesday, and vowed that Pakistan would continue its efforts for lasting peace in the Middle East.

According to a statement issued by the interior ministry, the two sides held detailed discussions on Pakistan-Iran relations and the latest regional situation following the peace agreement.

Naqvi congratulated Momeni on the joint declaration signed at Burgenstock, Switzerland, saying the agreement would not have been possible without the sincere efforts of the Iranian government and its negotiating team.

"Pakistan has always been a proponent of peace and stability across the world," he said, adding, "I am hopeful that the peace agreement will have far-reaching positive consequences for the entire region."

Momeni expressed gratitude for the warm welcome extended to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his delegation during their visit to Pakistan.

Momeni was part of a delegation led by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, which visited Pakistan a day earlier after the US and Iran signed a 'Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding' (MoU) to end the Middle East conflict.

He also praised Pakistan's sincere role in the Iran-US negotiations and commended the Pakistani nation for its full support throughout the process.

Both ministers expressed satisfaction over the reduction of tensions in the region and agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors, including security, counter-terrorism, cyber security and immigration.

Momeni announced that he would soon undertake a detailed visit to Pakistan aimed at further strengthening cooperation between the interior ministries of both countries.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Secretary Interior, Additional Secretary Interior, Director General FIA, Commandant National Police Academy and Director General NCCIA.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif shakes hands with President JUI-F Maulana Fazl ur Rehman at the National Assembly in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif shakes hands with Chairman Pakistan People's party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the National Assembly in Islamabad.

Bilawal, Fazl slam Khawaja Asif over AJK remarks

Bilawal questions why he still remained in cabinet, Fazl says such statements will only inflame tensions

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Fazlur Rehman criticised Defence Minister Khawaja Asif over his remarks about Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) during a heated session of the National Assembly on Wednesday.

In a television interview, Asif said Rawalakot — which has seen protests led by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) — was "not Kashmir" and that he did not regard its residents as Kashmiris. He later clarified the remarks on X, saying that "Kashmiriat is defined by the sacri-

ces and struggles waged over almost eight decades" by Pakistanis, Kashmiris and others, "not by birth certificates."

While addressing the NA during debate on the federal budget, Bilawal said, "There are certain ministers whose politics I do not understand. Instead of helping the prime minister, they create problems for him."

The PPP chairman went on to say that every coalition partner, every member of the opposition and every citizen of Pakistan should ask "why such a minister is still in the cabinet," he said, adding: "How is it possible for us to accept that a federal minister can say that the Kashmiris of Rawalakot are not

Kashmiris?"

Bilawal said Pakistan's political parties needed to work together at a time of significant regional and international change. "Where Pakistan stands today, and given everything that is happening geopolitically, if all political parties unite and decide that we will collectively confront Pakistan's challenges, then we can secure the political, economic and strategic dividends that these opportunities offer," he said.

The PPP chairman said PM Shehbaz wanted to move the country forward in consultation with coalition partners and the opposition, arguing that many national problems could only be resolved

through dialogue. "Problems can only be solved through negotiations and dialogue," he said.

Bilawal said criticism of statements made at rallies or protests was legitimate, but argued that the comments of a serving federal minister carried a different weight. "If he is not prepared to apologise, then what justification do we have for sitting alongside that minister?" he asked.

While expressing respect for PM Shehbaz, Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's longstanding association with the Kashmir cause, Bilawal said a minister's remarks had worsened an already sensitive situation.

FO calls Islamabad MoU 'victory for diplomacy'

Says technical teams from Pakistan, Qatar will continue to remain engaged with US and Iran

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hailed the Iran-US peace process as a triumph of diplomacy, saying the Islamabad MoU and follow-up talks in Switzerland had strengthened confidence in dialogue, with technical teams from both countries expected to engage in the coming weeks. "The Islamabad MoU and the Lucerne Summit reinforce our faith in dialogue and diplomacy as the most effective means for peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts," Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said during his weekly media briefing on Wednesday.

The spokesperson said PM Shehbaz had announced on June 18 that the Islamabad MoU between the US and Iran had been signed electronically, describing it as a historic development. As a follow-up to the agreement, Pakistan and Qatar hosted the first high-level committee meeting under the framework of the Islamabad MoU in Bürgenstock,

Switzerland, on June 21.

"The meeting was successful in helping the two parties reach an understanding on various aspects of the implementation of the Islamabad MoU," Andrabi said.

He highlighted key outcomes of the talks, including the establishment of a high-level committee to provide political oversight of the mediation process. Chief negotiators, he said, would report regularly to the committee and lead working groups focused on nuclear issues, sanctions, monitoring and dispute resolution.

"The agreement has been reached upon a roadmap towards reaching a final deal in 60 days," he said. He added that the parties had also agreed to establish a communication channel to prevent incidents and miscommunication, particularly to ensure the safe passage of commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. Another outcome was the creation of a deconfliction cell involving the parties, the Lebanese government and the mediators.

CDF Munir, Libyan military deputy chief discuss defence cooperation

Haftar praises Pakistan armed forces' professionalism and contribution to regional peace

STAFF REPORTER



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir discussed matters pertaining to bilateral defence cooperation with the Libyan military's deputy chief on Wednesday.

A statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said CDF Munir held a meeting with Libyan Arab Armed Forces Deputy Commander-in-Chief Lt Gen Haftar in which both sides underscored the importance of strengthen-

ing bilateral defence ties and expanding cooperation in military training and security.

Lt Gen Haftar called on CDF Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi and was presented with a guard of honour upon arrival.

The two sides discussed matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, defence cooperation and avenues for enhanced military-to-military collaboration.

The ISPR added that CDF Munir highlighted the Pakistan Army's commitment to promoting peace, stability and constructive engagement with friendly countries. "The visiting dignitary appreciated the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their contributions towards regional peace and security," it said.

The meeting was the second between them this year. The two military leaders previously met in February, when they also discussed regional security dynamics.

During that meeting, the field marshal reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Libya and underscored renewed momentum in defence collaboration between the two countries.

Pakistan and Libya enjoy longstanding diplomatic and military ties. A notable example of this cooperation was a multi-billion-dollar conventional arms deal signed in December last year.

The agreement, described as one of Pakistan's largest-ever weapons sales, was finalised following an earlier meeting between Field Marshal Munir and Lt Gen Haftar in Benghazi.

KP budget 2026-27 to bring development and prosperity: CM KP

Says govt has improved financial discipline and increased tax revenues

TP REPORT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi has termed the provincial budget for fiscal year 2026-27 a roadmap for peace, development and prosperity, while thanking treasury and opposition members, the finance team and all stakeholders for supporting its approval in the provincial assembly.

Addressing the assembly, the Chief Minister said the provincial government remains committed to public welfare,

sustainable development and economic stability despite financial challenges. He stressed that protecting the rights and interests of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains the government's top priority.

Sohail Afridi said the provincial government has improved financial discipline and increased tax revenues from Rs66 billion to Rs129 billion, expressing confidence that revenue collection will further improve during the new fiscal year.

He highlighted that the development budget has been increased from Rs195 billion to

Rs235 billion, while special development packages have been allocated for Peshawar, Mardan, Hazara and other regions.

The Chief Minister announced the introduction of a Senior Citizens Card for men and women aged 60 years and above, allowing free travel on the BRT system. He also revealed that a Jwandoon Card would soon be launched as another welfare initiative for the people of the province.

He said major projects including the D.I. Khan Motorway, Dir Motorway and Swat Motorway remain among the government's top priorities, while significant resources have been allocated to strengthen the police force and maintain law and order.



The Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment to education,

health and human development, assuring that all districts would receive their

fair share of resources and development opportunities.

The SPACE

Karbala teaches resistance against oppression & sacrifice for truth: Mohiuddin

TP REPORT

HARIPUR: Internationally renowned Islamic preacher and spiritual leader Pir Syed Mohiuddin Mehboob has said that the tragedy of Karbala is an eternal message of standing firm against oppression, injustice and tyranny, while remaining committed to truth and righteousness under all circumstances. Addressing delegations from various regions at Mehboob Abad Sharif, he said Imam Hussain (AS), his family members and devoted companions set unmatched examples of patience, loyalty, steadfastness and sacrifice in the plains of Karbala. He stated that Imam Hussain (AS) sacrificed everything to protect the true principles of Islam and demonstrated that a believer never compromises on truth and justice, regardless of the challenges and hardships faced. Pir Syed Mohiuddin Mehboob said the sacrifices rendered by the Ahl al-Bayt and the companions of Imam Hussain (AS) remain among the brightest chapters of Islamic history and continue to inspire people across generations.

KPHCIP expands GBV and child protection awareness campaign to 48 schools across KP

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project (KPHCIP), implemented by the Elementary and Secondary Education Department with support from the World Bank, has expanded its community engagement campaign on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) to 48 government primary schools across the districts of Peshawar, Nowshera, Swabi and Haripur. Building on the successful completion of Phase I, the ongoing Phase II initiative has reached an estimated 2,160 children through 24 boys' and 24 girls' primary schools. Age-appropriate awareness sessions on child rights, GBV, SEA/SH, and Menstrual Health and Hygiene have been conducted in Urdu and Pashto across the four districts, while Hindko has also been used in Haripur to respect and promote the local linguistic identity.

Labor Education Organization hands over two baby warmers and two incubators to BKMC-MTI Swabi

All four medical equipment items installed in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Spokesperson.

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SWABI: To further strengthen neonatal healthcare services at Bacha Khan Medical Complex-MTI Swabi, Labor Education Organization, with the support of Muslim Charity UK, donated two Baby Warmers and two Baby Incubators to the hospital. The equipment has been formally handed over and installed in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). In this regard, Mr. Hassan Hassas, Program Manager, Labor Education Organization, visited the NICU and inspected the donated equipment. The NICU Incharge briefed him regarding the use, importance and expected benefits of

the machines for newborn babies requiring specialized care. According to spokesperson, during the visit, Mr. Hassan Hassas assured continued support for Bacha Khan Medical Complex, particularly for the improvement of NICU services. Hospital administration also shared a list of additional required equipment with the Program Manager for further consideration. Hospital Director and BKMC-MTI administration thanked Labor Education Organization and Muslim Charity UK for their valuable contribution, stating that the donated equipment will play an important role in improving newborn care, strengthening healthcare delivery and



providing better treatment facilities to patients. The administration appreciated the humanitarian efforts of both organizations and expressed hope that this collaboration will continue in future for the welfare of patients and improvement of healthcare services.

