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## PM Shehbaz hails Islamabad's 'true and special relationship' with Washington at event marking US 250th anniversary

**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday hailed the "true and special relationship" between Pakistan and the United States, which has spanned nearly eight decades and covers bilateral interests in security, counter-terrorism, energy and science, among other fields.

Addressing an event marking the US's 250th anniversary, PM Shehbaz noted that Islamabad and Washington had "worked closely at the most consequential moments of our history, whether it be the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s or the global war on terror from 2001-2021".

"Last year, following India's unprovoked aggression after the Pahalgam incident, it was

President [Donald] Trump's timely and most decisive intervention that resulted in a ceasefire between Pakistan and India on May 10, last year," he said, referring to a brief four-day war between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

"We shall forever remain grateful to President Trump for restoring peace in South Asia and saving millions of people. In this context, he will always be remembered as a man of peace." Recalling the relationship between Islamabad and Washington, PM Shehbaz noted that the US was among the first countries to recognise Pakistan, when then-US president Harry Truman sent a congratulatory letter to Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses at a ceremony celebrating 250th Independence anniversary of the United States of America.

## Iran's supreme leader says adversaries using 'hybrid warfare' aimed at creating divisions

**PEAK POINT**  
IRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said on Thursday that his country's adversaries had turned to "hybrid warfare", aimed at creating divisions among Iranians, after receiving a "decisive blow".

Mojtaba, who has not appeared publicly since being named as the supreme leader on March 8, made these remarks in his message on the death anniversary of Iran's founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The message shared on his official X account and reported by the Iranian media. Mojtaba's message stated, "The malicious enemy has been defeated in its confrontation with the armed forces. Since it has received a decisive blow both in military combat and in Iran's public squares and streets, it's experiencing a profound and significant humiliation. "The enemy has focused its schemes in hybrid warfare on two points: the resilience of the Iranian people and trying to create errors in the assessments of the country's officials. The instrument it's using for both is sowing the seeds of doubt, despair, fear, mistrust and discord."

## US House passes resolution calling for end to war on Iran, rebuking Trump

**MAHPARA ZAMAN**  
NEW YORK: The Republican-led US House of Representatives approved a resolution on Wednesday to block President Donald Trump from continuing the war against Iran, reflecting growing concern among members of his party about the three-month-old conflict. The House voted 215 to 208, as four Republicans voted with Democrats in favor of the war powers resolution, which directs Trump to withdraw US troops from Iran unless Congress declares war or authorises the use of military force. The move marked the first time the Republican-controlled House had approved a measure seeking to force Trump to wind down military operations against Tehran since the war began three months ago. It was the latest setback for Trump in Congress despite his party's slim majorities in both the House and Senate. For now, the vote is largely symbolic, as legislation must pass the Senate as well as the House to become effective, and there is debate over whether war powers resolutions would be constitutional even if they are approved by Congress. The vote, nonetheless, reflects unease among some Republicans over Trumps handling of the conflict and marks a rare bipartisan effort to curb presidential war powers as the war has entered a fourth month. Three previous war powers resolutions had failed in the House by increasingly slim margins and the chamber's Republican leaders abruptly postponed a vote on this one last month when it looked likely to pass.

## Growing impact of climate change demands urgent, coordinated, sustained action: CNS

**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI(M), T Bt, has said that the growing impact of climate change demands urgent, coordinated and sustained action at the national, regional and international levels.

In his message on World Environment Day, the CNS said that environmental protection is no longer solely an ecological concern; rather, it is intrinsically linked to economic stability, food security, public health and sustainable development, according to a statement issued by the Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy). The governments, institutions, industries and communities must therefore, work together to adopt innovative and practical solutions that reduce environmental degradation and promote resilience for future generations, he said. World Environment Day is observed on 5th of June every year to promote global awareness and inspire collective action for the protection and preservations of our environment.

## Noor Mukadam case: SC dismisses Zahir Jaffer's review plea, upholds death sentence

**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday dismissed a review petition filed by Zahir Jaffer and maintained its earlier verdict upholding his death sentence in the Noor Mukadam murder case. Noor, aged 27, was found murdered at Zahir's Islamabad residence in July 2021, with the probe revealing she was tortured by him before being beheaded. Zahir was sentenced to death by a trial in February 2022 and his sentence has already been upheld by the SC once.

