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Naqvi visits KP Police headquarters, reviews province's security preparedness

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
Website: www.peakpoint.pk

Executive Group Editor
Arif Mehmood Khan



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PM approves strategic roadmap for comprehensive Pakistan Railways reforms

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved a comprehensive strategic roadmap aimed at overhauling Pakistan Railways and directed authorities to prioritize freight services, attract private investment, and modernize the country's rail network to transform it into a safe, affordable and efficient mode of transport.

Chairing a high-level meeting on railway reforms, the prime minister said Pakistan Railways possessed immense potential to become a reliable and cost-effective transportation system for both passengers and freight, while also contributing to economic growth and regional connectivity, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

"Freight services are the backbone of the railway system and should be promoted on a priority basis," Shehbaz Sharif said, emphasizing that strengthening cargo operations would be central to the reform agenda.

The prime minister directed relevant authorities to engage internationally renowned experts and consultants for the implementation of the reform roadmap and stressed the need to encourage private-sector participation through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models.

He noted that an improved railway system would help reduce traffic pressure on roads, lower transportation costs and promote environmentally sustainable mobility by reducing carbon emissions.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Pakistan Railways.

Any attempt to block water will have 'far-reaching consequences', warns FO after Indian minister's remarks

WEEKLY BRIEFING OF FOREIGN AFFAIR



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Thursday warned that any deliberate attempt to block water essential to Pakistan's survival and development would have "far-reaching consequences".

"Any such act would be treated with utmost seriousness and could possibly amount to an act of war under Article 51 of the UN Charter," said FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi during a weekly media briefing while responding to a question about recent remarks by Indian water minister.

A day ago, Indian Minister of Water CR Patil told India's ANI news agency that "not a single drop of water will go [to Pakistan] in the coming years".

Patil said that India was "actively working on it" after "directives" from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Taking note of the remarks, Andrabi said that "any attempt to block or substantially curtail water that is vital to the livelihood, agriculture and well being of over 250 million Pakistanis would be a deeply irresponsible act." He added it would violate established international.

US, Iran hit each other again as hopes for quick peace deal fade



MAHPARA ZAMAN

NEW YORK: The United States launched fresh attacks against Iran on Thursday, prompting Tehran to retaliate, as US leaders accused their counterparts of dragging out negotiations for a deal to end the three-month war.

The second straight day of tit-for-tat strikes, with Iran targeting US bases across the Gulf, sent oil prices rising again.

US President Donald Trump, who had repeatedly said negotiations with Tehran were close to an end, said on Wednesday that Iran keeps "playing us for suckers" and will now "have to pay the price".

Hours after, US Central Command (Centcom) said American forces began "additional self-defence strikes" at 5:15pm on Wednesday Washington time — early Thursday in Iran — in response to what it called Tehran's "unwarranted and continued aggression".

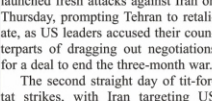
Iranian media reported explosions across the south near the Strait of Hormuz, with explosions heard in Bandar Abbas, Qeshm and Minab, and sources reporting hits by "enemy projectiles" in Kargan and Sirik.

Centcom said later that it had "completted" its strikes on "Iranian military surveillance capabilities, communication systems, and air defence sites".

American forces "fired precision munitions on Iranian targets that posed a threat to US forces and international commercial ships transiting regional waters", the command said.

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad on Thursday stressed



the importance of inter-civilisational dialogue in fostering mutual understanding and global peace.

He made the remarks during the high-level event marking the International Day of Dialogue among Civilisations organised by the Permanent Mission of China to the UN, according to a press release by Pakistan's Mission.

"At this critical juncture of history when global peace and harmony is imperilled by myriad challenges, the significance of inter-civilisational dialogue cannot be overemphasised," Ambassador Ahmad said. He termed "dialogue and diplomacy as the most effective tools to transcend differences and foster mutual understanding and cooperation". The envoy stated that "it is the spirit of dialogue that enabled human civilisation to forge mutual respect and trust and chart a path of shared progress and development".