Another PESCO man loses both arms and hands after being electrocuted



STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: According to the spokesperson of the All Pakistan WABDA Hydro Electric Workers Union Khyber, in a tragic incident on June 21, 2026 at about 1:20 am, a resident of Charsadda and a lineman of Gulbela Sub-Division PESCO Peshawar, second-in-command, suffered a tragic electric accident while repairing a technical fault in the 11 KV line. Later, during surgery at the North West Hospital Peshawar, he lost both his hands and arms and was permanently disabled. He is still undergoing treatment in the ICU of the North West Hospital Peshawar. It is clear that the said lineman has five small children, including his only 9-year-old son. The provincial union has strongly demanded the government, Federal Minister for Energy and Power Division Owais Ahmed Leghari, Chairman PESCO BOD Himayatullah Khan and Chief Executive PESCO Akhtar Hameed to conduct an impartial investigation into the accident and reduce the work pressure on the field staff, as well as to immediately take action in PESCO in the best interest of consumers and PESCO. Thousands of vacant posts should be filled. While accident victims should be given privileges like security forces.

Provincial govt committed to restoring peace in Lakki Marwat: Tariq Saeed

Delegation of Marwat Qaumi Jirga meets Tariq Marwat and Additional Chief Secretary Ikramullah



STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the Core Committee of Marwat Qaumi Jirga, Lakki Marwat, called on the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Tariq Saeed Marwat, and Additional Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ikramullah Khan, at the Civil Secretariat Peshawar. The delegation was led by former Federal Minister Saleem Saifullah Khan and former Member of the National Assembly Nasir Muhammad Khan Midadkhel. Former Secretary for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Akhtar Munir

Marwat and other elders of the Marwat Qaumi Jirga were also part of the delegation. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the overall law and order situation in District Lakki Marwat, provision of modern equipment, vehicles and other essential facilities to the police force, and other important security-related matters. The delegation expressed public concerns over the withdrawal of security forces from FC forts and urged the government to deploy additional personnel instead of reducing the strength in the area in order to further strengthen law

and order and make peace efforts more effective. On the occasion, Additional Chief Secretary Ikramullah Khan and Special Assistant Tariq Saeed Marwat assured the delegation that they would apprise the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of the security situation in District Lakki Marwat and would take all possible measures to address the issues being faced by the area. They said that the provincial government is serious about restoring peace and maintaining law and order in Lakki Marwat and that practical measures are under way for a lasting solution to the issue. They further stated that special funds have been allocated in the provincial budget to enhance the capacity of the police force and equip it with modern facilities, which would play an important role in eliminating terrorism and establishing sustainable peace. The delegation appreciated the keen interest and cooperation extended by Special Assistant Tariq Saeed Marwat and Additional Chief Secretary Ikramullah Khan in addressing the issues of the district.

Majid Ali Tahir defended his doctoral thesis



HARIPUR: PhD scholar Majid Ali Tahir of the Department of Public Health & Nutrition, University of Haripur, successfully defended his doctoral thesis titled "A Comprehensive Assessment of Preparedness and Readiness of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Manage Public Health Emergencies" during a public defense held on

June 22, 2026. His research provides important evidence for strengthening provincial health security, emergency preparedness, and response systems in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study highlights key strengths, identifies critical gaps, and proposes a practical framework to improve the province's ability to prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies. Special Thanks to External Examiners Prof. Dr. Saira Afzal (Dean, Institute of Public Health, Lahore), and Prof. Dr. Rubena Zakar (Professor of Public Health, University of the Punjab, Lahore), and Internal Examiner, Dr. Abbas Khan for their valuable insights and contribution in improving the quality of research work. Appreciation goes to the Supervisor, Dr. Ijaz Ul Haq, Co-Supervisor, Dr. Shahbaz Ahmad Zakki for their continuous mentorship and guidance throughout this academic & research journey. It is pertinent to mention Head of Department, Dr. Zakki, Prof. Dr. Aziz Ullah, Dean, Faculty of Biological & Biomedical Sciences and Dr. Sami Ullah Khan, Director ASRB who provided full Institutional support and guidance. Our Correspondent

Dr. Jamshed assures reforms in Malakand

PROVINCE REPORT

CHAKDARA: Regional Director Health Malakand Division Dr. Jamshed Sherani has said that recommendations will be sent to the provincial government to improve healthcare facilities across Malakand Division, address doctors' issues and ensure the provision of medicines and medical staff in hospitals. He was addressing a meeting of District Health Officers (DHOs) and Medical Superintendents (MSs) of Category A, B and C hospitals held at Chakdara under his chairmanship. The meeting reviewed key challenges facing healthcare institutions, including shortages of medicines, doctors, ambulances and emergency facilities. Participants also discussed issues related to accommodation for doctors and medical staff and measures to improve healthcare services at district and tehsil levels. DHOs and MSs from all districts highlighted problems faced by their respective hospitals and stressed the need for enhanced resources to improve patient



care and emergency response services. The meeting also reviewed progress on the anti-polio campaign, with participants reaffirming their commitment to strengthening EPI and polio eradication efforts across the division. Doctors attending the meeting welcomed the initiative and expressed hope that the recommendations would help improve healthcare delivery and address longstanding challenges in the region.

Despite development claims, Arang continues to struggle with problems

ANWAR ZADA GULYAR

BAJAUR: Murad Sajid, former Chairman of Village Council (VC) Arang and a worker of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has expressed concern over the lack of basic facilities faced by local residents and called on the relevant authorities and elected representatives to take immediate notice of the situation. Addressing a press conference at Bajaur Press Club in Khar along with his colleagues, Murad Sajid said that the people of Arang and its adjoining areas are still deprived of several basic necessities, including access to clean drinking water, causing serious hardships for the local population. He stated that the absence of effective measures to address public issues has led to growing frustration and disappointment among residents. He alleged that some political representatives have failed to deliver services in line with public expectations. He further claimed that party workers have reservations regarding organizational affairs and the distribution of positions and responsibilities. According to him, preference is often given to a limited number of individuals in decision-making



processes, creating a sense of deprivation among party workers and local residents. Murad Sajid said that the drinking water crisis in VC Naranj and surrounding areas has reached an alarming level, with residents being forced to purchase a single can of water for up to Rs. 200. He described the situation as an additional burden on poor families amid rising inflation. He also raised questions about certain development projects and the performance of public representatives, stating that more practical measures are needed to address the region's developmental

challenges and basic public issues. He stressed that the public should be fully informed about development projects and their benefits to ensure transparency and accountability. At the conclusion of the press conference, Murad Sajid urged the government, district administration, and elected representatives to prioritize the resolution of drinking water shortages, the provision of basic facilities, and the completion of development projects in Arang, Naranj, and other affected areas, so that the difficulties faced by local communities can be addressed on a permanent basis.

KP government speeds up legal reforms for stronger Justice System

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Under the special directives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi, work on legal reforms to make the province's justice system more effective, transparent and people-friendly is progressing rapidly. In this connection, a key meeting of the special committee constituted for reforms in various laws was held in the Law Department's conference room under the chairmanship of Law Minister Aftab Alam. Senior officials and representatives of the Law Department and the Advocate General's Office attended the meeting, where several important laws were reviewed in detail. The main objective of the meeting was to align the legal and judicial system with modern requirements to provide citizens with immediate, affordable and effective justice. The committee deliberated on proposed amendments to various key laws. Members presented their suggestions and opinions, on the basis of which an



initial draft of the proposed amendments has now been prepared. The committee formed for legal reforms has been holding continuous meetings for the past 20 days to review different laws in detail, with the aim of finalising a comprehensive and effective reform package. The draft of the proposed amendments will soon be presented to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi and the provincial cabinet for final approval.

These reforms will prove to be a major milestone towards strengthening the rule of law in the province, ensuring timely delivery of justice, and establishing a modern, transparent justice system aligned with public expectations.

DI Khan gears up for peaceful Muharram

PROVINCE REPORT



DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Division Dawood Khan chaired a special meeting of the Divisional Intelligence Coordination Committee (DICC) to review security and administrative arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram 2026. The meeting was attended by Regional Police Officer Ghulam Mubashir Maken, Deputy Commissioners of Dera Ismail Khan and Tank, senior officials of the police, Pakistan Army, CTD, FIA, Special Branch, PESCO and other relevant departments.

The participants reviewed the law and order situation, security measures, intelligence coordination, monitoring of sensitive locations, traffic management, emergency medical facilities and uninterrupted power supply during Muharram. Addressing the meeting, Commissioner Dawood Khan stressed that effective coordination among all institutions was essential for ensuring the peaceful observance of Muharram. He directed officers to strictly implement security plans, enhance surveillance at sensitive places and remain fully prepared to respond to any emergency.

Umar chair 47th Meeting of Provincial Seed Council

Provincial Seed Council Approves 19 Seed Varieties

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: 47th meeting of Provincial Seed Council was held under the chairmanship of Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Agriculture and Chairman of Provincial Seed Council, Mian Muhammad Umar. The meeting discussed in detail important matters relating to the provision of quality seeds, approval of new varieties and promotion of agricultural research in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa.

Provincial Seed council meeting was attended by Secretary Agriculture Dr. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan, Director General Agricultural Research Dr. Abdul Rauf, Director General Agricultural Extension Dr. Naveed Khan and other members of Provincial Seed Council.

Addressing the meeting, Advisor on Agriculture Mian Muhammad Umar said that quality and improved seeds play a fundamental role in increasing agricultural productivity and enhancing farmers' incomes. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is giving special attention to agricultural research, promotion of modern technologies and development of climate-resilient seed varieties.

He urged agricultural scientists to introduce superior seed varieties that would provide maximum benefits to farmers and ensure the availability of high-yielding and climate-adapted seeds.



The meeting reviewed proposals regarding new varieties of various crops, fruits, vegetables, cereals, oilseed crops and pulses. Participants were informed that under the Federal Seed Act, 1976, Provincial Seed Council is empowered to approve new varieties in the province, prevent the cultivation of ineffective or harmful varieties, permit inter-provincial commercial production and deal with other related matters.

After detailed deliberations, Provincial Seed Council approved cultivation of

19 seed varieties submitted by various institutions. These included new varieties of fruits, vegetables, cereals, oilseed crops and pulses. The approved varieties were developed by agricultural research organizations and universities.

The approved varieties include three fruit varieties: Blackberry, Apricot, Apricot (Castle Brite). In vegetables, council approved Pea Farhat-2025 and Onion NARC-1. Among cereal crops, approved varieties include PARC Oat, Fakhre-Tarnab Wheat, Abdul Bari-2024 Wheat,

Dosti-2024 Wheat, Ishaq-2025 Wheat, Qaid-2026 Wheat, NARC-2 Maize, NIGAB-25 Rice, NARC-25 Rice and PARC-25 Rice. Similarly, in oilseed crops and pulses, council approved Sunflower NARC-SUN-2020, Soybean NIBGE-Soy-3, Canola IBGE-Canola, and Groundnut NARC-2021 for cultivation.

Mian Muhammad Umar further stated that government would provide all possible support to strengthen capacity of agricultural research institutions and promote modern agricultural research in the province.

News BRIEFS

Dr. Abrar Malik honored in Skardu, educationists receive awards



PROVINCE REPORT

SKARDU: A prestigious ceremony was held in Skardu in honor of Dr. Abrar Hussain Malik, Central President of APPSCA, where distinguished educationists were presented shields and awards for their outstanding services in the education sector. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Malik said private educational institutions are playing a vital role in promoting quality education, while teachers and administrators remain the backbone of educational excellence. Participants praised his contributions to improving educational standards and strengthening the private education sector across Pakistan.