## FO rejects reports of Dar sharing information on Iran's nuclear programme during meeting with Rubio

**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday refuted reports that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar shared any information regarding Iran's nuclear programme during a meeting with United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Dar met with Rubio on May 29 during a brief visit to Washington, where the two discussed bilateral cooperation as well as regional security issues. Rubio had praised Islamabad's role "in advancing peace in the Middle East". Responding to queries during a weekly press briefing on Thursday, FO Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Pakistan rejected reports of the

deputy premier which allegedly "exchanging any kind of "alarmed" Rubio. Rubio had also responded to the claims during a congressional hearing on Wednesday. US Congressman Scott Perry asked him if Dar had delivered a message that Iran is "prepared to demonstrate a nuclear weapon should the current escalation continue". "I have not seen that reporting and I am not aware of any such message," Rubio responded.



## Security forces kill 4 terrorists in separate KP operations: ISPR

**PEAK POINT**  
RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed four terrorists in two separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military's media wing said on Thursday. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the four terrorists killed during the operations belonged to Fina Al Khawarij, referring to the term used by the state to designate members of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). "On [the] reported presence of khawarij, an intelligence-based operation (IBO) was conducted by security forces in Dera Ismail Khan district," ISPR said in a statement. "During [the] conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged [the] khawarij location and after [an] intense exchange of fire, two khawarij ... were sent to hell."





# SPORTS



## Australia set modest target for Pakistan in ODI series decider



**PEAK POINT** second delivery. Following the early stutter, Marnus Labuschagne (19) joined captain Josh Inglis in the middle, and the duo batted cautiously to put together 46 runs until the former was run out in the 12th over, courtesy of a direct hit by Arafat Minhas.

Inglis then shared a 52-run partnership for the third wicket with fellow wicketkeeper batter Alex Carey, who could muster 19 before falling victim to Haris Rauf in the 22nd over.

The touring side got off to a dismal start to their innings as Shaheen dismissed their opener Matthew Short (zero) on just the

counterpart Shaheen in the 27th over, during which the left-arm pacer also got rid of all-rounder Cameron Green (seven) as the touring side slipped to 120/5.

Inglis remained the top-scorer for Australia with a gritty 65 off 71 deliveries with the help of eight fours and a six.

Australia then lost two more wickets in quick succession as Abrar Ahmed dismissed Matt Renshaw (four) and Cooper Connolly (three) in his successive overs, while experienced all-rounder Shadab Khan ended his wicket drought in ODIs by dis-

missing Oliver Peake in the 35th over.

Shadab struck again on the second delivery of the 42nd over, cleaning up Adam Zampa (10), while Matthew Kuhnemann's run-out in the same over ended Australia's woeful outing with the bat.

Shaheen spearheaded Pakistan's bowling charge with economical figures of 3/30 in eight overs, followed by Shadab and Abrar with two each, while Rauf chipped in with one scalp.

## Pakistan awarded hosting rights for ICC Women's T20 WC 2028



**LAHORE:** The International Cricket Council has awarded Pakistan the hosting rights for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2028, marking a major achievement for the country's cricketing profile and its role in hosting global events.

The decision was announced following an ICC Board meeting in Ahmedabad, where several recommendations from the Chief Executives' Committee were formally approved as part of a broader set of reforms and scheduling updates.

Under the existing arrangement governing ICC events involving Pakistan and India, matches featuring India women's national cricket team during the tournament will be played at a neutral venue.

Among other key decisions, the ICC approved a trial allowing the use of the pink ball in Test matches when both participating teams agree, with the aim of reducing time lost to poor light conditions.

The governing body also increased the innings break in T20 Internationals to 15 minutes, introducing a longer interval between innings.

In women's cricket, the ICC confirmed that the ICC Women's Champions Trophy 2027 will now be held from February 14 to 28, 2027, after being moved from its previously planned June-July window.

