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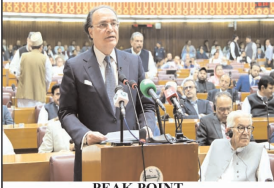
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Govt unveils Rs18.8tr budget for FY2026-27; GDP growth targeted at 4pc



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented the FY2026-27 budget in the National Assembly (NA) on Friday, during a session that began two hours late and was marred by loud

protests from the opposition. Aurangzeb prefaced the numbers with a note of thanks to leaders of the coalition parties supporting the federal government, as well as a rumination on Pakistan's improved standing in the world, which he described as a culmination of events that started from last year's Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos and which peaked with Pakistan brokering a ceasefire between Iran and the US amidst a dangerous regional escalation. The finance minister then delved into a long note on the government's successes in keeping the public protected from the more devastating effects of the war, crediting the prime minister for taking 'timely decisions' that prevented fuel shortages and economic chaos.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif signing Annual Budget 2026-27 documents after its approval by the Federal Cabinet meeting at Parliament House.

Bilawal welcomes invitation to form PPP govt in GB, expresses gratitude to PM Shehbaz



Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and expressed his gratitude. The PPP is all set to form a government in the region after it gained 11 out of 24 seats in the GB Legislative Assembly, according to the unofficial results (Form-47) of the June 7 elections. According to Radio Pakistan, the prime minister assured full support from the PML-N to the PPP on government formation. The prime minister said the PML-N has decided to sit on the opposition benches in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly, but its elected members will vote in favour of the PPP to form the government. In a statement, Bilawal said that recognising the PPP's majority in GB is the continuation of a democratic tradition and added that the party views the premier's invitation to form the government as a "positive step". "As a result of a consensus agreement, the positions of governor and deputy speaker of Gilgit-Baltistan will be allocated to the PML-N," he was quoted as saying.

Iran says no final decision made on deal that Trump hopes could be signed soon



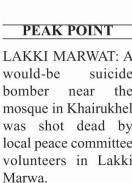
WASHINGTON/DUBAI: President Donald Trump on Thursday said the United States and Iran could sign a peace deal as soon as this weekend that would reopen the Strait of Hormuz to shipping, but Iran countered that it had not reached a final decision on an agreement. The deal, if confirmed, would be the most significant diplomatic breakthrough yet to end the three-month-old war, which has killed thousands and sent global energy prices sharply higher. Iranian media reported Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei as saying that large parts of the text under negotiation have been finalized but Iran would not compromise on its red lines. "We have not reached a final conclusion on this matter," he said. "This is a very important issue that is currently being reviewed by the relevant decision-making bodies." Trump, meanwhile, told reporters at the White House: "We just made a great settlement of the war with Iran." "The Strait will officially open as soon as we sign, which could be soon, very soon, maybe over the weekend in Europe," Trump said, adding Vice President JD Vance could sign for the United States. When asked if Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei approved the deal, Trump said: "I understand the answer is yes." Trump's announcement came after he called off planned military strikes on Iran, citing progress in talks. U.S. stocks rose and oil prices fell on the news.

Pakistan secures top position at international military drill competition in UK: ISPR



RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Army team has clinched first position at an international military drill competition held in Britain, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday. "In a remarkable display of excellence, the Pakistan Army team, represented by the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA), has clinched 1st Position at the prestigious International Pace Sticking Competition 2026 held at the Royal Military Academy (RMA) Sandhurst, United Kingdom," the ISPR said in a statement. It added that the PMA team "made a clean sweep at the competition, securing all major honours, that is 1st Overall Team Trophy, Best Pace Sticker and Best Driver awards". According to the ISPR, the nine-member contingent, led by Major Haider Gulzar, arrived in the UK on June 5. A total of 16 international teams from different armies participated in the fierce annual event. "The Pakistan Army team's victory is reflective of the highest standards of professional training, excellence.

Would-be bomber shot dead by peace volunteers in Lakki Marwat



LAKKI MARWAT: A would-be suicide bomber near the mosque in Khairukhel was shot dead by local peace committee volunteers in Lakki Marwa. According to local committee volunteers, the firing caused the explosive device installed in the motorcycle to explode. Three locals were also injured in the explosion. Friday prayers were being offered in the mosque at the time of the explosion. After the explosion, the motorcycle and the suicide bomber caught fire.