HMC expands clinical services and pushes forward major infrastructure projects

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Medical Teaching Institution, Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) has made remarkable progress in its clinical service delivery. Service delivery is now consultant-led and consultant-based to enhance quality, consistency and accountability. OPD timings have been extended in accordance with the guidelines of the Board of Governors, thus providing access to more patients. With the formal separation of the Urology and Transplant units, transplant surgeries are now carried out daily, with waiting times now reduced to less than a month in renal care. The Eye department, PICO, is now conducting corneal transplantation using corneas from the USA – a previously unavailable specialist procedure is now available to patients throughout the region.

Patients enrolled in Sehat Sahoolat Program are now entertained in the morning working hours so that they do not have to be on waiting list enabling the patient and the institution to get the best out of the program.

One of the hospital's much-anticipated projects, the new Accident and Emergency block is 98 percent structurally complete with HR and biomedical equipment financing currently sought to turn the facility into a reality. The Board of Governors approved PC-1 has been submitted to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Liver and Bone Marrow Transplant programme.

In addition to these physical improvements, the hospital has implemented an online appointment and registration system for patients attending for Institute Based Practice (IBP) which has helped to alleviate queuing times and access.

A paperless SSP workflow with a digital dashboard has also been implemented, facilitating claims processing and allowing for the real-time monitoring of the workflow by clinical and administrative staff. These front-facing enhancements are part of the Board's broader effort to make physical investment directly impactful for establishing improved operational systems and providing a better services to patients.

Naz Baloch visits FGP, discusses climate resilience and inclusive development

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Member of the National Assembly and former Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change, Naz Baloch, visited the office of Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) on Wednesday and held detailed discussions on Pakistan's emerging development priorities, with particular focus on climate resilience, women's empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods.

During the meeting with Muhammad Anwar, CEO of FGP, Shafiq Aziz, Strategic Policy Advisor, and Dr. Shahbaz Tariq,

Head of Research, the participants exchanged views on climate change adaptation, climate finance, disaster resilience, environmental sustainability, and the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women, children, and vulnerable communities. The discussion also covered opportunities to promote youth and women's economic empowerment through innovative, community-driven development interventions.

Naz Baloch emphasized the need for stronger collaboration among policymakers, civil society and development organizations to ensure that climate policies



translate into tangible benefits for communities most affected by environmental challenges. She noted that greater investment in climate adaptation and locally-led initiatives is essential for building resilient communities and advancing sustainable

development.

Ms Baloch also underscored the importance of ensuring that women and young people remain at the center of climate and development policies. She said that strengthening their participation in decision-making, improving access to climate finance, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities are essential for building resilient communities and achieving inclusive national development.

Muhammad Anwar briefed the visiting parliamentarian on FGP's ongoing initiatives in climate resilience, community empowerment, policy advocacy, digital

innovation, and sustainable development. He highlighted the organization's commitment to developing practical, evidence-based solutions and fostering partnerships that contribute to inclusive growth and improved livelihoods across Pakistan.

Shafiq Aziz shared FGP's strategic vision for integrating climate action and emphasized that strengthening climate knowledge, encouraging innovation, and promoting informed policy dialogue are essential to addressing the country's growing environmental and socio-economic challenges.

Detailed inspection of development projects to ensure quality, transparency

ANWAR ZADA GULYAR

BAJAUR: A detailed inspection of development projects funded through the development funds of Minister of State Mubarak Zeb Khan was conducted to ensure quality, transparency, and timely completion of the schemes.

According to details, the Minister of State's special representative and Vice Chairman Mian Habib Gul, along with Mian Ikram, Tor Gul Haji, Abdullah Salar, Baba Khan, and other local elders, visited Shah Narey, its surrounding areas, and Utman Khel Sikandro. During the visit, they reviewed ongoing development projects and PCC (Plain Cement Concrete) road construction schemes, assessing the quality of work, construction standards, and the materials being used.

Speaking to local elders and youth on the occasion, Vice Chairman Mian Habib Gul said that the journey of development and public welfare under the leadership of Minister of State Mubarak Zeb Khan would continue with full commitment and dedication. He stated that the vision and mission of Shaheed-e-Tehreek Rehan Zeb Khan would remain a guiding principle



in serving the people and promoting sustainable development in the region.

He emphasized that no compromise would be made on the quality or quantity of development projects. The use of sub-standard materials, poor workmanship, or any form of irregularity would not be tolerated under any circumstances. He further assured that transparency and accountability in the utilization of public funds would be strictly maintained.

Mian Habib Gul reiterated his commit-

ment to the development, prosperity, and progress of Bajaur, stating that all available resources would be utilized to provide basic facilities and improve the quality of life for the people. He added that efforts would continue until public issues are resolved at their doorstep and Bajaur is transformed into a model district of development and prosperity. He also pledged to ensure the timely completion of all ongoing projects in accordance with the highest standards.

Tourism Department, UoP to organize International Studies Conference

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), in collaboration with the Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar, has decided to organize an International Studies Conference from 8th to 11th July 2026 at the Bara Gali Campus of the University of Peshawar in Galiyat.

In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony was held at the office of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority. Director General KP Culture and Tourism Authority, Shahid Khan Mohmand, and Chairman, Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar, Dr. Syed Sami Raza, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective institutions.

The conference theme focuses on geopolitical dynamics, economic opportunities, regional politics and diplomacy, and strategies to address environmental challenges in Pakistan and beyond. The conference aims to promote academic research while enhancing awareness, understanding, and collaboration on



environmental issues. It seeks to support sustainable tourism, preserve cultural heritage, and promote Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a peaceful destination for eco-tourism.

In addition, a Summer School Camp will be organized from 8th to 19th July 2026. Under the MoU, field visits to Mushkपुरi Top and other tourist attractions in Galiyat will be arranged, featuring tourism-related research activities and other academic engagements.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and

Tourism Authority will support the conference by facilitating cultural showcases, including handicraft stalls, traditional music performances by local artists, and other cultural activities.

Furthermore, to facilitate field research and academic studies, the Authority will provide administrative support, local and regional data, and logistical guidance in the Galiyat Zone for 35 elite research officers conducting field-based environmental assessments and research activities.

Book "Obeidullah Baig Ek Pashtoon" launched



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The distribution and reception ceremony of Dr. Imran Shahzad's book "Obeidullah Baig Ek Pashtoon" on the art and personality of the late Obeidullah Baig, a well-known personality who gained fame from PTV's program Kasooti, was held at Pak Tea House.

In which renowned personalities from

the academic and literary circles participated. In the ceremony, renowned fiction writer Dr. Fawzia Maqbool reviewed two novels of Obeidullah Baig in a detailed article and shed light on other aspects of his personality.

Dr. Atif Butt described the author's efforts as a historical document on this occasion. Finally, author Dr. Imran Shahzad thanked all the speakers and attendees.

Tarakai meets ILO delegation; discusses Workers' Welfare and Institutional capacity building

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Labour, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Khan Tarakai, held a meeting with a delegation from the International Labour Organization (ILO). The meeting focused on workers' welfare, the promotion of safe and decent employment opportunities, strengthening social protection mechanisms, and enhancing the institutional capacity of the Labour Department.

On the occasion, the Provincial Minister reaffirmed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government's commitment to safeguarding workers' rights, improving social security services, and implementing labour reforms in line with international standards. He stated that the government is utilizing all available resources to pro-



vide better healthcare, social protection, and legal support to the working class.

The two sides also agreed to further strengthen mutual cooperation and promote technical assistance across various sectors of the Labour Department. In this regard, it was decided that a special-

ized training workshop for doctors of the Employees' Social Security Institution (ESSI) will be held on July 8 2026. The workshop aims to enhance the professional capacity of medical practitioners, familiarize them with modern healthcare practices, and improve the quality of medical services

provided under the social security system.

The ILO delegation appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Provincial Government and the Labour Department for the welfare of workers and expressed its commitment to further strengthening cooperation in the future.

A Gesture of Gratitude, A Signal of Trust

JUNAID QAISER



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Pakistan following the U.S.-Iran diplomatic breakthrough in Switzerland was a gesture of gratitude that also served as a powerful signal of trust. At a time when the region is cautiously emerging from one of its most dangerous periods of tension in recent years, Pezeshkian's decision to make Islamabad his first foreign destination carried a message that diplomats and policymakers around the world could not ignore.

In international relations, symbolism matters. The choice of where a leader travels, whom he meets, and what he says can often reveal more than formal communiqués. By arriving in Pakistan just days after the signing of the Islamabad MoU and the subsequent talks in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, the Iranian president underscored the importance Tehran attaches to Pakistan's role in facilitating dialogue and reducing tensions.

The visit was, in many ways, a public acknowledgment of Islamabad's efforts throughout the crisis. For months, Pakistan quietly worked behind the scenes to keep communication channels open between Washington and Tehran. While much of the world's attention remained focused on military developments and political rhetoric, Pakistani diplomacy concentrated on creating opportunities for engagement rather than escalation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's sustained outreach to Iranian leadership, combined with the active diplomatic and security engagement led by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, helped establish Pakistan as a credible interlocutor at a moment when trust was in short supply. The result was not an overnight breakthrough but the gradual creation of an environment where dialogue became possible.

President Pezeshkian's visit therefore represented something larger than a diplomatic courtesy. It reflected a recognition that Pakistan had emerged as a trusted partner in the search for regional stability. In a region often shaped by rivalry and suspicion, trust is neither easily earned nor quickly granted. When it is expressed so openly, it deserves attention.

The warm welcome extended to the Iranian president—from the ceremonial reception at Nur Khan Airbase to the high-level meetings with Pakistan's civilian and military leadership—was a reflection of the longstanding relationship between the two neighboring countries. Yet the significance of the visit went beyond bilateral ties. It highlighted Pakistan's growing ability to serve as a bridge between competing interests and as a voice for dialogue in an increasingly fragmented geopolitical landscape.

The discussions during the visit covered a broad range of issues, including trade, energy cooperation, border management, counterterrorism, and regional connectivity. These are areas where both countries stand to benefit from deeper cooperation. The goal of expanding bilateral trade and enhancing economic links appears more achievable when political trust and diplomatic goodwill are moving in the same direction.

At the same time, the visit reinforced an important lesson about Pakistan's foreign policy. Influence in today's world is not measured solely by economic size or military capability. It is also measured by a country's ability to build relationships, encourage dialogue, and create space for peaceful solutions to difficult problems. Pakistan's role in facilitating recent diplomatic progress between the United States and Iran demonstrates the value of that approach.

Of course, significant challenges remain. The diplomatic roadmap emerging from recent negotiations is still in its early stages, and difficult questions surrounding sanctions, regional security, and long-term confidence-building measures have yet to be resolved. History reminds us that peace processes are rarely linear and that setbacks are often part of the journey.

