



**President confers military awards on officers, personnel of armed forces**



**Shaza unveils Pakistan's Digital Future on Independence Day**



**Tanveer calls for immediate reduction in DAP prices to protect farmers**

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Friday 15 August 2025 Safar 20, 1447 A.H VOI No: 05 Issue No. 225 Pages 4 Rs.20

## PM Shehbaz hoists national flag to mark 78th Independence Day

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday hoisted the national flag to mark the celebration of the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan.

The main flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Pakistan Monument – an iconic structure representing the national unity and strength of the Pakistani people.

PM Shehbaz hoists national flag to mark 78th Independence Day. The event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, federal ministers and dozens of students.

As the prime minister arrived at the venue, the children attired in national cultural dresses, presented him flowers.

Prime Minister Shehbaz, who wore black sherwani over white shalwar and kameez, hoisted the national flag as the crowd stood in respect.

The ceremony also marked the playing of the national anthem and national songs.

Later, the prime minister laid a wreath at the monument, offering prayers for Pakistan's development, progress, and prosperity.

The Independence Day was dawned with the booming of 31-gun salutes in Islamabad and 21-gun salutes in all provincial capitals.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends flag hoisting ceremony at Pakistan Monument.

## Kabul to host trilateral talks between Pakistan, China, Afghanistan on Aug 20



SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China's foreign ministers are set to convene in Kabul on August 20 for trilateral discussions, sources informed Geo News on Thursday.

The meeting will bring together Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

The sources said the agenda will include discussions on counterterrorism efforts and the expansion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Earlier this month, Afghanistan's Interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi was scheduled to visit Pakistan on August 5. However, both countries later issued statements citing "technical" reasons for the cancellation. It has since emerged that the UN Security Council did not grant permission for the visit.

as Muttaqi remains on the UN-designated list of Taliban members. Following the Kabul meeting, the Chinese foreign minister is expected to travel to Pakistan the next day, the sources said.

## Service Chiefs, Armed Forces felicitate nation on 78th Independence Day

SIDRA SADOZAI

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff; General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee; Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI (M), Chief of the Naval Staff; and Air Chief Marshal Zabeer Ahmad Babar Sidhu, NI (M), Chief of the Air Staff, on behalf of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, extend heartfelt felicitations to the nation on the auspicious occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day—marking the triumph of unity, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to a shared vision for a brighter future. "As we pay homage to our founding fathers, we honor their indomitable spirit, resolute determination, and unparalleled sacrifices under the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, sacrifices that paved the



way for independence. Their courage, foresight and unshakeable faith in the cause of freedom remain an enduring beacon of guidance," said a statement issued by Inter Services. Public Relations (ISPR). The Armed Forces pay solemn tribute to the visionaries, statesmen and soldiers who laid our nation's foundations, cherishing their legacy with deep reverence and gratitude. As guardians of national security, we reaffirm our unwavering resolve to safeguard Pakistan's sovereignty and terri-

torial integrity, uphold the Constitution, and protect the values that define our national identity. The unbreakable bond between the Armed Forces and the people is the cornerstone of our collective strength. On this Independence Day, let us renew our resolve to strive for peace, progress, and unity, upholding the ideals of Faith, Unity, and Discipline to realize the dream of a resilient, prosperous, and progressive Pakistan. Pakistan Armed Forces Zindabad Pakistan Painsdabad.

## Turkish, Azerbaijani military units join Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The military contingents from brotherly countries of Turkiye and Azerbaijan on Wednesday participated in Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations held in Islamabad. The troops of brotherly countries took part in the parade and also performed march-past on the occasion. Their appearance was met with loud applause and enthusiastic chants from the audience, reflecting the deep and enduring friendship between Pakistan and the two nations.

## Five cops martyred, 8 injured after multiple police checkpoints come under attack in KP

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: At least five cops were martyred and another eight left injured as militants attacked police checkpoints at different locations late at night in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, including Peshawar, Upper Dir and Lower Dir, police said on Thursday.