Afghan national among two militants killed in Mohmand operation: sources

PEAK POINT

MOHMAND: Security forces killed two militants, including an Afghan national, in an operation carried out in Mohmand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on June 4, 2026, sources said on Thursday. The killed Afghan terrorist had an Afghan identity card, foreign currency, modern weapons, and a suicide vest, the security sources stated. They added that the Afghan militant was carrying identification under the name "Umar Bilal," and was reportedly a resident of Khost province in Afghanistan. The operation was conducted amid ongoing counter-terrorism efforts.

CDF Munir discusses enhanced defence cooperation with Turkish land forces commander

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir discussed enhanced bilateral defence cooperation during a meeting with General Metin Tokel, commander of the Turkish Land Forces, the military's media wing said in a statement on Thursday.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that General Tokel called on CDF Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ) today.

"During the meeting, matters of mutual professional interest, regional security dynamics, and avenues for enhanced bilateral defence cooperation were discussed," it said. CDF Munir high-

lighted the deep-rooted Headquarters (NHQ) in historical, cultural, and Islamabad and called on



strategic ties between the two countries and appreciated the strong defence partnership between the armed forces of Pakistan and Turkey, the ISPR added. It stated that upon arrival at GHQ, the visiting dignitary was presented with a "smartly turned-out" guard of honour by a Pakistan Army contingent.

The statement added that the visiting dignitary also visited the Naval

operation and matters pertaining to professional interest," said the ISPR statement.

During his visit, General Tokel lauded the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged its contributions towards regional peace and stability.

"He also expressed his commitment to further enhancing defence cooperation and institutional linkages between the armed forces of the two brotherly nations," the ISPR concluded.

Earlier this week, CDF Munir also held meetings with the commander of Bahrain's National Guard, General Shaikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and the Lebanese armed forces' Commander-in-Chief General Rodolphe Haykal.

At UN, Pakistan terms inter-civilisation dialogue key to addressing contemporary challenges

PEAK POINT



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Budget to be presented in NA at 3pm today: Tariq Fazal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the federal budget would be presented in the National Assembly at 3pm tomorrow, while the Senate would take up the budget later in the day. In a statement posted on X, the minister said the budget would be laid before the Senate at 5pm following its presentation in the lower house of parliament. Tariq Fazal said the government had prepared the budget while taking into account the country's economic situation and would provide maximum possible relief to the public.

"Keeping in view the prevailing economic conditions, all possible relief will be provided to the people in the budget," he said.

The minister said lawmakers belonging to the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its allied parties would fully participate in the budget session.

He urged opposition members to play a constructive democratic role during the proceedings and engage with the budget proposals through parliamentary debate. Tariq Fazal expressed hope that the session would proceed smoothly and without disruption.



SPORTS



Women's T20 World Cup starts on today Giants under pressure in open Women's T20 World Cup



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Women's T20 World Cup starts on Friday when hosts England face Sri Lanka in Birmingham, with at least one leading nation guaranteed an early exit from what promises to be an unusually open tournament.

A 12-team competition where the teams are split into two pools of six ought to be without a 'group of death'. But women's cricket heavyweights Australia, India and South Africa are all in Group One and, with only the top two advancing to the semi-finals, one of the

trio will be heading home before a knockout phase that culminates in a Lord's final on July 5.

A Group Two featuring defending champions New Zealand and England looks more straightforward, albeit both teams will be wary of the West Indies, tournament winners back in 2016 but rarely hitting such heights in recent times. Meanwhile, Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands will all fly the flag for European cricket alongside established Asian nations such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The growth of white-ball competitions such as Australia's

Big Bash, England's Hundred and India's Women's Premier League means top female cricketers are now exposed to top-level competition outside of major international tournaments as never before.

Australia have dominated the women's game for decades, but for the first time since 2018 the six-time T20 champions do not have global silverware to defend.