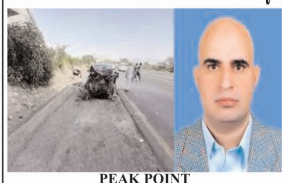
Pakistan praises Muscat Plan of Action for promoting peace, dialogue

NEW YORK: Pakistan on Friday described the Muscat Plan of Action as an innovative pathway to address the scourge of hate speech, prevent incitement to genocide and other atrocity crimes, and promote peace mediation, dialogue, and local peacebuilding. Radio Pakistan reported. These remarks were made by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, at UN Headquarters in New York. The ambassador said the plan galvanises the cultural legitimacy and credibility of traditional and indigenous leaders in countering hate speech and promoting peace through mediation and

local peacebuilding. He said Pakistan would continue to work hand in hand with international partners to dismantle the "twisted and flawed ideology" of hate speech and to turn societies into "oases of peace, equality and tranquillity". Iftikhar also congratulated the Sultanate of Oman, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and the Peacemakers Network for compiling and finalising the Muscat Plan of Action. On Wednesday, Pakistan urged all sides to exercise restraint and give diplomacy "a little more chance" amid heightened tensions in the Middle East, warning that recent events have highlighted the risk of further escalation. Addressing a UN Security Council briefing on non-proliferation, the

ambassador said Islamabad was "deeply concerned" at the ongoing situation in the region marked by heightened tensions. "Events of the last few days have amply underscored the fragility of the situation, the risk of escalation and the need for diplomatic efforts to come to fruition - sooner than later," he told the council. The ambassador said the recent increase in violence in the Middle East was "a stark reminder of the dangers associated with a tenuous ceasefire and the unbearable consequences it may lead to". "The cycle of violence and instability must end for the good of regional and international peace, security, and prosperity," he added.

Former senator Taj Afridi dies in accident on Islamabad-Peshawar motorway



PESHAWAR: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) former senator Taj Muhammad Afridi lost his life in a road accident on the Kernal Sher Khan Interchange on M-1 Motorway on Friday. The incident took place when the senator was travelling to Peshawar from the federal capital. His driver sustained injuries in the accident, and he has been shifted to a hospital for treatment. Reports said the incident occurred due to a mechanical fault in the vehicle. Soon after receiving the report, Motorway Police rushed to the spot and shifted the deceased and the injured driver to the hospital.



SPORTS



Mexico kicks off historic FIFA World Cup 2026 with spectacular opening ceremony



PEAK POINT
MEXICO CITY: The FIFA World Cup 2026 officially got underway on Thursday with a dazzling opening ceremony at the iconic Estadio Azteca, setting the stage for the largest tournament in football history before the opening match between co-hosts Mexico and South Africa.

Fans created a vibrant atmosphere inside the historic stadium. Estadio Azteca entered the record books as the first venue to host matches in three different FIFA World Cups, having previously staged games in 1970 and 1986. A major highlight of the event was the performance of "Dai Dai," the official FIFA World Cup 2026 song, by Colombian superstar Shakira and Nigerian music sensation Burna Boy. The star-studded ceremony also featured renowned

international and Latin American artists, celebrating the global spirit of the tournament. Co-hosted by Mexico, the United States and Canada, the 2026 FIFA World Cup is the first edition to feature 48 teams and a record 104 matches across 16 host cities. The expanded tournament is expected to attract billions of viewers worldwide and will culminate with the final at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey on July 19. FIFA has described the opening

ceremony as the beginning of a month-long global celebration of football, culture and unity. The tournament marks the first World Cup jointly hosted by three nations and is widely regarded as the most ambitious edition in the competition's history. With fans from across the globe gathering in North America, the opening ceremony delivered a memorable start to a World Cup that promises historic moments both on and off the pitch.

Father and son create history, win Punjab ranking men's doubles championship

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: History was made at the Sahiwal All Pakistan Junior/Senior Tennis Championship as Talha Waheed and his son, Abubakar Talha, etched their names into Pakistan's tennis record books with a remarkable achievement.