Still, it's moments like these that keep diplomacy on the move. A visit, a handshake, a chat, or even a simple gesture of thanks can really help build the confidence needed to keep negotiations alive. President Pezeshkian's trip to Islamabad was one of those pivotal moments.

In the end, this was about more than just saying thank you. It was a nod to Pakistan's positive influence in regional matters and a recognition of the trust that Islamabad has built through its steady and patient diplomatic efforts. As the region looks for a more stable future, that trust could turn out to be one of Pakistan's greatest diplomatic strengths.

From Roads to Innovation

China's New Investment Strategy in Pakistan

FIZZA QAISAR



For a decade, China's footprint in Pakistan was easy enough to picture. Highways cutting through mountains, power plants rising along the coast, and Gwadar's port slowly taking shape on the edge of the Arabian Sea. That picture is changing, and the change is visible in the language of officials and business leaders now use when they talk about the relationship. Conversations that once centered on concrete and steel increasingly mention artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, solar batteries, and quantum technology instead. The question worth asking is how much of this is genuinely happening and how much remains aspiration dressed up in fresh vocabulary.

The clearest evidence that something real is underway sits quietly on millions of rooftops across the country. Over the past five years, Pakistan imported fifty gigawatts of Chinese solar panels, a wave that energy analysts have taken to calling the solar supernova. The surge was driven by a collapse in module prices, which fell to historic lows of seven to nine cents per watt, and the country now has 38 gigawatts of solar capacity installed nationwide. Low-carbon sources account for more than 64% of Pakistan's total electricity generation today, a figure that would have sounded implausible only a few years ago.

The savings are not abstract for the people experiencing them. Khalid Mahmood, an electric vehicle owner, put it plainly when he said that driving a petrol car used to cost him nearly eighty thousand rupees a month, and switching to an EV cut that figure to roughly one tenth. At a national level, Pakistan avoided more than twelve billion dollars in oil and gas imports by February this year because of this shift toward renewables, with a further six billion dollars in savings projected by the end of the year. This is the proof of concept underlying everything China is now proposing for Pakistan's next decade. Affordable Chinese manufacturing scale turned an expensive, aspirational technology into something an ordinary middle-class household could actually afford, and the same formula, cheap components paired with local assembly, is now being floated for electric vehicles, batteries, and inverters as well.

Electric vehicles look like the next chapter in this story. A senior delegation from BYD recently met Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to brief him on the company's operations and plans in Pakistan, including progress on introducing new energy vehicle technology through a partnership with Mega Motor Company. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation on electric mobility, local manufacturing, technology transfer, and skills development, with the stated goal of positioning Pakistan as a regional hub for new energy vehicle production. Officials and BYD representatives specifically discussed the synergy between Pakistan's growing solar adoption and electric mobility, recognizing that cheap solar electricity makes EV ownership even more attractive to consumers already feeling the benefit in their monthly budgets. Industry voices in Pakistan argue the country could particularly benefit from developing local assembly plants for batteries, inverters, and EV components, creating skilled jobs while cutting dependence on imported fossil fuels, a step that would mark genuine technology transfer rather than simple importing.

Much of this shift traces back to decisions being made in Beijing rather than Islamabad. China's latest five-year plan places breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, quantum technology, and sixth-generation communications at the center of its national strategy, and analysts argue this opens a genuine opportunity for Pakistan's IT sector and universities. Some have suggested that joint China-Pakistan innovation centers focused on artificial intelligence and quantum applications could let Pakistani researchers take part in global knowledge creation while helping local startups commercialize new ideas. China's green technology sector has grown to roughly six hundred and 25 billion dollars, and Chinese firms are increasingly willing to

move beyond simple exports into joint ventures, technology transfer, and regional partnerships, with Pakistan positioned as one of the larger beneficiaries given its existing trade ties and geography. The scope of cooperation extends further still. A recent batch of agreements covering two hundred and seven separate memorandums of understanding worth 7.5 billion dollars included battery energy storage systems, artificial intelligence, mobile devices, biotechnology, and vaccine manufacturing, areas that have little in common with the roads and ports that defined the relationship a decade ago.

Whether Pakistan can actually capture the benefit of all this is a separate and far less settled question, and experts working on the issue have not been shy about saying so. A policy consultation held in Islamabad in May produced a blunt conclusion from specialists, who said Pakistan lacks a clear industrialization strategy and must stabilize its own policies to attract growing levels of Chinese green investment. The same group agreed that sectors like solar energy, battery storage, and electric vehicle manufacturing offer real opportunities, while warning that Pakistan will struggle to compete for private Chinese capital without meaningful structural reform and a more predictable investment climate. There is also a peculiar irony sitting at the center of this entire story. A country importing record volumes of Chinese solar panels still struggles, in many areas, with unreliable grid electricity, and the same experts called for Pakistan to reinforce its national power grid and guarantee reliable supply specifically to its special economic zones, arguing that without this, the country cannot credibly offer the infrastructure that artificial intelligence development and advanced manufacturing actually require. In some ways, Pakistan is not embracing this shift purely out of strategic foresight. Rising electricity tariffs have been steadily eroding the competitiveness of its own industrial sector, pushing manufacturers toward renewable alternatives largely because there were few other affordable options left, with Chinese firms positioned to meet that need at the exact moment it became urgent.

Pakistan has already proven it can absorb Chinese technology as a buyer; fifty gigawatts of imported solar panels leave little room for doubt there. The far harder test is whether it can become a manufacturer of components rather than simply an assembler of finished Chinese products, and local battery and inverter plants, if they materialize at the scale being discussed, would be the first solid evidence that technology transfer is actually happening rather than being promised at conferences. Proposals for joint research centers in artificial intelligence and quantum computing remain largely conceptual for now, and even under the most optimistic timeline, building genuine research capacity and a pipeline of trained engineers takes the better part of a decade. What is not really in doubt is the direction China itself is moving. Its economy is shifting deliberately toward high technology and away from the labor-intensive manufacturing that once defined it, and Pakistan is positioning itself, through this year's budget incentives and a growing list of agreements spanning everything from EV batteries to biotechnology, to absorb some of what China leaves behind. Whether Pakistan executes well enough to turn that positioning into actual factories, jobs, and exports remains genuinely open.

The story of solar power suggests it is possible. The state of the electricity grid suggests it will not be easy. "What strikes me most about this shift is how quickly it moved from policy papers to people's daily lives. A few years ago, solar power was a talking point at conferences. Today, it is the reason a taxi driver in Lahore pays a fraction of what he used to for fuel. If Pakistan can repeat that with batteries and EVs the way it did with solar panels, this could be one of the more consequential economic stories of the decade, not because of how it sounds in a press release but because of what it actually changes for ordinary households." — Industry Analyst, Pakistan Renewable Energy Sector



Pakistan has already proven it can absorb Chinese technology as a buyer; fifty gigawatts of imported solar panels leave little room for doubt there.

The Price of Digital Isolation

MUHAMMAD TALMEEZ



Islamabad suffers from a glaring double standard when it comes to the digital economy. On any given day, state officials proudly boast about the IT sector's potential, quoting rising export remittances, preaching the gospel of a "Digital Pakistan," and promising a hyper-connected future. Yet, while the state masquerades as a progressive champion of technological modernization, its hands are firmly wrapped around the throat of the country's actual digital infrastructure. The ground reality for Pakistan's tech ecosystem is defined not by a grand digital leap, but by systemic, deliberate structural regression. The aggressive deployment of restrictive web management systems colloquially known as the national firewall alongside arbitrary social media blockades and severe clampdowns on Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) have collectively sabotaged the country's global digital credibility. What authorities justify under the banner of "national security" is an exercise in economic self-sabotage that is systematically uncoupling Pakistan from the global marketplace.

The modern digital economy runs on two fundamental parameters that cannot be compromised: low latency and uninterrupted uptime. When a government tampers with these pillars for political engineering, the financial and

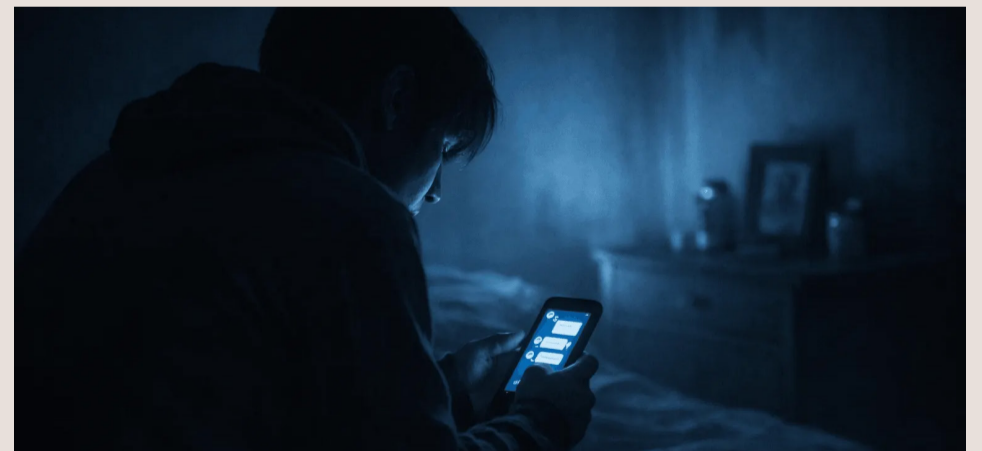
reputational collateral damage is instantaneous. For the estimated 2.3 million freelancers and hundreds of software houses forming the backbone of Pakistan's non-traditional exports, a stable internet connection is not a luxury; it is the vital raw material required to function. Over the past two years, rolling nationwide slowdowns, localized blackouts, and deliberate media throttling have completely shattered the operational reliability of Pakistani professionals. It is impossible to maintain a competitive edge when routine file transfers take hours instead of minutes, or when a Zoom call with an international stakeholder cuts out repeatedly because state-operated deep packet inspection tools are clogging the bandwidth.

The consequences of these digital chokeholds are no longer theoretical or confined to domestic complaints voiced on fragmented forums. The global marketplace does not wait for a country to sort out its internal anxieties. International freelancing platforms have previously resorted to marking Pakistani freelancer accounts as "unavailable" to safeguard global clients against missed deadlines caused by state-enforced connectivity failures. Long-standing international clients are quietly but steadily shifting their contracts to digitally stable jurisdictions like India, Bangladesh, or Vietnam. According to industry data, the country faces millions of dollars in direct revenue losses during prolonged network disruptions, but the most devastating casualty is the permanent erosion of international trust. Trust is a hard currency that takes decades to build in the global tech space, but it takes only a few weeks of erratic governance to completely destroy.

This manufactured digital isolation directly feeds into Pakistan's most critical existential cri-



The global marketplace does not wait for a country to sort out its internal anxieties



sis: the unprecedented brain Drain of its highly educated youth. For decades, the country has lost its best doctors, engineers, and academics to institutional instability and economic mismanagement. Now, the technology sector which uniquely allowed skilled youth to earn competitive foreign currency while remaining anchored within Pakistan is being actively emptied out by state policy. The primary driver of this modern exodus is no longer just high inflation or political polarization; it is the depressing realization that running a competitive global enterprise from a country that treats basic internet access as a conditional privilege is a mathematical impossibility. Tech entrepreneurs and software engineers are realizing that no amount of personal resilience or technical talent can overcome a state apparatus that pulls the plug on the network whenever it panics.