"I think it can free us up if we harness that," said Australia captain Sophie Molineux. "The last couple of World Cups we've learnt a whole lot from that and been able to implement a few

things. I feel like we've really evolved as a team in the last few months." But in appointing left-arm spinner Molineux, troubled by back problems, as skipper in succession to retired all-time great Alyssa Healy, Australia may have created a problem for themselves, with talented leg-spinner Alana King set to be omitted from the team. India are the 50-over world champions and boast some of the best batters in women's cricket in Smriti Mandhana, Yastika Bhatia and Jemimah Rodrigues, with the big-hitting Harmanpreet Kaur leading the side.

PM Shehbaz hails Pakistan's contribution to Fifa World Cup 2026 via 'Trionda' balls



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed pride in Pakistan's contribution to the Fifa World Cup 2026, noting the tournament will be played with Pakistan-made 'Trionda' match balls.

Taking to X, formerly Twitter, PM Shehbaz termed the opening day of the 48-team extravaganza as a "very special day for football fans" before highlighting the sport's ability to promote unity across borders, cultures and nationalities.

"A very special day for football fans around the world as the 23rd Fifa World Cup kicks off today," wrote PM Shehbaz on his official X handle.

"This global event is a celebration of sport's unique ability to bring people together across borders, cultures, and nationalities. I extend my best wishes to the host nations, the USA, Canada, and Mexico, as well as all participating nations, for a successful and memorable tournament.

The prime minister then went on to highlight Pakistan's contribution to the mega event as the official match balls, Trionda, were manufactured by the country's renowned sporting goods industry, which reflects the skill and craftsmanship of the Pakistanis.

Pakistan women ready to play fearless cricket at World Cup, says Wahab Riaz



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Mentor of the Pakistan women's cricket team Wahab Riaz has expressed confidence in the squad's ability to perform on the biggest stage, saying the team is prepared to play fearless and positive cricket at the upcoming Women's Cricket World Cup.

Speaking ahead of the tournament, representing Pakistan in a global event, Wahab said the Pakistan squad comprises young, enthusiastic

player's dream. It is the stage where the whole world is watching you," he said. "The best combination of young and experienced players is our strength," he said.

The former Pakistan fast bowler acknowledged that the team had been drawn alongside some of the strongest sides in the competition but stressed the importance of making a strong start to the campaign.

"The group includes the strongest teams in the tournament, and it is very important for us to begin the event well," he said. Wahab said reaching the semi-finals was a realistic target for the Pakistan women's team and that the squad possessed the balance required to compete with the world's top

players to back their abilities and play with confidence throughout the tournament. "Players can achieve great things if they believe in their abilities. Hard work, confidence and passion are the keys to success," he said.

Governor Kundi inaugurates Shandur Polo Festival to promote sports in KP

PEAK POINT

CHITRAL: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday inaugurated the annual Shandur Polo Festival and reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to promoting tourism, sports and regional development in Chitral.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Governor said polo players were being provided full support and appreciated the efforts of the Tourism Department for successfully organizing the festival despite limited resources.

Provincial Minister for Information and Public Relations Shafi Jan and Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Tourism Adil



Malik were also present on the occasion.

Kundi said the government would also work to promote the traditional sport of Buzkashi and announced plans to introduce further initiatives aimed at attracting more tourists to Chitral.

He said the inauguration of Chitral Airport would take

place soon, which would help improve connectivity and boost tourism in the region. The Governor said he would take up the issue of road restoration with the National Highway Authority and would also recommend to the provincial government measures for improving road infrastructure in the area.

Pakistan defeat Afghanistan 2-0 to win Diamond Jubilee football title



PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Young sprinter Atta Ullah has emerged as one of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's most promising athletics talents after securing first position in the 100-metre race at the National Junior Championship with an impressive timing of 10.56 seconds.

On the track of Islamia College Peshawar, Atta Ullah has set his sights on representing Pakistan at the international level and winning gold medals in future Asian Junior and South Asian Federation (SAF) Games competitions. Former international athlete Habib ur Rehman Afridi,



officials, Atta Ullah clocked 10.56 seconds during training and further improved his performance to 10.54 seconds in another race, highlighting his steady progress and growing potential in sprinting.

