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PM directs to accelerate privatisation process of power DISCOs

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to accelerate the privatisation process of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs), reiterating that offloading loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) was a priority for the government.

Chairing a high-level review meeting here, the prime minister instructed officials to ensure complete transparency throughout the privatisation process and establish a robust regulatory framework immediately following the transition of the DISCOs to the private sector. During the briefing on the progress regarding the privatisation of DISCOs, it was told that in the first phase, Islamabad Electric

Supply Company (IESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPSCO), and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) would be privatised as the Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purpose had already been published in national and international newspapers.

It was told that the Cabinet Committee on Privatization had approved the transaction structure regarding the privatisation of the said three DISCOs.

The international roadshows are being organized starting this month to attract investors from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and China. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on privatisation of DISCOs.

Budget likely to be announced on June 12, says minister

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said on Tuesday that the budget for the next fiscal year (FY2026-27) would likely be presented in the parliament on June 12 (Friday).

He posted this on X, further stating that summaries to convene budget sessions in the National Assembly and Senate on June 10 (Wednesday) had been sent. The sessions for the NA and the Senate have been advised to be summoned at 5pm and 4pm, respectively, Chaudhry added. Before Chaudhry's statement, uncertainty had surrounded the date for the budget's presentation as the federal government, its coalition partners and provincial governments struggled to reach a consensus over the Centre's demand for more than Rs1 trillion for strategic needs. The meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC), officially called for Monday, was postponed for the third time at the last moment amid continuing negotiations over the freezing of provincial shares in the federal divisible pool under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. Muzammil Aslam, adviser on finance to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, confirmed that the Centre had told provinces that their financial shares under the NFC for the current year would not be increased next year.

Lebanese army commander calls on CDF Munir, discusses regional security environment

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: The Lebanese army commander held a meeting with Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir on Tuesday, during which the two exchanged views on the evolving regional security environment. The military's media affairs wing said in a statement that Lebanese armed forces' Commander-in-Chief General Rodolphe Haykal called on CDF Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. He was presented a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent upon his arrival at the GHQ, the statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations said. "During the meeting, both dignitaries exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, evolving regional security environment, defence cooperation and prospects for enhancing bilateral military relations," it added. The discussions focused on strengthening professional interactions, training cooperation and institutional linkages between the armed forces of the two countries, the statement said. It said Field Marshal Munir reaffirmed during the meeting the "importance Pakistan attaches to its longstanding and cordial relations with Lebanon and underscored the Pakistani Army's commitment to expanding defence collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces". For his part, General Haykal "appreciated the professionalism and operational excellence of Pakistan's armed forces and acknowledged their contributions to regional peace.

JUIF Chief, KP CM vows fight for province's constitutional rights

PEAK POINT



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi addressed a joint press conference alongside Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at Mufti Mahmood Markaz on Monday late night, stating that the purpose of the meeting was to hold detailed consultations on the province's constitutional and financial rights and to develop a consensus-based approach for the protection of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's interests. The Chief Minister stated that the most pressing issue relating to provincial rights was Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's share under the National Finance Commission (NFC) framework, and clarified that the federal government had subjected the province to discriminatory treatment over the past eight years. He maintained that, following the 25th Constitutional Amendment, the annual distribution of resources under the existing NFC framework had become unconstitutional, as the Constitution clearly provides that NFC resources are to be distributed among the four provinces.

US helicopter crew who went down in Strait of Hormuz rescued by drone

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: United States President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that two US helicopter crew members were "fine" following their rescue by a US Navy drone after their Apache gunship went down in the Iran-controlled Strait of Hormuz.

The US military's Central Command (Centcom) said the AH-64 Apache went down at around 3am local time on Tuesday (4am PKT) near the coast of Oman while patrolling regional waters. It gave no reason for the crash. The pair were rescued within about two hours.

India's key objectives in Afghanistan solely driven by singular goal of destabilising Pakistan, envoy tells UNSC

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's envoy to the United Nations said on Monday that India's key objectives in Afghanistan were "solely driven by the singular goal of destabilising Pakistan".