The father-son pair became the first and only duo in Pakistan's tennis history to win the Punjab Ranking Men's Doubles Championship in a highly competitive 32-draw event. Their landmark victory represents a unique milestone in the country's sporting landscape and highlights their exceptional talent, dedication, and passion for the game. Talha Waheed, who serves as Brand Ambassador for GO Petroleum, expressed his gratitude to GO Petroleum CEO Khalid Riaz for his great support throughout his tennis journey. He acknowledged that the encouragement and backing he has received have played a significant role in helping him pursue excellence in the sport. Adding further distinction to the achievement, Talha Waheed is the only Pakistani tennis player to hold a Guinness World Record in tennis, making him one of the country's most accomplished figures in the sport. His son, Abubakar Talha, has also emerged as one of Pakistan's brightest young tennis prospects and is notably the only junior player in the country to possess an ATP ranking point. Their historic success at the Sahiwal All Pakistan Junior/Senior Tennis Championship not only celebrates a remarkable sporting achievement but also serves as an inspiration for aspiring athletes across Pakistan.

National Women's Hockey C'ship next month



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: In a landmark development for women's sports, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has officially announced the National Women's Hockey Championship to be held in Islamabad, during the second week of July 2026. Teams from Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, and other regions will compete in the championship, said a press release.

The tournament is expected to serve as a major milestone in promoting and expanding girls' participation in hockey across Pakistan. PHF officials said the initiative will lay the foundation for a strong and sustainable system for girls' hockey in the country. The federation expressed hope that, this step will mark the beginning of a bright and successful future for Pakistan hockey. PHF President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani also extended his best wishes to all teams participating in the tournament. enable them to represent Pakistan at the national and international level, just like their male counterparts.

Pakistan Hockey Team arrives in Brussels



Raheel victor clinches U-15 Title at 2nd RICHS National junior Squash championship

PEAK POINT
KARACHI: Sindh's Raheel Victor and Vishnavi, along with PAF's Anas Rafeeq, emerged victorious in their respective categories at the 2nd RICHS National Junior Squash Championship, while Anas Shah claimed the title in the PSA Satellite Squash Championship. The finals of the championship were played at the Jahangir Khan Squash Academy, PSB Karachi Centre, where players from across Pakistan competed in Boys U-11, Boys U-15, Girls U-15, and Men's Senior events. A total prize fund of Rs. 600,000 was distributed among the winners and runners-up of the junior championship, while prize money worth US\$1,000 was awarded to the winner, runner-up, and other leading performers of the PSA Satellite event. The closing ceremony was attended by Pakistan Sports Board (PSB)

Karachi Centre Director Ali Naseem 3-1 to capture the title. After losing the opening game 8-11, Anas bounced back strongly to win 11-6, 11-8, and 11-7. The Boys Under-15 final saw Sindh's Raheel Victor dominate second seed Mamoon Khan



KP Squash Association Secretary Mansoor Zaman, Muhammad Naseem, and other officials. According to Organizing Secretary Naveed Rehman, the championship concluded with exciting finals across all categories. In the Boys Under-11 final, top seed Anas Rafeeq (PAF) defeated Sindh's M. Bin (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) with a convincing 3-0 victory. Raheel secured the championship with scores of 11-9, 11-0, and 12-10. In the Girls Under-15 final, top-seeded Vishnavi (Sindh) defeated fellow Sindh player Aiman Fatima in straight games, winning 11-7, 11-2, and 11-4 to lift the title.

Players welcome 'step forward' after Wimbledon prize money increase



PEAK POINT
LONDON: Wimbledon's 20 percent increase in prize money has been welcomed as a "significant step forward" by the sport's top players. The Wimbledon singles champions will now pocket £3.6 million each. Even first-round losers will be richly compensated at

Wimbledon, with ATP and WTA Tours were pleased with the decision by Wimbledon organisers. "Leading players from the ATP and WTA Tours welcome Wimbledon's 2026 prize money announcement as a genuine and significant step forward - the 20 percent increase is the largest single-year uplift in the tournament's history and a meaningful signal of intent," a statement said. "Players want to see Wimbledon continue to thrive and support the investment the tournament makes in the game. The players were frustrated that prize money at Roland Garros only increased by 9.5 percent from 2025 and stayed at around 15 percent of the revenue generated from the clay-court tournament. Representatives for players from the