## Marka-e-Haq T20 cricket match held to pay tribute to Pakistan Armed Forces



**PEAK POINT** took part in the match which was played between the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has congratulated the Prime Minister Youth Program XI on their victory in the Marka-e-Haq T20 cricket match which was held here to pay tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces.

The minister also

strong sportsman spirit, highlighting the role it has played in fostering unity.

He praised both teams for demonstrating excellent performances. He also mentioned that the citizens of Islamabad came out to enjoy the match, and children took a keen interest in the event.

The Minister emphasized that through this match, solidarity was expressed with the armed forces and the victory of Marka-e-Haq was celebrated, adding that the nation should witness this kind of unity.

Later in the ceremony, trophies were distributed between the winning and runner-up teams.



**SARGODHA:** Divisional Sports Officer and District Sports Officer Saima Manzoor pose for a group photo with position holders during the Inter-District Athletics Championship organized by the Divisional Sports Department at the Sports Stadium.

## Pakistan outclass Maldives in four-nation football tournament to end 35-year drought

**PEAK POINT** KARACHI: Pakistan's men's football team ended a 961-day wait for an international football victory with a convincing 3-0 win over hosts Maldives in the Diamond Jubilee Four-Nation Football Tournament on Thursday.

After opening the tournament with a goalless draw against Bangladesh, Pakistan entered the match under pressure to secure a positive result to keep its hopes of reaching the final alive. The breakthrough eventually came in the second half after both sides failed to score before the interval. Young Umar Nawaz put Pakistan ahead in the 54th minute, scoring his first international goal in only his second appearance for the national team. The match also marked his first start for Pakistan. Nawaz's journey to the

national team has been shaped by personal tragedy. His brother, Haris Nawaz, was among the martyrs of the 2014 Army Public School attack in Peshawar, while another brother, Ahmed Nawaz, was seri-

ously injured. The family later moved to the United Kingdom in 2015, where Umar began his football journey before eventually earning a place in Pakistan's national setup. Pakistan doubled its advantage in the 84th minute when Abdul Samad Arshad found the net. Just

three minutes later, Harun Hamid added a third goal to seal the victory for the visitors. The result marked Pakistan's first international win over the Maldives since 1991 and brought an end to the team's lengthy



## Iran depart for Mexico amid uncertainty over World Cup visas



winless run. Pakistan's previous victory had come against Cambodia in a FIFA World Cup qualifier on Oct. 17, 2023. The win strengthened Pakistan's chances of reaching the tournament final. The team will conclude its league-stage campaign against Afghanistan on June 7.



# Only 147 scholarships awarded to Pakistani students for study in Turkey since 2003

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training disclosed that only 147 scholarships have been awarded to Pakistani students for higher education in Turkey since 2003, despite the growing demand for international education opportunities. Questions have been raised regarding the distribution of these scholarships across professional disciplines and universities, as they show a heavy concentration in top institutions such as Middle

East Technical University and Koc University, while many other universities received only a handful of scholars. During the 27th session of the National Assembly, Starred Question No. 86, moved by Ms. Asiya Naz Tanoli, MNA, requested details on the number of Pakistani students who have received scholarships for higher education in Turkey and the professional disciplines they cover. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training responded that the Higher

Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad, has awarded a total of 147 scholarships under various schemes since 2003. According to details provided by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad, the scholarships have been distributed across multiple universities in Turkey. Middle East Technical University received the highest number of scholars, with 43 students, followed closely by Koc University with 42. Sabanci University in Istanbul hosted 25 schol-

ars, while Bilkent University accommodated 16 students. Other institutions, including Atılım University, Istanbul Technical University, and Gazi University, received between one and four students each. Universities such as Afyon Kocatepe, Cukurova, Dokuz Eylul, Hacettepe, Eastern Mediterranean University, Izmir University of Economics, Uludag University, UNIDO International Centre for Hydrogen Energy Technologies, and

University of Erziyes each hosted one scholar. The scholarships cover a range of professional disciplines, although the Ministry did not provide a detailed breakdown by field. The program is designed to give Pakistani students international exposure and access to quality higher education, while fostering educational collaboration between Pakistan and Turkey. The Ministry noted that applicants must meet specific academic and language requirements and are selected based on merit.