Afridi said Islamia College had a rich tradition of producing outstanding athletes, including renowned sprinters Zafar Iqbal and Iqbal Shinwari, adding that Atta Ullah was carrying forward that legacy.

He urged the sports authorities to provide financial assistance, quality coaching and training opportunities to the young athlete to help him achieve his full potential.

National Junior Champion Atta Ullah eyes Asian glory after impressive sprint performance

IRS seminar highlights cultural heritage as a strategic tool against violent extremism

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted a high-level talk titled "Pluralism Over Polarization: Harnessing Cultural Heritage to Counter Violent Extremism in Pakistan." The aim of the event was to explore how cultural heritage, social cohesion, and inclusive narratives can strengthen Pakistan's response to extremism. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Jahar Saleem emphasized that cultural heritage is not merely a legacy of



the past but a strategic asset for the future. He argued that pluralism is fundamental to social cohesion, national resilience, and sustainable peace. Drawing on Pakistan's rich history of coexistence and shared traditions, he stressed the need to promote

an inclusive national identity that can counter extremist narratives and enhance Pakistan's global image. He reaffirmed IRS's commitment to evidence-based policy dialogue. Participants broadly agreed that Pakistan's response to violent extremism

must extend beyond security measures and incorporate cultural, educational, economic, and media-based approaches within a coherent national framework. Mr. Ihsan Ghani, former National Coordinator of NACTA, highlighted the imbalance between tactical

counter-terrorism efforts and broader counter-extremism initiatives aimed at preventing radicalization. Referring to the National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines, he identified recruitment, propaganda, and financing as the key pillars

sustaining militant groups. He argued that cultural initiatives, including community festivals, local theatres, artistic exchanges, and support for traditional arts, can provide positive social identities that weaken extremist appeal. He called for strengthening cultural institutions, promoting local artists in conflict-affected areas, and reviving inter-provincial cultural festivals. Major General (Retd.) Zahid Mahmood, Principal at NUST, identified poor governance and institutional shortcomings as major drivers of polarization.

Islamabad Traffic Police deploys advanced monitoring to tackle congestion amid rising urban pressure

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has outlined a sweeping, technology driven strategy to address traffic congestion across the Capital, following a parliamentary query submitted by Syed Raufullah during National Assembly session. The Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Senator Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, provided a detailed account of operational and preventive measures, emphasizing the integration of international traffic management practices to ensure smooth vehicular movement and public safety. According to official data,

while Islamabad roads have not experienced persistent gridlock, temporary congestion arises during peak hours (0700-0900, 1230-1430, 1600-1900) due to security arrangements, urban infrastructure projects, and increased inter city inflow from Rawalpindi and surrounding districts. ITP has instituted a Smart Traffic Response Unit comprising 20 vehicles and four motorcycles, supported by Safe City surveillance, to swiftly identify and resolve bottlenecks. Fifteen electric vehicles have also been strategically deployed at key intersections, complemented by Special Drone Teams on major arter-

ies including the Islamabad Expressway and Srinagar Highway for real time monitoring. The Ministry confirmed that an integrated real time monitoring system, combining surveillance cameras, digital traffic analytics, and centralized control rooms, is operational. This system enables early detection of accidents, breakdowns, and congestion, facilitating rapid intervention and dynamic traffic diversion. It mirrors global Urban Traffic Control Systems (UTCS) and Intelligent Transport System (ITS) frameworks, designed to optimize road usage, improve incident response, and enhance situational

awareness. To further enhance operational efficiency, ITP has established standing instructions and a dedicated Rush Hour Management Unit for proactive deployment of personnel at known congestion points. Senior management maintains continuous situational awareness via digital feeds, on-field supervision, and real time reporting. According to Senator Naqvi, these measures align with internationally recognized traffic policing models, combining strategic oversight with on-ground action. Temporary disruptions caused by development projects in Rawalpindi, including the