Young leaders from south punjab convene to strengthen climate action and democratic governance

PEAK POINT
MILTAN: Nearly 200 young people from South Punjab convened in Multan from 4 to 11 June to deliberate on the climate, governance and development challenges facing their communities and to build the skills and knowledge needed to engage with the institutions responsible for addressing them. Participants from 4 District Youth Assemblies (Muzaffargarh, Layyah, Jhang, and Kot Addu) engaged with elected representatives, disaster management experts and government officials, debated policy in parlia-

mentary-style sessions, and passed resolutions calling for stronger youth inclusion in local governance. The sessions are part of the three-year action "Rising Leaders: Youth in Climate Leadership & Governance," co-funded by the European Union and implemented by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) and the Social Youth Council of Patriots (SYCOP). Each of the four DYAs (comprising 50 members each) participated in a two-day (June 10th and 11th) programme combining civic educa-

tion, parliamentary-style debate, expert dialogue, formal voting exercises and digital skills training. The first day (June 10th) focused on understanding the challenges facing participants' districts. Interactive discussions on the topic "How Is Climate Change Affecting Your District?" featured policymakers and disaster management experts. Addressing the participants, Mr. Muhammad Ajmal Khan Chaudhary, MPA and Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education, emphasized youth must play an active role in environmental protection, tree plantation,

efficient water management, and disaster preparedness. Drawing on their practical experiences, Mr. Irfan Sial, Coordinator District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Muzaffargarh, and Mr. Karamat Ali, Coordinator DDMA Layyah, shared their expertise on early warning systems, flood emergency response, riverine flooding risks, and long-term adaptation measures. Participants engaged with the structure of Pakistan's democratic institutions — the roles of the legislature, executive and judiciary, and the different tiers of government

through which decisions affecting their communities are made. The second day (June 11th) focused on practical action, with participants receiving training on how to engage with government as citizens and as young leaders — including how to file Right to Information (RTI) requests, engage with Standing Committees, and contest or participate in local government elections. The sessions made clear that democratic participation does not begin and end at the ballot box, and that young people have concrete mechanisms to hold institutions accountable

and advocate for their communities. Addressing participants, Mr. Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, emphasized that young people in South Punjab are among those most affected by climate change and should be empowered as stakeholders in shaping responses to climate and governance challenges. He noted that the European Union's support for the initiative reflects its commitment to strengthening inclusive, participatory governance in Pakistan.

Pakistan allocates Rs. 3.74 billion for overseas Pakistanis and human resource development in FY 2026–2027

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan, through the Finance Division under Secretary Imdad Ullah Bosal, has finalized the budget for the fiscal year 2026–2027, allocating Rs. 3,735,457,000 to the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development. The

allocation aims to cover current expenditure on salaries, operational costs, and administrative functions related to supporting Pakistanis abroad. The 2026–2027 allocation marks a reduction from the previous fiscal year's estimates of Rs. 4,190,553,000 but remains above the 2024–2025 actual expenditure of Rs. 3,227,633,000. The entire

budget is categorized under General Economic, Commercial, and Labour Affairs (041), highlighting the government's continued focus on labor and human resource development for overseas Pakistanis. A breakdown of the current expenditure reveals that employees' related expenses constitute the largest share of the budget at Rs. 2,140,512,000. Of

this, pay for officers totals Rs. 255,366,000 while other staff salaries account for Rs. 381,482,000. Allowances are projected at Rs. 1,503,664,000, including regular allowances of Rs. 1,277,814,000 and other allowances of Rs. 225,850,000. Operating and administrative expenses are set at Rs. 1,424,175,000, showing an increase from the

2024–2025 actual expenditure of Rs. 1,232,567,000. Repairs and maintenance are budgeted at Rs. 64,016,000, and physical assets at Rs. 37,524,000. Grants, subsidies, and write off loans are projected at Rs. 40,405,000, while retirement benefits total Rs. 27,857,000. Transfers are allocated Rs. 968,000. The budget reflects the government's efforts to

provide structured support to overseas Pakistanis, including assistance with labor affairs, coordination with foreign missions, and welfare initiatives. The detailed demands for grants and appropriations were laid before the National Assembly under Article 82 of the Constitution and Section 4 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2019.