He made these remarks during a UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan while responding to remarks by Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad detailed the use of Afghan soil by terrorists and its impact on Pakistan, calling for the Afghan Taliban to take action against militants. He also spoke about Pakistan's counter-terror-

ism measures. Faiq also had accused Pakistan of commenting on Pakistan's striking a hospital in



counter-terrorism operations, in response to which Ambassador Ahmad said: "Pakistan's actions, including those conducted in March, were directed solely against the terrorist and military support infrastructure that is operating from Afghanistan. And it is in no way directed against the brotherly people of Afghanistan." On March 16, the Afghan Taliban

Kabul; however, Islamabad denied the accusations, maintaining that the strikes targeted terrorist infrastructure linked to hostile activity in Pakistan and no civilian facility was targeted. In response to the Afghan diplomat, Ambassador Ahmad reiterated Islamabad's position that strikes targeted "drone storage and technical support infrastruc-

ture and ammunition storage sites, which were being used by the Afghan Taliban regime to carry out attacks against innocent Pakistani civilians".

"The strikes were precise, deliberate and professional. No hospital or drug rehabilitation centre or civilian facility was targeted by these strikes. And as part of established practice, video footage of all six strikes was released by the Ministry of Information shortly after the operation, clearly showing the nature of the targets. "The secondary explosions visible in the footage further confirmed that ammunition storage facilities were indeed struck with precision. So all insinuations to the contrary are not based on facts and are in fact just propaganda," he asserted.

GB Election Commission bars consolidation of results until re-polling in 5 constituencies

PEAK POINT



GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan Election Commission has directed that the results of the June 7 election must not be consolidated until re-polling in five constituencies is complete, it emerged on Tuesday. In a circular to the returning officers concerned, dated June 8 and available with Dawn, the GB Election Commission noted that it had ordered re-polling at certain polling stations in their respective constituencies — Skardu-II (GBA-8), Astore-I (GBA-13), Diamer-I (GBA-15), Diamer-II (GBA-16), and Diamer-III (GBA-17). The Election Commission observed that the "process of consolidation of results under the relevant provisions of the Elections Act, 2017 and Elections Rules.



SPORTS



PFF launches ambitious nationwide drive to revive domestic football



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) unveiled a comprehensive nationwide football development programme centred around the District Football Championship 2026, youth competitions and administrative reforms designed to strengthen the domestic game. The initiative, announced at a press conference by PFF Chief Operating Officer Muhammad Shahid Niaz Khokhar alongside Media Director Umair Wasim, is being hailed as one of the most ambitious domestic football projects launched in recent years. Representatives of provin-

cial and regional football associations participated virtually in the briefing. Khokhar described district football as the foundation of Pakistan's football pyramid, stressing that sustainable success at national level could only be achieved through regular and organised football activity at the grassroots. "Strong national teams are built on strong grassroots structures. District football is where future talent is discovered and developed. Our objective is to create a clear and merit-based pathway for players to progress from local competitions to club football and ultimately the nation-

al teams," he said. For the first time, the federation will provide coordinated technical, administrative and logistical support to district football associations to ensure the smooth conduct of competitions across the country. The championships will be organised in collaboration with provincial and regional football bodies, which have been actively involved in the planning process. According to the federation, the District Football Championship 2026 will not only promote football activity nationwide but will also help identify and verify genuine clubs, strengthen local football institu-

tions and improve governance within the sport. The Pakistan Football Referees Association (PFRA) will assist the programme by providing qualified match officials and maintaining an updated database of registered referees to ensure professional standards during competitions. Following the district championships, the PFF plans to stage a National Club Championship, creating the next stage of the player development pathway. Talented footballers identified through the competitions will receive structured coaching and development opportunities under qualified trainers.

Gaddafi Stadium receives ICC demerit point over 'unsatisfactory' pitch rating



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has rated the pitches at both Lord's Cricket Ground and Gaddafi Stadium as "unsatisfactory" following recent international matches, with each venue receiving one demerit point under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process.

The decision relates to the first Test between England and New Zealand at Lord's and the third one-day international between Pakistan and Australia in Lahore. Match referees Andy Pycroft (Lord's) and Graeme La Brooy (Lahore) submitted reports expressing concerns over playing conditions.

At Lord's, Pycroft said the pitch produced "excessive seam movement" throughout the Test, with the ball also keeping extremely low at times and the bounce varying significantly. He noted that 33 wickets fell across the first two days, saying the surface heavily favoured bowlers over batters.