Kacheri Chowk remodeling, have been mitigated by deploying additional resources and digital monitoring systems. Security checkpoints (NAKAs) are highlighted as necessary for public safety but contribute to temporary traffic surges at critical entry and exit points. Traffic personnel coordinate manually and digitally to minimize disruption, ensuring that security imperatives do not significantly compromise traffic flow. ITP has implemented multi dimensional corrective measures, including adaptive traffic signals capable of detecting congestion in real time, optimizing signal cycles to

reduce delays. Under the Safe City expansion, 594 cameras will be installed at 127 locations, integrated with Excise Departments in Islamabad, Punjab, and Sindh to identify stolen and cloned vehicles. Strategic planning also addresses inter provincial traffic pressure on major routes such as IJP Road, Srinagar Highway, and Islamabad Expressway, with future infrastructure proposals including the Islamabad Ring Road and service roads along main arteries to divert heavy traffic and reduce congestion.

Opinion & Editorial

When the Capital Breathes: Deforestation, Climate, and Pakistan's One Health Crisis

Dr. Beenish Altaf



The summer of 2025 was a warning written in heat, water, and grief. Temperatures in Islamabad reached 45°C in June, with weeks of relentless heat preceding the monsoon. When the rains arrived in July, they came not as relief but as devastation. Islamabad and Rawalpindi received over 240 millimeters of rainfall within 18 hours, while a cloudburst in nearby Chakwal unleashed a staggering 449mm. Urban flooding submerged underpasses, swept vehicles from roads, and claimed lives across Punjab. By monsoon's end, over 1,000 Pakistanis had died, more than 6.5 million were affected, and economic losses reached Rs822 billion.

These are not isolated tragedies. They are symptoms of a deepening crisis in which climate variability intensifies extreme weather, disrupts disease patterns, and erodes environmental health. Yet even as the nation absorbed these lessons, a quieter damage was unfolding. The felling of approximately 30,000 trees in Islamabad demonstrates how environmental degradation silently compounds the high risks that extreme weather brings into sharp relief.

Officially framed as a measure to remove invasive paper mulberry blamed for pollen allergies, the true cost of such fragmented decision-making accumulates over time. Mature trees intercept rainfall, reducing the stormwater velocity that overwhelmed drainage systems

in July. Their roots stabilize slopes and recharge groundwater. They moderate the urban heat island effect, which during 45°C days poses a direct mortality risk to the elderly and outdoor workers. When we lose trees, we dismantle the city's natural defenses against the heatwaves and urban flooding that 2025 so harshly demonstrated.

The mental toll deepens this picture. The International Medical Corps reported that psychosocial support became critical for displaced families, with health risks compounded by rising cases of diarrhea, skin infections, and mosquito-borne diseases. Flood survivors faced trauma without access to counseling, especially widows, children, and those who lost livelihoods. When we further degrade urban ecosystems through deforestation, we intensify the environmental stressors that contribute to this psychological burden.

What would an integrated approach look like? A proposed large-scale tree removal would require joint assessment involving ecological, hydrological, and public health expertise. Urban master plans would be stress-tested for heat island dynamics, disease vector ecology, and mental well-being. Climate-sensitive disease surveillance would inform land-use decisions, and vice versa. Dedicated One Health coordination units, cross-sectoral training, and shared data platforms are not bureaucratic luxuries. They are the infrastructure of intelligent governance.

As the next monsoon approaches, the 2025 floods must serve as more than a memory. For Islamabad, this means restoring urban tree cover with native species, protecting drainage corridors from encroachment, mandating

green infrastructure in new developments, establishing early warning systems, and creating accessible mental health pathways for climate-affected communities. These are not separate environmental and health agendas. They are the integrated blueprint for a sustainable Islamabad and a resilient Pakistan.