Consequently, we are witnessing a catastrophic digital flight: the literal brain Drain of our brightest

minds, and the immediate capital flight of tech companies legally relocating their operations and corporate headquarters to Dubai, Riyadh, or Estonia just to guarantee uninterrupted service for their clients. When a tech company leaves, it takes its tax revenue, foreign exchange inflows, and job-creation capacity with it. The state's current security playbook is dangerously obsolete, operating on the false assumption that political information can be walled off without fracturing the economic foundations of the nation. You simply cannot build a 21st-century digital hub using a 20th-century command-and-control paradigm. If Pakistan wishes to salvage its economic future, the state must urgently reconcile its contradictory ambitions. It must dismantle the digital chokeholds and guarantee unhindered connectivity as a fundamental economic right, or watch Pakistan become a stagnant digital backwater, entirely depleted of the capital, innovation, and intellect required to survive the modern age.

Iran making 'very big concessions': Trump

'The war is going very well. As you know, we're winning by a lot,' says US president

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump claimed on Wednesday that Iran was offering significant concessions as negotiations between the two sides are set to continue next week.

"The war is going very well. As you know, we're winning by a lot. Iran is making very big concessions."

"We'll see what happens — but it has been very, very, very powerful," Trump told reporters at the Capitol.

He earlier said Iran had told the US that no tolls were being sought from ships travelling through the Strait of Hormuz.

The two countries, which ended a first round of negotiations in Switzerland on Monday, have offered conflicting accounts about financial incentives for Iran, control of the Strait of Hormuz and Israel's parallel war in Lebanon — all major aspects of their framework deal signed last week, aiming to end the war.

Trump has faced criticism over the deal domestically, including from hardliners in his Republican Party.

Iran's Ghalibaf says deal to end war 'declaration of US defeat'

Meanwhile, Iranian Parliament Speaker and chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said that the deal between Iran and the United States to end the war is "America's declaration of defeat."

"The Islamabad understanding was not



the result of pressure and coercion, but rather the result of the resistance and authority of the brave Iranian nation," Ghalibaf said at a conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, on an Azerbaijani broadcast on Iranian television.

"That is why the Islamabad memorandum of understanding became a declaration of America's defeat."

He added: "The brave resistance of the armed forces and the heroic resistance of the people in the streets caused Iran to impose heavy costs on the United States and the fake Israeli regime."

Ghalibaf added that regional countries alone should determine the Middle East's security structure.

"We consider the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the region a strategic objective. We see the future of the region not in confrontation, but in interaction. [Military] bases of extra-regional forces in West Asia are a source of instability," he said.

Ghalibaf said Iran is ready to cooperate with nations in the Middle East based on "non-interference in internal affairs and respect for sovereignty."

He reiterated Iran's stance that Israel must halt its attacks and occupation of southern Lebanon.

"We have not abandoned our friends and strategic partners in the most difficult and complex conditions ... A ceasefire and an end to the war in Lebanon is just as important to us," Ghalibaf said.

He also said that "the Iranian nation has shown that the era of imposing will on independent nations is over."

"Although this war imposed heavy costs on our nation, it revealed the fundamental truth that the people's resistance and resistance as the real power in the most difficult conditions disrupts the calculations of the aggressors."

No program to access attacked facilities, nuclear materials: Iranian Deputy FM

Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi stated in a post on X that despite IAEA chief Rafael Grossi's request, no meeting was held with him in Switzerland, and that "here is also no program for access to the attacked facilities and nuclear materials."

"These issues will solely be examined and resolved within the framework of the final agreement," he said.

"You cannot advance the 'stir up and take over' policy with media hype," he added.

Israel's defence minister says military will not withdraw from Lebanon, even if US demands it

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said Israel will not pull its forces out of southern Lebanon "even if there is an American demand," according to Al Jazeera.

"200,000 residents will not return," said Katz, referring to the Lebanese forcibly displaced by Israel's invasion and attacks, in comments carried by The Times of Israel.

"What happened in the past in security zones, where there was also a civilian population [present], was roadside bombs and attacks against the soldiers, and therefore we will not allow that," added Katz. "We are not withdrawing."

US-Iran Islamabad pact sends 'positive signal,' be jointly safeguarded, implemented: China

The US-Iran Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding has sent a "positive signal" and should be jointly safeguarded and implemented, China said on Wednesday.

China "advocates" dialogue and negotiation in addressing regional issues and differences among parties and "opposes the threat or use of force," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told reporters in Beijing.

North Korea's Kim unveils plans for 10,000-tonne warships, nuclear navy

PYONGYANG: North Korea will equip its navy with nuclear weapons and build larger warships, leader Kim Jong Un said according to state media Wednesday, as Pyongyang pushes ahead with a military expansion.

The hermetic nation is under multiple sets of sanctions over a nuclear programme its leaders have vowed to pursue as an essential deterrent to the United States and South Korea.

Kim made his remarks at the commissioning of the Choe Hyon — one of two 5,000-tonne class warships launched last year — in the port city of Nampho on Tuesday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

"The programme of equipping the Navy with nuclear weapons is following its planned course unerringly," Kim reportedly told the ceremony.

"This is a strategic course of crucial importance as it will make it possible to keep the nuclear force of our state ready for multifaceted and efficient operation," he said.

North Korea previously said the Choe Hyon is equipped with the "most powerful weapons", and Kim oversaw a cruise missile test from the vessel in April.

"Following the Choe Hyon, we will soon commission destroyer Kang Kon for operations. After that we will launch 10,000-ton strategic warships one after another," Kim said according to a KCNA report released in English.

Pakistan at the 14th St. Petersburg International Legal Forum



ST. PETERSBURG: A proud moment for Pakistan as the country's judicial leadership and diplomatic mission came together at the 14th St. Petersburg International Legal Forum (ILF) 2026.

Chief Justice Supreme Court of Pakistan Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi and Chief Justice of Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Aminuddin Khan, accompanied by Ambassador of Pakistan to the Russian Federation, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, participated in one of the world's leading legal forums, engaging with international counterparts on issues of justice, rule of law, and global legal cooperation.

Their participation reflects Pakistan's continued commitment to strengthening judicial dialogue, promoting international legal collaboration, and expanding Pakistan-Russia institutional engagement.

The first day of conference ended with a Plenary Session, where delegations of various countries interacted with each other.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch hosts NDU delegation in France

PROVINCE REPORT

PARIS: Pakistan's Ambassador to France Mumtaz Zahra Baloch welcomed a delegation from the National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad, at the Embassy of Pakistan during the delegation's study tour to France.

The ambassador briefed the participants on Pakistan's foreign policy priorities, geostrategic outlook and key dimensions of Pakistan-France relations. She also engaged in an interactive discussion and exchange of views with the delegation on regional and international developments.

The NDU delegation is currently visiting France as part of a study tour aimed at enhancing understanding of international strategic affairs and defence cooperation.

During their visit, the delegation is scheduled to interact with leading French military, strategic and academic institutions to gain insights into France's defence policies, security framework and strategic outlook.

The visit is expected to contribute to academic learning, professional development and greater understanding of international security and diplomatic affairs.



U.S. Consulate marks 250 years with focus on future leaders

PROVINCE REPORT

KARACHI: As the United States celebrates 250 years of independence, innovation and enduring partnerships, U.S. Consul General Charles Goodman hosted a networking and debriefing session for eight Pakistani professionals who recently returned from the U.S. government-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).

The participants, representing diverse sectors including public health, journalism, law enforcement and waste management, shared their experiences, professional insights and the valuable networks they developed during their visits to the United States. During the session, the IVLP alumni highlighted how the knowledge and skills gained through the exchange program are helping them make meaningful contributions to their communities across Pakistan.

Consul General Charles Goodman emphasized the importance of international exchange programs in strengthening people-to-people ties and fostering leadership, innovation and mutual understanding between Pakistan and the United States.



The gathering celebrated the achievements of the participants and underscored the lasting impact of educational and professional exchanges in promoting community development and international cooperation.

Qatar PM in Oman to pave way for Iran-Gulf-Iraq Hormuz talks

DOHA: Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani visited Muscat on Wednesday for talks with Oman on initiating negotiations involving Iran, Iraq and Gulf Arab states on the Strait of Hormuz, a diplomat briefed on the talks told Reuters.

The discussions are separate from US-Iran peace talks and de-mining arrangements. Gulf states are expected to push for no transit fees, while Iran could propose environmental, navigation and security fees, the diplomat said.

The Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, has been heavily disrupted since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran on February 28, curbing commercial shipping and rattling global energy markets.

The move appears to implement a provision of the memorandum of understanding signed last week that calls for Iran to hold talks with Oman and other Gulf states and Iraq on the future management of navigation and maritime services in the strait. The diplomat added that Pakistan was the proposed mediator for these talks. Separately, there are plans for regional reconciliation talks to be held in Riyadh between Iran, Gulf Arab states and possibly other regional countries, he said. Earlier on Wednesday, Oman announced two temporary routes north and south of the existing shipping lane in the strait to facilitate the safe passage of vessels departing the region in coordination with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

U.S.-Pakistan partnership invests in future leaders



PROVINCE REPORT

KARACHI: U.S. Consul General Charles Goodman joined 75 emerging Pakistani leaders at Lincoln Corner Karachi for the Freedom 250 Alumni Speaker Series, where participants took part in an interactive session focused on public speaking and professional communication.

The event brought together university students and early-career professionals, providing them with practical training to strengthen

presentation skills, improve interview performance and communicate effectively in leadership and professional settings.

Participants engaged in hands-on activities designed to build confidence, enhance communication abilities and prepare them for future career opportunities.

The program was organized as part of activities marking the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States on July 4, highlighting the importance of educational and

professional exchanges between Pakistan and the United States.

Speaking on the occasion, Charles Goodman emphasized the value of investing in young people and supporting leadership development through learning opportunities and international partnerships.

The event reflected the ongoing commitment of the U.S.-Pakistan partnership to empowering future leaders through skills development, education and people-to-people engagement.

آئیے مل کر تھیلیسیا اور میموئیلیا کے خلاف جنگ لڑیں

حمزہ فاؤنڈیشن ویلفیئر ہسپتال اینڈ بلڈ ٹرانسفیوژن سروسز (رجسٹرڈ خلابی ادارہ)

2006ء سے اب تک، تھیلیسیا اور میموئیلیا کے مرض میں مبتلا ہزاروں مستحق بچوں کو خالصتاً انسانی ہمدردی کی بنیاد پر چھت مند، اسکرین شدہ خون اور خون کے اجزاء مل طور پر منت فرمائے جا رہے ہیں

امراض خون میں مبتلا مصوم بچوں کی زندگی بچانے کیلئے اپنا رزق کو حمزہ فاؤنڈیشن کو دینے۔

بینک اکاؤنٹ کی تفصیلات: مسلم کش بینک (MCB) برانچ: یو نیورس ٹاؤن رانچ، پشاور شہر بختونخوا

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پشاور: 7-13AM

Transport fares in Mardan remained unchanged

AKHUNZADA FAZLE HAQ

MARDAN: Despite a continuous reduction in petroleum prices, transport fares in Mardan have largely remained unchanged, sparking concern among commuters and residents.