This initiative is part of ongoing efforts to support students in acquiring global educational experiences, contributing to the development of skilled professionals who can advance Pakistan's progress. While the number of scholarships may appear limited given the potential pool of applicants, officials highlighted that the program is competitive and aims to ensure high academic standards and meaningful international experience for the selected students.

## World Environment Day: Environmental Protection is our collective national responsibility: NA Speaker

### Collective efforts are imperative to preserve natural resources and address climate challenges: Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that safeguarding and promoting a clean, safe, and sustainable environment is a collective responsibility of all citizens. He stated that climate change, environmental pollution, deforestation, and the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources pose grave threats to human health, economic stability, and the prospects of future generations. He expressed these

views in his message on the occasion of World Environment Day, observed globally on 5 June under the auspices of the United Nations. NA Speaker stated that the purpose of observing World Environment Day is to raise public awareness about environmental protection and to promote the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources. He noted that although Pakistan's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions remains negligible, the country is among those most vulnerable to the

adverse impacts of climate change. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that coordinated global strategies and effective measures are essential to protect the environment and combat environmental degradation. He stressed the need for enhanced international cooperation to address climate-related challenges and safeguard the planet for future generations. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq further stated that environmental challenges can be effectively mitigated through afforestation, the

prudent use of water and energy resources, the reduction of unnecessary plastic consumption, and the adoption of environmentally responsible lifestyles. He reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to playing a proactive role in advancing legislation aimed at environmental protection, sustainable development, and climate resilience. Highlighting the importance of renewable energy, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated that the Parliament of Pakistan holds the distinction of being the

world's first parliament to be fully powered by solar energy. He remarked that this achievement reflects Parliament's strong commitment to energy efficiency, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also urged the youth to actively contribute towards environmental conservation and the creation of a greener, cleaner, and safer Pakistan. He stated that a healthy environment is the foundation of a prosperous, developed, and sustainable future. On the

occasion of World Environment Day, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah said that environmental protection is a national duty and that safeguarding natural resources is a collective responsibility. He emphasized that by promoting environmentally responsible practices and ensuring the prudent utilization of natural resources, Pakistan can provide future generations with a better, safer, and more sustainable future.

# Opinion & Editorial


  
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## The embrace of Nessus

**Khurram Husain**  
THEY all look the same and for good reason. Every budget over the past 10 years (and more) is pretty much the same with minor differences usually in the gimmickry being advanced in the name of a 'revenue plan'. And it will be no different this time round when the budget for FY27 is announced.

There is a simple reason for this. A little more than a decade and a half ago Pakistan finally abandoned its last attempt to try and get serious tax reform through. Since then, successive governments have been rolling out various gimmicks, from amnesty schemes to 'point of sale machines' to do something that cannot be done with gimmicks. They are trying to document the growing services sector of the economy with these gimmicks, which is like trying to measure the ocean with a teaspoon.

Consider a little perspective first. Since the 1980s, the single fastest-growing sector of the economy has been services. It was slightly less than half of Pakistan's GDP back in those days. Today, it is touching 60 per cent while the shares of industry and agriculture have shrunk. But today, services contributes less than 40pc of total revenues while the share of manufacturing can be as high as 55pc.

This is an important crux of the problem. The fastest-growing sector in Pakistan's economy has made a dimi-

nute contribution to its revenue effort. And there are a number of reasons why. First, successive governments have failed to undertake the kind of tax reforms necessary to keep abreast of the changes sweeping the economy where the services sector is a motor force for growth. For now, the bulk of the revenues contributed by this sector comes from banking and telecom — the low-hanging fruit.

Quite possibly, this is the one budget of the past decade or more which will be defined almost entirely by its revenue effort.

Documenting the transactions taking place in this sector is the first step to reaching them. And for decades there was one big idea on how to do that. It was called 'value-added tax', or VAT, and countries around the world implemented it with varying measures of success to help document their economies during periods of change, and help distribute the burden of the tax effort more widely. In some shape or form, the VAT was always on the agenda as a crucial structural reform measure of every IMF programme that Pakistan signed between 1988 and 2008, and there were many. The tax itself was passed into law in 1992, updated in 1996, but never really applied in value-added mode across the board. In 2008, it was supposed to be updated and modernised but the government of the time failed to ensure passage of the

legislation so spectacularly that the IMF simply dropped it from all future reform agendas. Since then, it has been abandoned.