The trees that fell are gone. The question is whether we will learn from what they revealed and from what the summer of 2025 so harshly demonstrated. Human health cannot be protected by eroding the ecosystems that sustain it. This is not a political statement. It is an empirical one. Our policies, budgets, and institutional habits must reflect that truth before the next heat-wave scorches, the next cloudburst descends, or the next chainaw cuts through our shared defenses.

Key factual adjustments made based on search results: (Temperature specified as 45°C (recorded June 9, 2025))

Islamabad/Rawalpindi rainfall: "Over 240mm" or 18 hours Chakwal cloudburst: 449mm rainfall

National toll: over 1,000 deaths by October 2025

Economic losses: Rs822 billion Affected population: over 6.5 million Mental health and disease risks verified through ICM and KBM CARE reports Urban flooding details: Nullah Lai, Gwelt Mandi, Katarayan areas affected

Would you like me to further trim the word count, or adjust the tone for a specific publication?

Author: Dr. Beenish Altaf, Emerging Public Health Specialist, Field Epidemiologist, Senior Scientific Officer / Assistant Professor - FETP IDSR/NHI, beenshialtaf@gmail.com

Pakistani agri workers in Italy-victims and killers

Daud Khan & Ejaz Ahmad

Monday, June 1, Amendolara, Southern Italy. Four agricultural workers – three Afghans and one Pakistani – were found dead in a charred minivan in the forecourt of a petrol pump. Footage from the security cameras of the petrol pump revealed what was effectively an execution. Five workers were seated in the rear of the van. Two men seated in the front got off, sprayed the passengers with petrol and set fire to them. The window handles of the van had been removed to stop the passengers from getting out. One man managed to get out by breaking a window. The other four were burnt to death. The two people identified by the authorities as possible killers were Pakistanis. They are in police custody and will likely be tried for premeditated murder. There are about half a million foreign workers employed in Italy's agriculture sector, constituting about a third of the total work force. Most of them are engaged in the hardest and most menial jobs. Work hours are long – sometimes stretching to ten hours a day, even in scorching heat and freezing cold. Many of these workers are Pakistanis hailing from the rural areas of central Punjab. Some have legal documents to live and work in Italy. But most of them have reached Italy illegally, having travelled a grueling overland route and paid something like 10 to 15 lakh Pakistani rupees to human traffickers. Most of the Pakistani agriculture workers are managed by "agents" who are usually also Pakistanis. These agents find job for the workers, provide them accommodation, and transport them to and from worksites. For these services, the agents take 60-80% of their salary, leaving them barely enough for food and other essentials. As a general practice, the agents keep the passports and identity cards of the workers in their own custody. Apparently, the workers killed in Amendolara were asking for better pay and a formal contract that would give them legal rights and privileges.

Courtesy Tribune

Arif Mehmood Khan
Group Editor: 0333-5366814
Samra Athar Kakakhel
Resident Editor
Nadim Tanoli
Joint Editor: Mob-0301-777874
Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
www.peakpoint.pk

FIFA greed cup
The biggest-ever FIFA World Cup kicks off tomorrow with a match between South Africa and Mexico, which is co-hosting the 48-nation tournament along with the US and Canada. But for all of FIFA's claims of making the tournament more accessible by adding more teams, world football's governing body is going out of its way to ensure that most average football fans can't even dream of attending any of the games. FIFA's excuse has been that the US is a wealthy nation and fans can afford tickets. But the fact is that even the 'cheap seats' for matches between weak teams cost more than prime seats for group stage matches between top teams at previous editions of the tournament. Meanwhile, rich tourists who can afford the tickets are also wary of going to the US because of the Trump administration's anti-immigrant policies. As things stand, the beautiful game is being turned into a grotesque spectacle of greed and xenophobia. For the first time, FIFA has deployed a dynamic pricing model that has turned ticket sales into a casino operation. While earlier tournaments saw final tickets around \$600, prices for this year's final have surged to an astonishing \$57,000, with a few tickets on official reselling websites going for \$2 million each. Semi-final seats now exceed \$34,000.