Citizens have expressed frustration that repeated cuts in petrol and diesel prices announced by the government have not translated into lower transportation costs. Daily commuters, including students, office workers, and laborers, say they continue to pay the same fares as before, placing an unnecessary financial burden on households already struggling with rising living expenses.

Passengers complained that the benefits of lower fuel prices are not reaching the general public, as transport operators have failed to make any significant adjustments to fare rates. They argued that reductions in fuel costs should be reflected in public transport charges to provide meaningful relief to commuters.

Residents have urged the authorities to review and revise transport fares in proportion to the decline in petroleum prices. They also called on the district administration, the Regional Transport Authority (RTA), and other relevant departments to ensure strict implementation of officially approved fare schedules.

Citizens further demanded action against transport operators found overcharging passengers, stressing that the financial relief generated by lower petroleum prices should directly benefit the public rather than remain limited to transport owners.

P3A Board reviews Key PPP, initiatives, advances Kharian, Rawalpindi motorway

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The 43rd meeting of the Board of Directors of the Public Private Partnership Authority (P3A) was held under the chairmanship of Muhammad Ali, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and Chairman of the Privatisation Commission, to review key developments in Pakistan's public-private partnership (PPP) agenda.

The meeting brought together senior government officials, including the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (also serving as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission), the Secretary of the Privatisation Division, the Member (PSD&C) of the Planning Commission, representatives of the Finance Division, private-sector board members, and senior officials from P3A and the Privatisation Division, said a release issued here on Wednesday.

A major focus of the session was the National Highway Authority's proposal for the Kharian-Rawalpindi Motorway Project (M-13), a strategic transport corridor aimed at improving regional connectivity, easing mobility constraints, and supporting broader economic activity.

The Board reviewed the proposal under the provisions of the Public Private Partnership Authority Act, 2017, emphasizing compliance with procurement rules, transparency requirements, and value-for-money principles.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee at the Finance Division in Islamabad on Wednesday. — PHOTO: PID

ECC, approves key TSGs, sectoral support measures

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday chaired the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet and approved key Technical Supplementary Grant (TSGs) and Sectoral support measures.

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met Wednesday at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The ECC approved two summaries submitted by the Ministry of Defence. The Committee approved a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) amounting to Rs. 1.289 billion for expenses relating to Independence Day and Marka-e-Haq Celebrations 2025.

The ECC also approved a TSG amounting to Rs. 2 billion for the Marka-e-Haq Monument Project, Islamabad, to be executed by the Frontier Works

Organization (FWO).

The Committee also approved two summaries submitted by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication.

These included a TSG amounting to Rs. 4.5 billion for completion of Phase-II of the Pakistan Asan Khidmat Centre, Islamabad, and re-appropriation of savings amounting to Rs. 911.2 million to the Smart Islamabad Initiative.

The ECC approved a summary submitted by the Prime Minister's Inspection Commission for provision of a TSG amounting to Rs. 8.216 million to meet employee-related expenditure requirements.

The Committee further considered two summaries submitted by the Finance Division and approved a TSG amounting to Rs. 312.3 million for implementation of the incentive package for PAS and PSP officers serving in Balochistan and also approved discontinuation of the Telegraphic Transfer Charges Incentive Scheme (TTCIS) with effect from July 1, 2026.

The ECC also approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of Housing and Works for transfer of Rs. 793.7 million relating to the PSDP scheme for District Shargla to facilitate timely implementation of development initiatives.

The Committee also approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of Industries and Production authorizing release of salary payments for Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) from the already approved budgetary allocation for FY 2025-26 to ensure continuity of employee-related payments.

The ECC also approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs for provision of a TSG amounting to Rs. 600 million as the Federal Government's share for installation of a Vessel Monitoring System in fishing boats across Pakistan.

The Committee considered a summary submitted by the Power Division and approved a TSG amounting to Rs. 52 billion for release to Central Power Purchasing Agency-Guarantee (CPPA-G) as Government equity in DISCOs and

further approved re-appropriation of Rs. 97.649 billion from K-Electric to Inter-DISCO Tariff Differential Subsidy along with adjustment of TESCO TDS arrears claims of amount Rs. 44.198 billion.

The ECC further approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control for provision of Rs. 250 million to Frontier Corps KP (North) to meet operational requirements and enhance its operational preparedness and overall security capabilities.

The Committee also approved a summary submitted by the Petroleum Division for extension in the validity of sovereign guarantees against the Rs. 50 billion financing facility obtained by Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) from Meezan Bank Limited up to June 30, 2027.

In addition to the regular agenda items, the Committee considered a summary submitted by the Ministry of Railways and approved enhancement in Grant-in-Aid for Pakistan Railways amounting to Rs. 7 billion.

CM's aide on industries commends KPEZDMC's performance

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on industries Hamayun Khan said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC) has established itself as a forward-looking institution and expressed confidence that would continue to attract investment, create employment, and accelerate industrial growth across the province. He expressed these views during his visit to KPEZDMC head office. The advisor met with the members of the Board of Directors (BoD) and senior officials of the company. The visit is being seen within the organization as an early vote of confidence from the Advisor, and a sign that KPEZDMC's work was registering at the right levels of government. The advisor was briefed about the function, operations and regulation of the company. KPEZDMC was a Section 42 company established by the Government of KP to develop, manage and promote economic zones and special economic zones across the province, facilitating industrialization, investment and sustainable economic growth throughout the province. STAFF REPORTER

Oil falls further on hopes of smoother crude flows via Hormuz

Brent crude drops to \$76.30, WTI slips to \$72.43 a barrel

DUBAI: Oil prices fell more than 1% on Wednesday, extending this week's losses and trading near four-month lows, on signs that more oil tankers stranded in the Gulf are set to move out of the Strait of Hormuz.

Brent crude futures fell 78 cents, or 1.0%, at \$76.30 a barrel as of 0350 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate slipped 78 cents, or 1.1%, to \$72.43 a barrel.

Both benchmarks settled down around 1% on Tuesday, touching their lowest levels since early March.

"Positive signals from the Persian Gulf are fuelling optimism about oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz. Vessel crossings increased in recent days, although they remain well below pre-war levels," ING commodity strategists said in a note on Wednesday.

Prices have also come under pressure this week after Washington granted Tehran a 60-day sanctions waiver fol-

lowing initial peace talks, allowing it to sell oil, and as hostilities in Lebanon eased.

"Crude oil prices were weighed down by hopes of easing US-Iran tensions and a recovery in oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz," said Tomomichi Akuta, senior economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting.

"Further progress in nuclear negotiations could push prices back to pre-war levels," he added.

On Tuesday, Oman and Iran agreed to press on with discussions about the future administration of navigation in the Strait. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said any Iranian attempt to levy transit fees would violate international law.

Still, uncertainty remains over the durability of the accord. US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Iran had agreed to nuclear inspections into

"infinity," while Tehran said it had made no such concession in negotiations.

Investors are also watching how quickly Middle Eastern producers can restore exports and whether more ships will enter the region.

An Iranian military source told Fars news agency that a limited number of vessels are being allowed to pass through the strait each day under co-ordination with Iran's Revolutionary Guards Navy.

Ship-tracking data showed that three stranded supertankers passed through the strait on Tuesday. The UN shipping agency said an evacuation plan to enable hundreds of ships with 11,000 seafarers stranded in the Gulf to sail through the strait is underway after the US-Iran ceasefire deal.

Meanwhile, crude stocks fell by 765,000 barrels in the week ended June 19, market sources said, citing data from the American Petroleum Institute released on Tuesday. Nine analysts polled by Reuters estimated, on average, that crude inventories fell by about 4.5 million barrels in the last week.

SCCI stresses joint ventures to strengthen Pak-Iran mutual trade ties

Vast opportunities available to improve the current trade volume between two countries: Junaid Alaf



STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Junaid Alaf while highlighting importance of Pak-Iran bilateral trade and economic relations, called for launching of joint ventures, exchange of business delegation, holding of single country exhibition, and fully taking advantages from each other potentials and experiences to further improve the mutual trade volume between

the two brotherly Islamic countries.

Speaking during a visit of Consul General of Iran in Peshawar Ali Banafsheh Khah here at the chamber, President Junaid Alaf stressed the need of launching joint ventures to further improve mutual economic trade ties between Pakistan and Iran.

Meeting was attended by SCCI senior vice president Muhammad Nadeem, vice president Sabir Ahmad Bangash, former senior vice presidents Abdul Jalil Jan and

Shahid Hussain, members of the chamber's executive committee Ishaq Ahmad and Shamsur Rahim, WCCIP President Qurtul Ain, SVP Zarea Imtiaz, VP Zareen Akhtar and Naemur Rehman, Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool and Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahmad, traders and industrialists.

The meeting discussed promotion of joint ventures in sectors of mutual interest, exploration of investment opportunities and industrial collaboration, exchange of business delegations to identify potential areas of cooperation and strengthening business-to-business (B2B) linkages to enhance mutual trade volume between the brotherly Islamic countries. The participants emphasized the need for a simplified and expedited visa regime for genuine businessmen, and facilitation in the issuance of long-term multiple-entry business visas to encourage trade and investment activities.

The meeting called for signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Iranian business institutions to facilitate information sharing, trade promotion, and investment cooperation.

NIC strengthens startup investment ecosystem through invest Lab 3.0 and KP Investor Summit 2026

STAFF REPORTER

Peshawar: The National Incubation Center (NIC) Peshawar successfully hosted Invest Lab 3.0 and the KP Investor Summit 2026, two flagship initiatives designed to strengthen Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's startup investment ecosystem by building investor capacity and fostering connections between startups and investors.

Invest Lab 3.0, a three-day investor education program led by national and international experts, brought together investors and business leaders to explore startup investing, due diligence, risk assessment, portfolio strategies, and investment decision-making. Speaking about the initiative, Mr. Asim Ishaq Khan, Project Director NIC Peshawar, said:

"A thriving startup ecosystem requires not only ambitious founders but also investors who understand the unique dynamics of startup growth. Through Invest Lab, we are helping build local investment capacity and creating stronger pathways for startups to access the sup-



port, networks, and resources they need to succeed."

Building on this momentum, the KP Investor Summit 2026 convened startups, investors, business leaders, and ecosystem stakeholders to facilitate networking, collaboration, and investment engagement.