Opinion & Editorial



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Saved by benefit of doubt

The Supreme Court's acquittal of two MQM workers in the Baldia factory fire case is a devastating blow to the families of over 260 workers who were burnt alive on 11 September 2012. While the apex court has granted the two former MQM workers the benefit of the doubt, the overturning of their death sentences also exposes the systemic failure of law enforcement and prosecution. The detailed judgment has not been released yet, leading to some speculation over the reasoning in the verdict. However, enough is already known about the shoddy ground-work laid by the state to pinpoint where the rot lies. The problems begin with the police. From day one, the investigation was a half-hearted, compromised mess. The first investigating officer had concluded the fire was arson - even tracing where the chemicals were bought - yet he was promptly removed from the case, allegedly under pressure from the MQM leadership. The Joint Investigation Team later confirmed the police's "irresponsible behaviour", noting that officials were "not only unsuccessful but also tried to protect the accused". One special public prosecutor even resigned, citing the investigating officer's outright non-cooperation and failure to provide witness statements.

Drugs and teens

A Kishwar Enam DECADE ago, during one of the 'Growing Up' sessions I was holding in Karachi schools, I talked to seventh graders about drugs and addiction. Their interest and giggling prompted me to ask whether they knew where drugs could be obtained. They named several locations. Later, I realised that drug availability among the youth is far more common than we may believe. Perhaps the most alarming evidence is found in rehabilitation centres where children as young as eight years are being treated for substance abuse. News of teenagers dying of overdose in the country has become increasingly common. Seemingly healthy teenagers are succumbing to substance abuse — accidentally or intentionally — as they seek to escape from life's difficulties and take refuge in the world of temporary pleasure that drugs provide. Substance abuse refers to drug use, which causes significant problems at school, work or home — and continues despite the consequences. Dependence may develop, requiring larger amounts of the drug and causing withdrawal symptoms when use stops. Addiction begins with experimentation, especially during adolescence, with cigarettes, alcohol or drugs out of curiosity or peer influence. The adolescent brain is still developing, especially the areas responsible for

judgement, decision-making and self-control. This may explain why teenagers often engage in risky behaviour. Adolescents are strongly influenced by their peers, and often resort to drugs to fit in. The maturing brain may not fully appreciate the long-term consequences. According to an ANF report last year, almost nine million Pakistanis are struggling with substance abuse, with young people among the most affected. Universities and colleges are increasingly being targeted by drug dealers. Traditional drugs such as cannabis (marijuana, charas and hashish), heroin and cocaine have been overtaken in recent decades by methamphetamine derivatives such as ice, and designer drugs such as ecstasy. Hallucinogens (ketamine, LSD and phencyclidine) remain in circulation, and inhalants (aerosol spray cans and petrol) are often abused, particularly by street children. Numerous synthetic drugs are also available. Their effects are unpredictable; even a single dose may be fatal. Alcohol use is common, while paan, gutka and naswar are often overlooked because of cultural acceptance, despite their addictive nature and health risks. Nicotine use has also changed. Traditional smoking and hookah are increasingly being replaced by vaping and shisha. Many teenagers, even parents, wrongly perceive vaping as harmless. Some vaping products contain high

An enduring friendship

Paulo Domingos
This year marks the 76th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Pakistan. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1950, the partnership has grown steadily and diversified across a wide range of areas, encompassing political engagement, cooperation in multilateral fora and expanding economic links. Although separated by geography, our two nations share a long history of interaction and a common commitment to mutual respect, international cooperation and constructive dialogue. New dimensions have been injected into the relationship by the growing Pakistani community in Portugal and increasing numbers of Pakistanis pursuing higher education in Portugal's internationally recognised institutions. The Pakistan-origin diaspora is making valuable contributions to Portuguese society in diverse fields. Their presence reflects the close links that unite our countries and serves as a living bridge between Portugal and Pakistan. Strengthening of the people-to-people dimension of our ties provides an even firmer foundation for the relationship. Our bilateral relationship is entering an even more promising phase, marked by increasingly regular contacts and a shared commitment to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Both our countries are committed to further strengthening this partnership and exploring new avenues of engagement that can benefit our countries and peoples. The positive momentum in our bilateral relations is reflected in the intensification of high-level contacts. An important milestone will be the bilateral political consultations scheduled to take place in Islamabad on 15 July 2026. This will provide an excellent opportunity to review our cooperation agenda and identify new avenues for collaboration. A visit to Pakistan by Portugal's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, Paulo Rangel, is also planned for the second half of 2026.
Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan Ranks Second Globally in Pilgrim Count; Hajj Operation Resounding Success: Sardar Yousaf



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, announced on Friday that Pakistan's Hajj operation achieved resounding success, earning the Excellence Award from the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah for the second consecutive year.