In abandoning it, however, a new question arose. If you are not going to use the VAT to document your economy, how exactly are you going to do it? The question was an important one because Pakistan's economy was growing in directions that its tax machinery struggled to capture. And successive governments gave their own answers to this question.

This was the decade of gimmicks. We had amnesty schemes, proliferating withholding taxes, new taxes on banking transactions of non-filers, attempts to document the economy by triangulating multiple databases, reliance on data from point of sale machines and even one brief and doomed attempt to manually document the retail sector by serving tens of thousands of notices to them.

Of course, all of these failed because, as already stated, they amounted to attempts to measure the amount of water in the ocean using a teaspoon. Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio stagnated in the single digits and intensified political struggles around the shrinking resource envelope of the state. We saw more gimmicks on the revenue side, like deemed incomes. We saw a 'hard state' approach to withdraw all exemptions or rebates offered to schoolteachers and university professors.

Courtesy Dawn

## Before the next amendment

Hammad Roshia

Pakistan's constitutional conversation appears to be gathering momentum once again. Reports of another constitutional amendment have already triggered the familiar cycle of political debate, legal commentary and institutional speculation. Depending on whom one asks, the amendment may be necessary, overdue, controversial or unnecessary.

Yet whenever Pakistan enters another constitutional debate, I am reminded of a different question: what impact will any of this have on the ordinary citizen's experience of justice? The question matters because constitutional reform and justice reform are often treated as though they are the same thing. They are not. Constitutional amendments determine how power is structured and exercised. Justice reform determines how effectively the state resolves disputes, protects rights and enforces the law. The two may overlap, but they are not interchangeable. A citizen can live under a perfectly drafted constitutional framework and still spend years waiting for a case to conclude.

This distinction often disappears in Pakistan's legal discourse. We devote enormous attention to judicial appointments, institutional powers and constitutional controversies. Yet for most citizens, the justice system is experienced very differently.

Speak to litigants outside almost any district court and the complaints are remarkably consistent. They rarely discuss constitutional architecture. Instead, they talk about delays, adjournments, legal expenses, missing records, absent witnesses and the uncertainty of not knowing when their dispute will finally be resolved. For businesses, uncertainty itself becomes a cost. For undertrial prisoners, delay becomes a punishment long before guilt has been established.

Pakistan's challenge, therefore, is not the absence of legal frameworks. The Constitution guarantees a fair trial. Courtesy Tribune

## No return from seas in sight

It has been over six weeks since 10 Pakistani sailors onboard the oil tanker Honour 25 were taken hostage by pirates off the coast of Somalia, along with the rest of the 17-member crew. The hostages have been languishing in captivity amid worsening conditions marked by diminishing supplies on board. But while their families in Pakistan are enduring an agonising wait, the government's response has been lacklustre, at best. The international community seems to have little interest in intervening to help end the deadlock, and the Somali government is perpetually on the verge of collapse. Somalia's military and law enforcement agencies are no match for the sheer scale of militant and criminal opposition, which is why, when piracy started becoming an issue a few years back, some countries just went in unilaterally to rescue their nationals or flagged ships from pirates. Later, a coordinated international naval presence suppressed Somali piracy, but recent geopolitical distractions have created a security vacuum, allowing it to resurge. Pakistan, it seems, is not only avoiding aggressive actions, but also meaningful ones. Even the government's biggest claims, if taken at face value, suggest that our efforts have been limited to platitudes and passive diplomacy.

## Collective efforts imperative to preserve natural resources, address climate challenges: Ayaz



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday said that safeguarding and promoting a clean, safe, and sustainable environment is a collective responsibility of all citizens.

He said that climate change, environmental pollution, deforestation, and the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources pose grave threats to human health, economic stability, and the prospects of future generations.

He expressed these views in his message on the occasion of World

Environment Day, observed globally on 5 June under the auspices of the United Nations.

Ayaz Sadiq said that the purpose of observing World Environment Day is to raise public awareness about environmental protection and to promote the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources.