The summit brought together representatives from organizations including Ignite, The Asia Foundation, KPEZDMC, SAIF Group, Jazz, Climaventures, Seedrise

Fund, KP Startup Fund, Pakistan Startup Fund, Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Evamp & Saanga, KP Board of Investment and Trade, and other key ecosystem partners.

A key highlight was the startup showcase, where seven ventures from sectors including education technology, sustainability, and defense technology presented their solutions and growth ambitions to investors and industry leaders.

The event concluded with remarks

by Mr. Muzaffar Uddin of The Asia Foundation, who emphasized the importance of continued collaboration among investors, founders, and ecosystem partners to unlock the region's entrepreneurial potential.

Through initiatives such as Invest Lab 3.0 and the KP Investor Summit 2026, NIC Peshawar continues to strengthen investor engagement, mobilize capital, and support the growth of innovative startups across the region.

SMEDA set to mark World MSME Day 2026

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE: Keeping its mandate in view to support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is set to celebrate World MSME Day 2026 by organizing awareness activities and interactive sessions simultaneously in 12 major business cities across the country.

Observed globally on June 27 under the auspices of the United Nations, the day highlights the critical role of these enterprises in driving innovation, generating employment and promoting inclusive economic growth, SMEDA spokesman told media here Wednesday.

In line with the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, who has consistently emphasized support for MSMEs for economic development of Pakistan, SMEDA aims to strengthen awareness about government initiatives and create greater engagement between entrepreneurs and public institutions.

SMEDA, with the support and guid-

ance of the Ministry of Industries and Production, plans to organize a range of activities at the national and regional levels to acknowledge the resilience and achievements of Pakistan's MSMEs and bring support services closer to businesses.

The main interactive session is scheduled to be held at the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries, where Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan is expected to deliver the keynote address.

Other sessions will be held at Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Multan, Sargodha, Abbottabad, Hyderabad, Dadu, Sukkur and Mirpur by engaging entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, trade bodies, women and youth-led startups, financial institutions and development partners. As part of the initiative, district-level discussions are being planned to establish stronger linkages with local enterprises and provide a platform for dialogue on opportunities and challenges facing MSMEs.

Asia Cup defence main focus for Pakistan U-19: head coach

Upcoming tour of England would be highly beneficial for the young cricketers, as playing in difficult conditions would help improve their game awareness: Shahid

STAFF REPORTER

MULTAN: Head Coach of Pakistan Under-19 team Shahid Anwar has said that Pakistan are the defending champions of the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup and retaining the title is one of the team's biggest responsibilities.

He expressed these views while speaking during the ongoing Under-19 Skills Development Camp in Multan, where 31 players are currently participating. He said the camp has been organised with a clear roadmap in mind, with the team first set to tour England before shifting focus towards the Asia Cup.

Shahid Anwar said the coaching staff is working on the physical, mental, technical and tactical preparation of the players to equip them for future challenges. He added that special emphasis is also being laid on the players' lifestyle and overall development so they can be groomed into complete professionals.

He said the upcoming tour of England would be highly beneficial for the young cricketers, as playing in difficult conditions would help improve their game awareness, temperament and overall experience. According to him, such exposure is crucial for the development of



emerging players at this stage of their careers.

The Pakistan Under-19 head coach said the team's ultimate target is to win the next ICC Under-19 World Cup, which is still around 18 months away, and the current camp has been planned keeping that long-term objective in view. He said the support staff is fully engaged in improving the players' skills and fitness levels during the camp.

Shahid Anwar further said the purpose of the development programme is not only to prepare a strong Under-19 side but also to produce quality cricketers for Pakistan's senior team.

He noted that players like Ali Raza, Sameer Minhas, Farhan Yousaf and Abdul Subhan have already come through the pathway, while four Under-19 players are also currently attending a camp at the National Cricket Academy.

The Under-19 Skills and Development Camp underway in Multan is featuring 31 players and is considered a key part of Pakistan cricket's preparations for upcoming international assignments, including the England tour, Asia Cup title defence and the next Under-19 World Cup campaign.

Bunir Festival to Promote Sports, Culture and Creativity: Taj Muhammad

PROVINCE REPORT

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Sports and Youth Affairs, Taj Muhammad Khan Tarand, has announced that the grand cultural, sports and youth festival "Bunir Gul-ud-Namir 2026" will be held from June 28 to 30 to showcase the rich traditions, cultural heritage and youthful talent of Bunir.

He said the festival will provide an excellent platform to highlight Bunir's colorful culture, local skills, traditional sports and the creative abilities of young people. Residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly from Bunir and adjoining districts, have been invited to participate in the three-day event.

Taj Muhammad Khan Tarand stated that culture is the identity of a nation, while youth are its greatest asset. He said the provincial government is taking practical measures to preserve cultural heritage, promote sports and create positive opportunities for young people.

He described "Bunir Gul-ud-Namir 2026" as more than a festival, calling it a celebration of local traditions, community values and the immense potential of the youth.

The festival will feature cultural activities, traditional games, local arts and various youth-oriented events aimed at promoting social engagement and regional heritage.

KP Tennis Association strengthens leadership with Zahir Shah's appointment

PROVINCE REPORT



PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tennis Association has appointed Zahir Shah, Chairman SMBR Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (BPS-21), as Executive Senior Vice President of the Association with immediate effect.

The appointment was announced by President KP Tennis Association DIG Muhammad Saleem Khan Marwat in consultation with Senior Vice President Malik Umar Ayaz Khalil and members of the Executive Committee.

The Association warmly welcomed Zahir Shah and expressed confidence that his experience and leadership would contribute significantly to the promotion, development and advancement of tennis across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Association stated that it looks forward to benefiting from his valuable contributions in strengthening tennis activities and supporting the growth of the sport throughout the province.

Colombia beat DR Congo 1-0 to reach World Cup knockouts

Colombia will face Portugal in Miami on Saturday, while DR Congo take on Uzbekistan in Atlanta

GUADALAJARA: Colombia finally broke down a stubborn DR Congo side on Tuesday to secure a 1-0 win that guaranteed their place in the World Cup knockout rounds.

Victory in Guadalajara, courtesy of a 76th-minute goal from Daniel Munoz, took them top of Group K with six points — two clear of Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal with one game to go in the first round.

Portugal, held 1-1 by DR Congo in their opening match, earlier hammered Uzbekistan 5-0 in Houston, with Ronaldo scoring twice.

Colombian fans turned the Mexican stadium into a sea of yellow, vastly outnumbering supporters of the African nation.

The South Americans, who beat Uzbekistan 3-1 in their tournament opener, dominated the early stages, peppering Lionel Mpsasi's goal.

Munoz squandered an early chance and shortly afterwards had a goal ruled out for offside while James Rodriguez unleashed a stinging shot that was brilliantly saved as Colombia kept probing.

Mpsasi made further sharp stops from Johan Mojica and Luis Diaz as the Colombians, playing with pace and invention, continued to dominate.

But their intensity dipped after the first drinks break, allowing DR Congo to edge back into the contest and pose their own



occasional threat.

Mpsasi made another stunning save with his leg from Diaz in the 50th minute to keep the game goalless.

DR Congo briefly threatened but Crystal Palace defender Munoz made up for his first-half miss when his shot was deflected past a wrong-footed Mpsasi.

The African team did not give up and as the clock ticked past 90 minutes Colombian goalkeeper Camilo Vargas was forced to scramble to his left to turn a fierce Nathanael Mbuku shot behind.

Colombia, who failed to qualify for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, will face Portugal in Miami on Saturday, while DR Congo take on Uzbekistan in Atlanta.

The Africans still have an outside chance of reaching the last 32 in their first appearance at the World Cup since 1974, when the country was known as Zaire.

Education Dept Town-IV Peshawar hosts sports gala

WAQAR AHMED AWAN

PESHAWAR: The Education Department, Town-IV Peshawar, held its annual sports gala alongside a centralized examinations awards ceremony, bringing together academic distinction and sporting achievement in a coordinated display of student performance. The event reflected the department's broader emphasis on holistic education, designed to cultivate academic excellence alongside physical fitness, discipline, and leadership among students. District Education Officer (M) Peshawar, Irfan Ali, attended as chief guest.

The ceremony was also graced by Deputy DEO Irshad Ali Khan, SDEO Town-IV Syed Sakhawat Ali Shah, SDEO Town-II Bismillah Jan, ADEO Sports Dr Muhammad Saleem Afaqi, alongside principals, teachers, administrative officers, and a large number of students. Students from across Town-IV schools participated in a series of sporting competitions, displaying notable enthusiasm, discipline, and competitive resolve.

Winners were awarded trophies, medals, and certificates amid sustained applause from participants and guests. Students who achieved top positions in the centralized examinations were also formally recognised for their academic performance, drawing appreciation from education officials and school communities.



Speaking on the occasion, education officials stressed that sports remain an integral component of modern education systems, contributing to the development of resilience, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking skills.

They reiterated that academic learning, when combined with structured co-curricular engagement, produces more balanced and capable individuals. DEO Irfan Ali reaffirmed the department's commitment to improving educational standards and strengthening the learning environment across schools. Deputy DEO Irshad Khan said sports play a vital role in promoting discipline, positive engagement, and healthy lifestyles among

young people.

ADEO Sports Dr Muhammad Saleem Afaqi noted that school-level competitions serve as an essential platform for identifying and nurturing emerging sporting talent with potential for higher-level representation. The efforts of SDEO Town-IV Syed Sakhawat Ali Shah were widely acknowledged for promoting sports culture in schools and expanding opportunities for student participation despite limited resources.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of prizes and certificates, marking a formal recognition of student achievement in both academic and sporting fields.

KP's Muhammad Ahammad shines in PSA Satellite Squash Tournament

SPORTS REPORTER



PESHAWAR: Emerging squash player Muhammad Ahammad of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa delivered an impressive performance in the Sohail Qaiser Racket Sports Trust Pakistan PSA Satellite Squash Tournament, finishing as the runner-up. The tournament was held from June 20 to 23, 2026, at the PAF Mujahid Anwar Khan Squash Academy, Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi.

Muhammad Ahammad started his campaign with a convincing 3-1 victory over fellow Khyber Pakhtunkhwa player Yahya in the opening round. In the second round, he comfortably defeated

Hikmat Yar by 3-0 to advance further in the tournament.

Continuing his excellent form, Ahammad outclassed Haris Zahid 3-0 in the quarter-finals. He then secured another dominant 3-0 win against Saddam Hussain in the semifinals to book his place in the final.

In the championship match, Ahammad faced Abdullah Nawaz. Despite a determined effort, he lost 3-1 and finished the tournament as the runner-up, earning praise for his outstanding performance throughout the event.

Muhammad Ahammad's achievement was warmly appreciated by his parents, coach Tahir Iqbal, the Pakistan Squash Federation, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Squash Association, the Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Provincial Sports Minister, all of whom congratulated him and wished him success in future competitions.

Ahammad credited his success to the support of his coach, parents, and sports organizations, and expressed his determination to continue working hard to bring further honors to Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the national and international levels.