Speaking at a reception ceremony at the Islamabad International Airport, the Minister stated that under the Prime Minister's direct patronage, the Hajj Mission successfully utilized all avail-

able resources to provide exemplary services. He highlighted that Pakistan ranked as the second-largest country globally in terms of pilgrim volume, yet managed to maintain flawless logistics, with 80 percent of the pilgrims benefiting seamlessly from the "Road to Makkah" project and the private Hajj sector securing three individual awards.

Expressing deep gratitude to the Saudi leadership, including the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Minister praised the exceptional cooperation between the two nations. Regarding future plans, Sardar Yousaf disclosed that the Saudi Ministry has already issued its deadlines, prompting the Pakistani government to present the upcoming Hajj policy to the Federal Cabinet within the current month, which will feature an application process structured strictly on a "First Come, First Served" basis. The Minister further underscored the

high standard of welfare provided during the season, noting that 100 percent of Pakistani pilgrims in Madinah were accommodated within the prized *Markazia* (central area). He lauded the commendable performance of the Hajj Medical Mission, the Saudi German Hospital, and local volunteers, particularly highlighting that the mission dedicatedly assisted 146 critically ill and elderly pilgrims to ensure they completed essential rituals like Waqoof-e-Arafat and Tawaf-e-Ziyarat. The Minister emphasized that the overall complaint rate remained under one percent due to immediate on-site resolutions, vowing that arrangements for the next cycle in Makkah, Madinah, and Mashair would be finalized.

President Zardari approves bill, 'fulfilling all legal formalities' for PIA's privatisation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday gave his assent to the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (Conversion) (Repeal) Bill, 2026, fulfilling all necessary legal requirements for the national carrier's privatisation.

The original bill, which now stands repealed, was passed in January 2016, and sought to convert the national flag carrier into a public limited company.

Confirming the development in a statement, the presidency said that following the approval, "all the necessary legal formalities and requirements for the completion of the privatisation process of Pakistan International Airlines Company Limited (PIACL) have been fulfilled".

It added that the bill was passed by the Senate on June 10



and subsequently received approval from the National Assembly on June 11, before being sent to the president for his assent. A consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation Limited had won the auction for 75 percent shares of PIA in December last year, making a winning bid of Rs135 billion.

The documents pertaining to the transaction were signed during a ceremony in January, which was attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The Arif Habib-led consortium aims.

Naqvi visits injured security personnel at CMH Peshawar, hails their bravery

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Peshawar on Friday to inquire about the well-being of injured personnel from the Pakistan Army and the Federal Constabulary, commending their courage and dedication in the line of duty.

During the visit, Naqvi met each injured officer and soldier individually, expressing concern for their recovery and offering words of encouragement. He praised the wounded personnel for their unwavering commitment and professionalism, saying their sacrifices reflected the highest traditions of service to the nation.

The interior minister also received detailed briefings from doctors regarding the treatment and medical condition of the injured personnel. He emphasized the importance of providing the best possible healthcare and rehabilitation facilities to those who had sustained injuries while carrying out their

responsibilities.

Addressing the injured soldiers, Naqvi said they had displayed extraordinary bravery in thwarting the malicious designs of "Fitna al-Khawarij," a term used by the government for militant groups involved in terrorist activities. "You courageously foiled the nefarious ambitions of Fitna al-Khawarij," he told the wounded personnel. "You are the heroes of the nation, and we are all proud of you."

He added that the country's security remained strong because of the sacrifices and vigilance of its brave servicemen.

"With courageous sons of the soil like you standing guard, no enemy conspiracy can succeed," Naqvi remarked. The visit underscored the government's support for security forces engaged in counterterrorism operations and highlighted the sacrifices made by personnel working to maintain peace and stability in the country. Also present on the occasion were Shahab Ali Shah, Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Nazeer Ahmed Gada.