In Lahore, La Brooy described the pitch as slow and low, making run-scoring difficult and requiring batters to spend considerable time adjusting.

He also said the surface assisted spin early in the match and remained consistent in those conditions throughout, making it unsuitable for one-day international cricket standards.

Rs100 million partnership signals fresh push for hockey revival



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) and Pakistan Arab Refineries Limited (PARCO) have signed a landmark cooperation agreement worth Rs100 million aimed at strengthening coaching education, grassroots development and hockey activities across the country. The two-year

partnership was formalised at a ceremony attended by PHF President Mohyuddin Wani, PARCO Managing Director Irtiza Qureshi, Secretary Petroleum Hamid Yaqoob Sheikh, senior officials from both organisations and members of the Pakistan Under-21 hockey team currently undergoing training. Under the agreement, PARCO will provide financial assistance for coaching education programmes, coach development initiatives and nationwide hockey activities. The funding will also support stipends for coaches participating in the PHF's coaching framework, helping to create a more structured and sustainable development system. Describing the agreement as a major

step forward, PHF President Mohyuddin Wani said the federation was committed to rebuilding Pakistan hockey through practical and long-term measures. "We are focused on the development and revival of hockey through a comprehensive coaching structure. A nationwide coaches' education programme will soon be launched to raise coaching standards in line with modern international requirements," Wani said. He emphasised that developing qualified coaches was essential for producing future generations of players and strengthening the game at the grassroots level. Wani thanked PARCO and the Ministry of Petroleum for supporting the national sport.



PESHAWAR: A group photo of Sports Journalists with Advisor to KP Chief Minister Sports Taj Muhammad Khan Rind here on Tuesday.

Pakistan to host two major tennis events in 2026

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) on Monday announced that the nation would host two ITF W15,000 USD Women's Futures tournaments in Islamabad, starting on October 5, 2026, ahead of the Billie Jean King Cup.

This marks another historic milestone for Pakistan and the Pakistan Tennis Federation, as it will be the first time two back-to-back ITF W15,000 USD Women's Futures tournaments are being held in the country.

This milestone reflects PTF's commitment to promoting women's tennis and providing international competition opportunities at home.

Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President-PTF, said: "We successfully provided strong opportunities for our men's players through ITF Men's Futures tournaments. Now,

we are proud to host two ITF W-15000 USD Women's Futures tournaments in October, giving our female players a chance to earn ranking points and gain international exposure at home."

He added that these events will allow Pakistan's

Raja, Laibah Durab, and other emerging talents are expected to benefit from this initiative.

The Pakistan Women's Tennis Association, established in 2024 by the President-PTF, continues to support the growth and empowerment of women's



top women players to compete internationally without heavy travel costs and will help prepare them for the upcoming Billie Jean King Cup.

Ushna Suhail, Mahin Aftab, Soha Ali, Romaisa Malik, Bismal Zia, Meheq Khokhar, Zunaisha Noor, Zainab Ali Raja, Fatima Ali

tennis in Pakistan.

Asma Khawar Khawaja, President, Pakistan Women Tennis Association, said: "These W-15000 USD tournaments strengthen Pakistan's position in international tennis and reflect PTF's efforts to develop women's tennis and nurture future champions."

Perry powers Australia past England as India beat Windies in WCup warm-ups



Gilani calls for stronger Senate role in budget oversight



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday called for stronger parliamentary oversight of public finances, saying an effective scrutiny of the budget was essential for transparency, accountability, and democratic governance.

Addressing a knowledge-sharing seminar on strengthening the Senate's budgetary review, organised by the Senate of Pakistan in collaboration with Forum of Federations and

Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, he said the "power of the purse" remained Parliament's oldest and most important responsibility.

Referring to the historical foundations of parliamentary financial oversight, Gilani stressed that public resources must be managed transparently and in the public interest.

The Senate chairman highlighted the upper house's role in reviewing budgetary matters and said constitutional limitations should be viewed as an opportunity to improve institutional effectiveness.

He added that the Senate's recommendations on Money Bills played an important role in providing policy guidance and strengthening fiscal oversight.

Recalling the "Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment", introduced during his tenure as prime minister, Gilani said the reform strengthened the federal spirit of the Constitution and enhanced the Senate's institutional role.