He said that although Pakistan's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions remains negligible, the country is among those most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that coordinated global strategies and effective measures are essential to protect the environment and combat environmental degradation. He stressed the need for enhanced international cooperation to address climate-related challenges and safeguard the planet for future generations. The Speaker said that environmental challenges can be effectively mitigated through

afforestation, the prudent use of water and energy resources, the reduction of unnecessary plastic consumption, and the adoption of environmentally responsible lifestyles.

He reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to playing a proactive role in advancing legislation aimed at environmental protection, sustainable development, and climate resilience.

Highlighting the importance of renewable energy, Ayaz Sadiq said that the Parliament of Pakistan holds the distinction of being the world's first parliament to be fully powered by solar energy.

He said that this achievement reflects Parliament's strong commitment to energy efficiency, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development.

Ayaz Sadiq also urged the youth to actively contribute towards environmental conservation and the creation of a greener, cleaner, and safer Pakistan.

## Dar congratulates countries elected as non-permanent UNSC members

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday congratulated Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zimbabwe on their election as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2027-2028 term.

"We wish them every success in discharging this important responsibility," he said in a post on X. "As Pakistan continues its tenure on the UNSC through 2026, we remain committed to advancing peace, security, dialogue, and multilateral cooperation," he added. Dar further stated, "We look forward to working closely with the incoming members in pursuit of our shared objectives and a more peaceful, secure, and equitable world." Only 10 out of the 15 members of



the council are elected, with no election for the five veto-wielding permanent members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States. The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday elected Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago and Zimbabwe to the 15-member UN Security Council for two-year terms starting on January 1, 2027. Germany, which had lobbied hard for a seat, came third for the two places contested by the Western European and Others Group, with 104 votes, against 134 for Portugal and 131 for Austria.

## Govt committed to protecting minority rights, promoting inclusive society: Attaullah Tarar



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday reiterated the government's commitment to the protection of minority rights, saying consultations with representatives of minority and other communities play a vital role in ensuring that the views and needs of all citizens are effectively reflected in legislation and public policies. He expressed these views during a meeting with a representative delegation of the Christian community, which was also attended by Federal Minister for Law,

Justice, and Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar. The meeting featured a detailed discussion on minority rights, legal reforms, and issues related to the welfare of the Christian community. Attaullah Tarar said the government was committed to promoting interfaith harmony, equal citizenship, and an inclusive society where every Pakistani, without discrimination, could contribute to national development. The Christian community delegation appreciated the government's continued commitment to safeguarding the rights of minority communities and welcomed recent legislation, particularly the Child Marriage Restraint Act. The delegation also lauded the government's efforts to protect minority communities and promote equal opportunities through the National Commission for Minority Rights. Participants discussed issues faced by minority communities and explored ways to ensure that the needs of the Christian community are effectively addressed through relevant laws and policies.

## Gilani calls for collective action to protect environment

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday called for collective and sustained efforts to tackle environmental challenges and protect natural resources for future generations.

In his message on World Environment Day, Gilani said environmental degradation, climate change, deforestation, water scarcity, pollution and biodiversity loss pose serious threats to ecosystems as well as sustainable development, public health, food security and economic stability. He noted that Pakistan, despite contributing very little to global greenhouse gas emissions, remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate-related disasters. The Chairman of the Senate stressed the need for environmentally responsible policies and the promotion of sustainable practices across all sectors of society.

He said protecting the environment is a shared responsibility that requires active participation from governments, institutions, communities and individuals.

## Mohsin Naqvi assures Sindh govt support for combating crimes

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said that the federal government would provide all possible assistance to the Sindh government for ensuring law and order and the elimination of drug smuggling in the province. He was speaking to Senior Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon in Karachi.

Praising the Sindh Police, he said that the Force had played a key role in the restoration of law and order in the province by demonstrating gallantry, professionalism and commitment in challenging circumstances. He congratulated the Sindh minister on conducting successful operations against the dacoits of katcha area. Speaking on the occasion,



Memon said that effective coordination and collaboration between the federal and provincial governments was the best recipe for dealing with the challenges confronting the country. He stressed the need for working together in matters of national interest. The provincial minister, on the occasion, expressed his government's resolve to continue to make efforts for the elimination of crimes, ensuring peace and protection of residents of the province.