PESHAWAR: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Peshawar on Friday.

Sherry Rehman Calls for Urgent Action to End Child Labour

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: On World Day Against Child Labour, Senator Sherry

Rehman expressed grave concern over the continuing prevalence of child labour that threatens the future of millions of children and undermines the country's development goals. "Every child deserves a childhood, an education, and the opportunity to realize their full potential. Yet millions of Pakistani children continue to be trapped in cycles of poverty, exploitation, and hazardous work," Senator Rehman said.

She noted "According to ILO, approximately 8.6 million children in Pakistan are engaged in child labour. Of these, nearly 2.7 million children are involved in the worst and most hazardous forms of labour, including work in agriculture, brick kilns, domestic servitude, workshops, and other dangerous sectors."

Senator Rehman underscored "Child labour remains deeply intertwined with poverty, inequality and lack of access to education.

Many families struggling to meet basic needs are compelled to send their children.

BISP Chairperson Rubina Khalid calls for collective action to end child labour

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid, has emphasized that the elimination of child labour is essential for building a just, developed, and prosperous society. In her message on World Day Against Child Labour, Senator

Rubina Khalid said that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the protection of children from exploitation and forced labour. She noted that Article 11 prohibits forced labour and child exploitation, while Article 25-A ensures every child's right to free and compulsory education. "Children should hold books in their hands, not tools," she stated, stressing the need to address the



social and economic factors that force children into labour.

The BISP chairperson said that providing education, healthcare, and protection to every child is a shared responsibility of the state and society. She highlighted that the Employment of Children Act, 1991, along with other relevant laws, provides safeguards against hazardous child labour and called for effective implementation of these laws. Senator Rubina Khalid said that BISP is playing a vital role in supporting vulnerable.

Call for Collective Action to Eliminate Child Labour in Pakistan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), in collaboration with the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC), commemorated World Day Against Child Labour 2026 under the global theme "Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults."

Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan, Convenor of the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR), stated that children represent Pakistan's future and their protection is fundamental to sustainable national development. She reiterated that PCCR remains committed to



strengthening legislation, improving policy frameworks, and ensuring effective oversight for child welfare. She emphasized that eliminating child labour requires coordinated action across all sectors, including government, civil society, the private sector, and communities, while also addressing root causes such as poverty, lack of access to quality education.

Freelance boom powers Pakistan's digital economy: Rana Mashhood

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Friday hailed the sharp increase in Pakistani freelancers' earnings, as highlighted in the Economic Survey 2025-26, saying the growth reflects the talent, innovation and global competitiveness of the country's youth.

Commenting on the survey findings released by the federal government, Mr Khan said freelance earnings surged from \$642 million to \$959 million annually, marking a significant contribution to Pakistan's digital economy and foreign exchange reserves. The Pakistan

Economic Survey 2025-26 notes that the remarkable rise in freelance income has been driven by expanding digital opportunities, improved access to technology and the growing participation of young Pakistanis in international online marketplaces.

Rana Mashhood said the achievement demonstrates how Pakistani youth are successfully leveraging digital skills to establish a strong presence in the global economy. He said the government's initiatives under the Prime Minister's vision to equip young people with modern IT training and digital skills were yielding tangible results.

According to him, investments in youth-focused technology pro-

grammes have enabled thousands of young professionals to secure international clients and generate valuable foreign exchange for the country.

The PMYP chairman observed that the expansion of freelancing and the broader digital economy is creating new employment opportunities and opening pathways for economic empowerment. He added that the government would continue to enhance access to advanced technology, training programmes and global markets to ensure sustained growth in the sector. Rana Mashhood reaffirmed the government's commitment to preparing young people for the future through skill development and innovation-driven initiatives.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expresses condolences on the passing of former Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Peak Point Islamabad: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of former Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi and paid tribute to his valuable parliamentary and public services. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated that former Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi was a sincere and dignified parliamentarian who played a significant role in promoting democratic values. He remarked that



the late Senator's contributions to parliamentary democracy will always be remembered with respect and appreciation. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the sudden demise of Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi is an irreparable loss for his family.