He also stressed the need for stronger committee oversight, timely access to reliable fiscal data, and greater technical support for lawmakers.

Referring to international best practices, he cited parliamentary budget oversight models he observed during visits to Austria and Ireland.

Gilani expressed confidence that the seminar would help improve the Senate's budget review process, strengthen committee performance, and enhance parliamentary scrutiny to promote better governance and public trust.

Pakistan-China friendship reaches new heights after PM's China visit: Tarar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Tuesday said that Pakistan-China friendship had reached new heights following Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China, reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation and advancing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Addressing a ceremony, organised by Xinhua News Agency, in connection with the construction of CPEC, 75 years of Pakistan-China friendship and global governance initiatives, the minister said it was a matter of great pride for the government and the people of Pakistan that the two countries were celebrating 75 years of an unbreakable



bond.

He said Pakistan and China shared a unique relationship that went beyond conventional diplomatic ties.

"Many countries describe their relations as brotherly, friendly or cordial, but Pakistan and China have the distinct honour of being iron brothers," he remarked.

Paying tribute to the leadership and peoples of both countries, Tarar said a renewed commitment to Pakistan-China friendship had emerged from the recent visit to China.

Russian Ambassador condemns 'Starobilsk Massacre', warns of new phase in Ukraine Conflict



RAJA MOHSIN

ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Albert P. Khorev on Tuesday delivered a strongly-worded address during a special briefing at the Russian Embassy, condemning what he described as a "terrorist attack" by Ukrainian forces on a student residence and academic building in Starobilsk that left 21 young students dead and more than 60 injured. Addressing journalists, diplomats and observers, Ambassador Khorev said the May 22 strike on the educational facility

in Starobilsk represented a tragic turning point in the conflict and crossed what he termed a "red line" for Moscow. "The victims were young students with their entire lives ahead of them. This crime against children and youth cannot be ignored by the international community," he said. According to the Ambassador, the attack prompted Russia to launch a new phase of military operations aimed at what Moscow describes as Ukraine's military-industrial infrastructure and command centers. He referred to Russia's subsequent precision strikes using advanced missile systems, including Kinzhal, Zircon, Iskander and Oreshnik missiles, saying they were carried out in response to what he called escalating attacks on civilians. Khorev sharply criticized Western governments and international organizations for what he described as a selective and politically motivated response to civilian casualties.

The Night a Generation Was Lost



RAJA MOHSIN

ISLAMABAD: Only hours earlier, the dormitories and classrooms of Starobilsk had been filled with the ordinary sounds of youth: laughter in hallways, conversations about exams, dreams of future careers, and plans for the summer ahead. Young men and women who had chosen education as their path forward were preparing not for war, but for life. Then, in a single night, according to Russian officials, those dreams were shattered. For Russia, the tragedy in Starobilsk has become far more than another episode in a long and bitter conflict. It is remembered as a human catastrophe that claimed the lives of students whose greatest ambition was to teach children, serve their communities and build a better future. Their photographs now look out from memorial displays across the country—smil-

ing faces frozen in time, unaware of the fate that awaited them. What makes the story so painful is the simplicity of their dreams. Yelena Martimyanova wanted to become a preschool teacher. Sofia Fen was known as a natural leader with a gift for working with children. Maxim Bugakov dreamed of a future in computer programming. Others hoped to become educators, archivists, administrators and community leaders. None of them sought fame. None expected that their names would one day be known far beyond the walls of their college. In Moscow, officials describe the attack as a tragedy that exposed the vulnerability of civilians caught in the conflict. Russian diplomats have repeatedly argued that the international community has failed to show sufficient concern for the victims and their families. For many Russians, this perceived silence has deepened the sense of grief. They see not only the loss of twenty-one young lives, but also the loss of twenty-one futures that might have enriched society for decades to come. Behind every victim stood a family. Somewhere, a mother still waits for a voice she knows she will never hear again. Somewhere, a father struggles to understand how a child he spent years raising could disappear in a single moment.