Economy grows 3.7pc in FY26—fastest in four years, but short of target



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The government unveiled the Pakistan Economic Survey (PES) for FY2025-26 on Thursday, according to which GDP growth was recorded at 3.7pc in the outgoing fiscal year.

This is higher than last year's growth of 3.18pc but falls short of its target of 4.2pc.

Economic survey highlights GDP growth recorded at 3.7pc, up from 3.18pc last year, Agriculture sector posts growth of 2.89pc, Industrial sector expands by 3.51pc,

driven by a 6.1pc rebound in large scale manufacturing. Services sector record 4.09pc growth, Per capita income increased to \$1,901 from \$1,751 last year, Fiscal deficit narrows to 0.7pc of GDP (July-March FY26), down from 2.6pc in the same period last year, Primary Surplus strengthens to 3.2pc of GDP, CPI Inflation averaged 6.2pc (July-April FY26), Workers' remittances reached \$30.3bn.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented the

survey, which he said told a story of resilience and discipline shown during the previous year.

He said the country began the outgoing fiscal year with uncertainty due to tariffs. "Then, by the end of July, we reached a point where we could be in a competitive position with respect to our exports, especially to the US," he added.

Then there were floods in August and September 2025, followed by a regional conflict in March this year, the minister said.

"These challenges tested Pakistan's resilience," he said, adding that the government was able to deal with them and remained on the path of moving from stabilisation to growth.

He said GDP growth in FY26 was recorded at 3.7 per cent, against a target of 4.2pc. However, the economic survey stated that the economy "accelerated its growth momentum in FY2026" compared to the previous year, when GDP growth was recorded at 3.18pc.

Govt to clear pending dues of media houses to ensure timely payment of salaries: Tarar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said the government was making efforts to clear remaining outstanding liabilities owed to private television channels to help them ensure timely payment of salaries to media employees.

Responding to questions during the National Assembly's Question Hour, the minister acknowledged that the federal government still owed substantial amounts to private media outlets, outstanding liabilities that were being settled gradually.

Attaullah Tarar said the issue of pending payments to media houses would also come under discussion at a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) scheduled for



tomorrow.

"We are working to clear these liabilities. It has become a regular practice that media organizations request the release of payments before Eid so that they can pay salaries to their employees and meet other financial obligations," he said. The minister said a dedicated cell within the Press Information Department (PID) monitored the status of pending dues and coordinated with media organizations to facilitate the timely release of payments. He added that the department maintained.

Naqvi visits KP Police headquarters, reviews province's security preparedness

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday visited the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Headquarters in Peshawar, where he paid tribute to police martyrs and reviewed the province's security preparedness and counterterrorism capabilities. During the visit, the interior minister laid a floral wreath at the martyrs' memorial and offered Fataha for the martyred police personnel. He paid rich tribute to the sacrifices of police martyrs, acknowledging their vital role in maintaining peace and security in the province. Mohsin Naqvi also inspected modern security equipment, including advanced drones, weapons, night-vision guns, and other state-of-the-art tools being utilized by the police force. Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Zulfiqar Hameed briefed the minister on the latest technology and equipment available to the force.

The interior minister later chaired a special meeting at the police headquarters. The

meeting was attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, IG KP Police Zulfiqar Hameed, IG Federal Constabulary Nazeer Ghauri, the head of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), and other senior officials.

Addressing the meeting, Mohsin Naqvi said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police remains on the frontline in the fight against terrorism. He emphasized that modern weapons, technology, and equipment are being provided to the police force on a priority basis to strengthen its operational capabilities. He further said that the federal and provincial governments are jointly mobilizing all available resources to enhance the capacity of the KP Police and the CTD, and this support will continue in the future. The interior minister also assured that the federal government would provide full assistance in delivering advanced counterterrorism training to police and CTD personnel. Mohsin Naqvi praised the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday visited the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Headquarters in Peshawar.