It is worth mentioning that Muhammad Ahammad is scheduled to participate in a US\$3,000 PSA Squash Tournament in Islamabad next month, where he is expected to continue his impressive run of performances.

Faisal Karim Kundi promises boost to sports in KP

Engaging youth in sports is the need of the hour and that the provincial leadership is taking practical steps to promote sporting activities: Governor KP

PROVINCE REPORT

PESHAWAR: A delegation led by Awami National Party Provincial Joint Secretary Hamid Khan Toofan called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House Peshawar to discuss the political situation, public issues and the promotion of sports in the province.

The delegation included Arshad

Khattak, Majeed Khattak, Saghar Nadeem and Darya Khan of the Kashmir Premier League. During the meeting, participants discussed measures to promote positive activities among youth, develop sports infrastructure and encourage cricket across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that engaging youth in sports is the need of the hour and that the provincial leadership is tak-

ing practical steps to promote sporting activities.

He noted that cricket is one of the most popular sports among the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and that the province possesses immense cricketing talent which deserves proper opportunities and support.

The Governor announced that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Champion League will be inaugurated soon, providing talented young cricketers from across the province with an excellent platform to showcase their abilities and advance their sporting careers.

The delegation appreciated the Governor's interest in youth development



and sports promotion and expressed hope that new initiatives would help nurture emerging talent in the province.



Anushka Sen to play lead role in a Korean movie

ISLAMABAD: Anushka Sen made her historical debut at a young age. She lands the lead role in a South Korean film as the first Indian actor. In the recent news, Jeju Olle, her upcoming romantic musical drama, stars Sen as Alisha, a singer who arrives on Jeju Island grieving the loss of her sister, and finds an unexpected connection with a singer-songwriter named Sunwoo, played by Kang Hyung-seok. Sen also noted that she shares a last name with her character in the film, adding that this detail made the film doubly special for her. The film, directed by Jin Kwang-Kyo and produced by Lucifer Productions and Celebridge, also stars Ha Ju-Young. This is also Sen's first commercial film and her first acting project performed largely in English. Shot across Jeju Island, the production is trilingual, with dialogue majorly in English and Korean, and some portions in Hindi. The film is currently being planned for release across India, Korea, and several markets across Asia and the Middle East. Speaking to THR India days after wrapping the shoot, Sen reflects on her three-year association with South Korea, learning experiences from the Korean filmmaking system, and why international projects are often harder than they look. This journey started three years ago, when I was appointed the honorary ambassador for Korea Tourism. That was a huge honour because I always wanted to be the bridge between Korea and India. With Jeju Olle, this becomes more historic and more prominent because this is a romantic musical. When I started watching K-dramas during COVID, I always wanted all my K-Drama



ISLAMABAD: Shiite Muslims take part in 8th Muharram ul Haram procession taken out Jamia Al-Murtaza (G-9/4) which concludes at Imambargah Imam Sadiq (G-9/2) in the Federal Capital. — PHOTO: ONLINE

Governor assures support for jewellery business

Kundi promises action on Mohmand issues

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday assured representatives of the gems and jewellery sector and a delegation from Mohmand district that their concerns would be taken up with relevant authorities for timely resolution.

A delegation of the Sarafa, Goldsmiths, Gems and Jewellery Traders and Exporters Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led by its president Amin Hussain Babar, called on the Governor and highlighted issues facing the gems and jewellery sector.

The delegation said that despite its vast potential, the sector had not received the attention it deserved and could significantly contribute to exports, revenue generation and employment opportunities.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possessed immense reserves of precious stones and mineral resources and that development of the gems and jewellery industry could help boost ex-

Governor praises Forces for eliminating six terrorists

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday paid tribute to security forces for a successful operation against Fitna Al-Khawarij in Lower Dir, commending the bravery and professionalism of the CTD and police personnel. The Governor lauded the joint operation carried out by the CTD and police, in which six highly wanted terrorists belonging to Fitna Al-Khawarij were killed. He appreciated the role of senior officials and personnel involved in the operation, saying their efforts reflected a high level of professionalism and commitment to maintaining peace and security in the province. Governor Kundi said the CTD and police had successfully eliminated enemies of humanity backed by India, demonstrating their operational capabilities and playing a vital role in curbing militancy and restoring peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

ports and create jobs. He assured the delegation that their proposals and concerns would be taken up with relevant federal institutions and departments.

In a separate meeting, a representative delegation from Mohmand district led by Dr Alam Zeb Mohmand met the Governor. Pakistan Peoples Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha was also present. The delegation apprised the Governor of various public issues, including prolonged and unscheduled power outages, reconstruction of Machni Bridge, lack of basic facilities in 25 villages, road infrastructure and other development-related matters.

Governor Kundi assured the delegation that their issues would be raised with the concerned departments.

He said a high-level meeting involving the TESCO chief executive officer, commissioner Peshawar, secretary PKHA and other relevant officials would be convened after Muharram to ensure practical measures for resolving electricity, road and bridge-related problems in the area.

US Chargé d'Affaires calls on Maritime Minister

Pakistan, US expand dialogue on Ports, Trade and Investment

PROVINCE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the maritime sector, focusing on investment, trade, port development and the blue economy.

The discussion took place during a meeting between Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and United States Chargé d'Affaires Natalie A. Baker, who called on the minister at his office on Wednesday.

Junaid Chaudhry highlighted the strategic importance of Pakistan's ports and coastal resources and invited US investors to explore opportunities in maritime infrastructure, shipping, logistics and port-related services.

He added that Pakistan was creating a



business-friendly environment for foreign investors and welcomed greater American participation in developing the country's blue economy.

Discussions also covered strengthening port infrastructure, improving logistics networks and enhancing connectivity to support regional and international trade.

Both sides exchanged views on boosting maritime commerce and unlocking investment tied to Pakistan's growing blue economy and agreed in principle to establish a joint working group to promote coordination and expand bilateral engagement in the sector.

IGP reviews Muharram security arrangements at Safe City Headquarters Peshawar

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulfiqar Hameed, visited the Safe City Command and Control Headquarters at Police Lines Peshawar to review security arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram.

During the visit, the IGP was briefed on the province-wide security plan for Muharram, monitoring of sensitive processions and gatherings, the Safe City camera network, modern surveillance systems, emergency response mechanisms, and coordination with field units.

Officials informed the IGP that Peshawar city has been fully covered through an extensive camera network, enabling police and the Counter Terrorism Department

(CTD) to identify wanted individuals in real time through advanced surveillance technology. Traffic violations are also being monitored through the system.

As part of enhanced security measures, around 80 police personnel have been equipped with body-worn cameras, while more than 30 City Patrol vehicles are conducting live monitoring operations. Thermal imaging cameras are also being used for surveillance during night-time hours.

A total of 347 cameras installed at various locations are monitoring Muharram processions and gatherings, while an additional 167 surveillance cameras are providing continuous coverage across the city.

The Safe City Headquarters in Peshawar is also directly monitoring the security sit-



uation in several districts, including Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Mardan, Hangu, Lakkhi Marwat and Tank.

The IGP inspected different sections of the Command and Control Centre, including live monitoring systems, video walls, emergency call response facilities and

security operations procedures.

Speaking to the media, Zulfiqar Hameed said that advanced technologies, including number plate recognition systems, facial recognition cameras and thermal imaging technology, are being utilized to strengthen security arrangements during

Muharram.

He stated that the Safe City Control Room would remain fully operational throughout Muharram to monitor all sensitive locations and the overall security situation. According to the IGP, security arrangements have been finalized in 14 districts of the province, six of which have been categorized as highly sensitive.

Personnel from the Frontier Corps (FC) will be deployed alongside police, while drone surveillance will be carried out in sensitive districts. He added that anti-drone technology has also been incorporated into the security plan in view of the increasing use of quadcopter drones.

The IGP emphasized that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, the CTD, Special Branch and all law enforcement agencies remain on high alert due to prevailing

security challenges in the province. Any potential threat will be dealt with immediately and decisively.

He reiterated the commitment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police to ensuring the protection of lives and property, safeguarding religious freedom and maintaining peace during Muharram-ul-Haram through the effective utilization of all available resources.

Earlier, the IGP chaired a video-link meeting with Regional Police Officers (RPOs) to review Muharram security arrangements across the province. The meeting discussed security plans, deployment of personnel, intelligence-based operations, search and strike operations, social media monitoring, and the use of Safe City technology and surveillance systems.

Spot ON

Swabi police eliminate three wanted criminals in encounter

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The Swabi police on Wednesday eliminated three notorious proclaimed offenders in an exchange of fire in Gadoon Abad area of Swabi. According to District Police Officer (DPO) Swabi, Waqas Rafiq, police received information about the presence of wanted accused in the area. Acting on the information, a police team conducted raid to arrest them. As the police approached, the suspects opened fire, prompting the police to retaliate. During the ensuing gun battle, all the three proclaimed offenders were killed.

Kidnapped infant recovered, three including woman held in Abbottabad

PESHAWAR: Police in Abbottabad have succeeded recovering a 17-day-old infant abducted from the Women and Children Hospital a day earlier. Police said on Wednesday that three suspects, including the main female accused have been arrested in connection with this heinous crime. According to police, the incident was immediately taken up by the district administration and the District Police Officer (DPO) Abbottabad formed special investigation teams under the supervision of SP Cantt Hamza Ali Butt.

Another school blow up in S Waziristan

PESHAWAR: In another act of violence against education, a government primary school was destroyed in an explosion in Srah Ghara area of Bermal Tehsil in Lower South Waziristan district. According to local admin on Wednesday, miscreants had planted explosive material inside the Government Primary School named after late Malik Shireen Jan. The explosives were later detonated, causing a powerful blast that severely damaged the school building and reduced a large portion of it to the rubble. Fortunately, no students, teachers or staff were present at the time of the incident and no casualties were reported.

Abaseen Arts Council Condolences Death of Bushra Farukh's Grandson

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Abaseen Arts Council has expressed deep sorrow over the death of the grandson of its Senior Executive Member, Bushra Farukh. Council President Dr. Ejaz Khattak, General Secretary Jahan Zeb Malik, and other members extended their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. In a statement, the Council prayed for the departed soul and asked Almighty Allah to grant patience and strength to the family during this difficult time.

KP to introduce AI-based monitoring for development projects

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Chief Minister on Finance, Muzammil Aslam has announced that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is preparing new legislation aimed at ensuring the timely completion of development projects, financial transparency and the efficient use of public resources.

Speaking during the budget debate in the provincial assembly, Aslam said unnecessary delays and rising costs in development schemes have placed a significant burden on government resources, making a clear legal framework essential.

He revealed that the provincial government is introducing an Artificial

Intelligence (AI)-based monitoring system to oversee development expenditures, scrutinize bills and improve financial management. An AI Authority is also being established to strengthen governance and enhance transparency through modern technology.

According to the proposed framework, development projects costing up to Rs100 million will be required to be completed within a maximum period of three years. Projects worth up to Rs1 billion will have a four-year completion deadline, while larger projects will be given a maximum of five years.