## PIC declares Islamabad Club public entity, orders disclosure of records to citizen under RTI Act

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) has ruled that the Islamabad Club qualifies as a public body under the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017, and has directed the club to provide a citizen with detailed records concerning its operations, membership, and finances. The decision was announced by Chief Information Commissioner Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui and Information Commissioner Jaz Hassan Awan. The case arose when citizen Sadiya Mazhar filed an information request with the Secretary of the Islamabad Club seeking details including total membership, membership criteria, leases of properties and outlets, events held at Rawalpindi Gymkhana Club, affiliated train-

ees and their salaries, audit reports, land holdings, and government funds or grants received since January 2024. The Islamabad Club initially contested the request, arguing that Mazhar, not being a member, had no locus standi and that certain matters were already pending before the Islamabad High Court. The club also contended that it did not receive federal funding and had no juristic personality, claiming that the request could not be entertained. In response to the claims of the Islamabad Club, the citizen Sadiya Mazhar, noted that the club occupies 352 acres of state land under a nominal lease of Rs. 1 per acre, with significant public interest implications. The commission found that, under Sections 2(ix)(a), (b), and (h) of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017,

## Waryam Masih to take legal action against fake campaigns on social media

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Renowned religious and social leader Bishop Waryam Masih has strongly reacted to the alleged fake, fabricated and baseless campaign being run against him on social media and announced legal action against the responsible elements. In this regard, while holding a press conference along with Michael Rose Advocate, Legal Advisor to the Pakistan Bishops Council, and Bishop Farrukh Javed, Bishop Waryam Masih said that some individuals and groups are deliberately trying to damage his reputation by spreading false information, misleading content and baseless allegations



on social media platforms. He said that freedom of expression is the right of every citizen, however, it is unacceptable to mislead the public through character assassination, false propaganda and misinformation. Bishop Waryam Masih said that his legal advisors have started reviewing the matter and legal action will be taken against all such social media accounts.

## Pakistan, Tajikistan set \$200 million trade target, deepen economic ties at 8th JCM

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Tajikistan have agreed on a comprehensive road-map to boost bilateral trade to \$200 million over the next three years while expanding cooperation in energy, agriculture, information technology, health, education and tourism during the 8th Session of the Joint Commission Meeting.

Both sides have fixed on different potential sectors including trade, economy and Scientific-technical cooperation held in Dushanbe.

The two-day meeting, held on June 2-3, was co-chaired by Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water

Resources, Jum'a Daler Shofaqr, and Pakistan's Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari.

Both sides Ambassadors, Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir and Ambassador of Pakistan to Tajikistan Irfan Ahmed also flanked by the both sides minister during the 8th Session of the Joint Commission Meeting.

Pakistan, Tajikistan set \$200 million trade target, deepen economic ties at 8th JCM

The Pakistani delegation included senior officials from the Economic Affairs Division, Ministry of



Commerce, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Ministry of National Health Services, Ministry of Industries and Production, Power Division, Petroleum Division, State Bank of Pakistan and the

Inter-Provincial Coordination Ministry.

Both sides underscored the importance of strengthening trade and investment ties through enhanced business-to-business engagement, participation in trade exhibi-

tions, exchange of trade information and closer collaboration between chambers of commerce.

The parties agreed to organize trade delegations, B2B meetings and online business interactions to unlock new commercial opportunities. A key outcome of the session was the agreement to develop a three-year roadmap aimed at increasing bilateral trade volume to \$200 million.

The two countries also welcomed the finalization of a Memorandum of Understanding between Tajikistan's Agency for Export and Pakistan's Trade Development Authority.

Discussions were also held on a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), which both sides described as an important step toward strengthening commercial relations. They agreed to continue consultations for its early conclusion.

In the energy sector, Pakistan and Tajikistan expressed satisfaction over progress on the CASA-1000 regional electricity transmission project and stressed the need for timely completion of the remaining work.

Both countries reaffirmed their participation in the CASA-1000 Joint Working Group meeting scheduled for June 2026 in Istanbul.