SJC considers 10 matters, decides to amend judges' code of conduct

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) of Pakistan on Thursday decided to introduce certain amendments to the Code of Conduct for Judges while considering a range of institutional and administrative matters during a meeting held at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The meeting was chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi in his capacity as Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council. It was attended by Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Supreme Court judges Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Federal Constitutional Court judge Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, and Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court Justice Aalia Neelum. Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court Justice S.M. Attique Shah participated as a substituted member.

The Council also discussed the proposed draft Rules Regulating Procedure and Conduct.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan discuss strengthening bilateral economic, industrial cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kazakhstan on Thursday discussed ways to enhance industrial cooperation, economic development and trade between the two countries. The discussion took place during a meeting between Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan and Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin.

Both sides agreed to strengthen industrial and economic ties further and explore new opportunities for collaboration in key sectors. The Kazakh envoy expressed Kazakhstan's keen interest in Pakistan's furniture industry, sports goods sector and maritime infrastructure, particu-



larly its seaports. Haroon Akhtar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision was centered on strengthening connectivity and economic cooperation with Central Asian states. He highlighted the importance of deepening economic engagement and expanding trade relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Stressing the need for improved financial connectivity, Haroon Akhtar Khan said stronger banking linkages between the two countries.

Call for dialogue, and Democratic Perseverance in Azad Kashmir

SPECIAL REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: Any direct confrontation with the state machinery will only widen existing divides, fuel extremism, and incite violence, ultimately resulting in severe and irreparable losses for all stakeholders involved. Such a confrontation risks suspending the officially scheduled electoral process under Azad Kashmir's democratic framework—a setback that could serve as a precursor to a much larger catastrophe. While the state may be compelled to exercise its power as a last resort to maintain order and protect the lives and property of its citizens, it is imperative that both the government and the leadership of the



Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) act with utmost safety and foresight. The JAAC leadership must urgently identify and expel violent, extremist, and separatist elements from its ranks. This is crucial to rescuing the public movement from the clutches of anti-state actors who are actively trying to fan the flames of conflict between the public and the state machinery.

NA Speaker calls for eradication of child labour, Stresses protection of parliamentary dignity

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has reiterated Pakistan's commitment to protecting children's rights and eliminating child labour, while also emphasizing that the dignity and sanctity of Parliament must remain uncompromised. In his message on the occasion of the World Day Against Child Labour, observed annually on June 12, the Speaker described children as the nation's most valuable asset and the foundation of a prosperous, peaceful, and devel-

oped Pakistan. He stressed that safeguarding children from exploitation and ensuring their access to education, healthcare, and equal opportunities must remain a national priority. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq noted that child labour continues to deprive millions of children worldwide of their childhood, education, and opportunities for personal development. He said every child has the fundamental right to grow up in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment free from exploitation and abuse. Referring to constitu-

tional protections, the Speaker said Article 11 of the Constitution prohibits the employment of children under the age of 14 in factories, mines, and other hazardous occupations, while Article 25-A guarantees free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of five and sixteen. He added that Article 37(e) obligates the state to ensure humane working conditions and protect children from unsuitable employment. The Speaker praised the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights for its efforts in

promoting and protecting children's rights across the country. He particularly appreciated the caucus's comprehensive report on out-of-school children, which identifies the root causes of the issue and proposes province-specific solutions based on local realities. Calling poverty, limited access to education, and social inequalities the primary drivers of child labour, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq urged the government, civil society, educational institutions, parents, and all segments of society to work collectively

to provide children with opportunities for learning and development instead of labour. Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, in his separate message, termed child labour a serious challenge to children's rights and holistic development. He emphasized the need for effective policy measures and public awareness to address the socioeconomic factors pushing children into labour. Meanwhile, during the National Assembly session on Thursday, the House approved a motion for the

suspension of Member National Assembly Muhammad Iqbal Khan under Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007. Addressing the House, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that Muhammad Iqbal Khan had repeatedly undermined the dignity and sanctity of Parliament through inappropriate and non-parliamentary conduct. He informed members that several complaints had been received regarding the use of abusive language towards officials.