Ahsan stresses adherence to Islamic teachings for peaceful, prosperous society

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI:

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said Muslims could regain their lost glory and achieve success by sincerely following the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah in every sphere of life. Addressing the annual Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) and Urs gathering here at Eidgah Shrine, the minister said it was a great honour for him to participate in the spiritually significant event. He said Allah Almighty had blessed Muslims by making them followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the most beloved personality in the universe and the source of guidance for humanity. Highlighting the unparalleled status of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), Ahsan Iqbal said there could never be any comparison between the Creator and His creation, yet Allah Almighty Himself commanded believers to send blessings upon the Prophet (PBUH), reflecting the Holy Prophet's exalted rank and honour. The minister.

Governor KP lauds PID's role in countering disinformation, promoting national narrative

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday visited the Press Information Department (PID) here, where he was briefed on the department's performance, responsibilities and various operational wings.

Pakistan Peoples Party Central Secretary Information Nadeem Afzal Chan accompanied the Governor during the visit. Principal Information Officer (PIO) Mubashir Hassan, Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, received the Governor upon his arrival.

During the briefing, officials highlighted PID's role in effectively communicating government policies and promoting the national narrative at both domestic and international levels.

Speaking on the occasion,



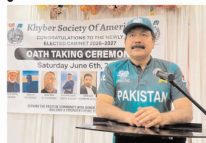
Governor Kundi appreciated the department's performance in line with modern communication requirements and said the Ministry of Information and its attached organizations were rendering valuable services in safeguarding national interests and ensuring the timely dissemination of accurate information.

He said the ministry's efforts to counter negative and misleading narratives against Islam and the State of Pakistan were commendable and reflected its commitment to protecting the country's image.

Consul General Attends oath-taking ceremony of khyber society of America

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: The Consul General of Pakistan in New York, Mr. Aamer Ahmed Atozai, attended the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected cabinet of the Khyber Society of America as the Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, the Consul General congratulated the incoming office-bearers and commended the Society's longstanding efforts in promoting unity, cultural heritage, and community engagement among Pakistani-Americans, particularly those with roots in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasized the



important role of diaspora organizations in strengthening people-to-people ties and fostering a positive image of Pakistan abroad. Mr. Atozai expressed his best wishes to the new cabinet and reaffirmed the Consulate's support for initiatives aimed at serving and empowering the community.

Dialogue among civilizations imperative for peaceful resolution of conflicts and sustainable stability: Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that fostering mutual respect, tolerance, and constructive engagement among diverse cultures, civilizations, and nations is indispensable for global peace, stability, and shared prosperity. He stated that in the prevailing global scenario, dialogue, diplomacy, and mutual cooperation, rather than confrontation, are the need of the hour for the peaceful resolution of differences and disputes. He made these remarks in his message

issued on the occasion of the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations, observed worldwide on June 10 each year. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that Pakistan has consistently championed the cause of global peace, interfaith harmony, tolerance, and mutual respect at the international level. He added that contemporary security, economic, and environmental challenges facing the global community can only be effectively and sustainably addressed through collective efforts,

parliamentary diplomacy, and constructive engagement. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq further stated that parliaments, being the true representatives of the people, can play a pivotal role in promoting harmony, respect, and cordial relations among nations. He highlighted that the 103 Parliamentary Friendship Groups established in the National Assembly of Pakistan are actively contributing to strengthening ties with parliaments around the world, enhancing mutual understanding, fostering trust and

respect, and advancing shared development and sustainable peace. Referring to Pakistan's diplomatic role, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that during recent tensions in the Middle East, Pakistan, as a responsible and peace-loving state, played a constructive and proactive role in promoting dialogue and understanding between East and West. He noted that Pakistan's efforts for the promotion of dialogue have been widely acknowledged at the international level. NA Speaker further added that during the Pakistan-India

tensions as well, Pakistan demonstrated a responsible approach by offering transparent, impartial, and joint investigations into the Pahalgam false flag incident in response to India's unfounded propaganda against Pakistan, while consistently emphasizing dialogue and diplomatic means for resolution. He said Pakistan has always prioritized peaceful dispute resolution, regional stability, and trust-building. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the statesmanship of Prime Minister Muhammad

Shehbaz Sharif of the strategic leadership of Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir played a significant role in effectively presenting Pakistan's stance at the global level, which was widely recognized by the international community. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stressed that all outstanding disputes must be resolved through dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect for sovereignty, rights, and the principle of self-determination. He reiterated the need for a peaceful settlement.