Over the past few months, multiple areas of KP — including Bannu, Peshawar, Karak, Lakki Marwat and Bajaur — have seen a series of attacks on police forces. The country has witnessed an uptick in terror activities over the past year, especially in KP and Balochistan, after the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022. In KP's Upper Dir,



three cops were martyred after their mobile was attacked by terrorists, while another six were injured in the same attack, the police said in a statement. Police have launched a search operation to find the perpetrators, and the injured were rushed to the nearby hospital. Meanwhile, in Lower Dir, "two separate terrorist

attacks on police checkpoints in the areas of Maidan, Lajbok and Shadas claimed the life of police constable Sanaullah, while Sultan Zareem was injured. District Police Officer Abdul Salam Khalid said in a statement. In Peshawar, two separate police checkpoints in the areas of Matni and Nasir Bagh and a police

station in Hassan Khel came under fire, leaving one police personnel dead and another injured. The deceased has been identified as Constable Jahangir Khan, who lost his life in the attack on Hassan Khel police station. According to a press release issued by the KP police, "the attacks on Matni and Nasir Bagh checkpoints were successfully thwarted." "Police and law enforcement agencies retaliated against the attacks," the statement read, adding that the terrorists retreated after the exchange of fire. "Elements of Fina-ul-Khawarij also fired on a police party near Nasir Bagh, which was foiled with timely action," the statement added, using the state-designated term for TTP.

## US congratulates Pakistan on Independence Day, vows to bolster bilateral ties

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio has extended felicitations on Independence Day of Pakistan. In a message, Rubio appreciated Islamabad's engagement on counterterrorism and trade. He also reiterated President Donald Trump's intention to explore "new areas of economic cooperation in critical minerals and hydrocarbons" between the two countries. "On behalf of the United States, I extend our warm congratulations to the people of Pakistan as they celebrate their Independence Day on August 14," Rubio added. "We look forward to exploring new areas of economic cooperation, including critical minerals and hydrocarbons, and fostering dynamic business partnerships which will promote a prosperous future for Americans and Pakistanis," he further said. The remarks from the top US diplomat come amid strengthening ties between Pakistan and the US. Earlier this week, the US officially designated the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and the Majeed Brigade Group as terrorist organisations.





# SPORTS



## Pakistan Cricket stars extend Independence Day greetings to the nation



**ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN** congratulated the people of Pakistan, while Salman Agha urged citizens to keep the country clean. Babar Azam reflected on the historic significance of the day, saying, "Remember, it was on this day that Pakistan was created — a day that gave us our identity and defined who we are as a nation."

In a video shared by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), ODI captain Mohammad Rizwan, T20I skipper Salman Ali Agha, Babar Azam, along with other players and management members, conveyed their messages of patriotism and unity.

Mohammad Rizwan



The nation marked the day with traditional fervor, renewing its commitment to the ideals of the Pakistan Movement and the vision of a true Islamic welfare state. The celebrations began with a 31-gun salute in the federal capital and a 21-gun salute in provincial capitals. Special prayers after Fajr were offered for Pakistan's security, prosperity, and the well-being of its people.

## Pakistan women's cricket team wishes nation on Independence Day

MUHAMMAD USMAN

ISLAMABAD: The players and coaches of the Pakistan women's cricket team have extended their warmest congratulations to the nation on the occasion of the Independence Day. In a statement issued here, Alia Riaz said, "Congratulations to all on Independence Day. May Allah bless Pakistan with peace, prosperity, and progress." Eman Fatima said, "Let's work hard for the progress of our country. Happy Independence Day to all. Pakistan Zindabad!" Junaid Khan said, "I pray that Pakistan continues to achieve success and prosperity."

Tahir Khan said, "Let's all play our part in Pakistan's success. Pakistan Zindabad!"



## Pepsi National PD T20 Cricket Championship: Multan Cruise into Final

SPORTS REPORTER

KARACHI: Multan booked their place in the final of the Pepsi National PD T20 Cricket Championship after defeating Lahore by seven wickets, recording their third consecutive victory of the tournament. In the final Multan will face the winner of the second leg. The championship, organised by the Pakistan Physical Disability Cricket Association (PPDCA), continued on the third day at the Rashid Latif Cricket Academy (RLCA) Ground in Karachi, featuring two more matches. In the day's opening fixture/



## Asif fails in medal quest despite stunning break at World Games



**PEAK POINT** podium finish as an independence day gift for Pakistan, first fell to China's Xiao Guodong in the semi-finals. Guodong — who won the Wuhan Open title last year — dominated the encounter, securing a commanding 2-0 victory. The 36-year-old home player sealed the first frame emphatically 80-0, featuring a 58-break, Asif, aiming for a

second frame 65-47 to Shang in action during the parkour freestyle medal match. Forced into the Hubin Arena — third-place playoff Reuters against Germany's Alexander Widau — Asif had my chances," a disappointed Asif had defeated earlier in the country's most decorated cueist, told APP Pakistani cueist after the loss to fought valiantly but Widau. "That 149 ultimately succumbed showed what I am 2-1 in a tense contest. Widau took the opening frame 70-40, n't get over the line, aided by a 59-break. This will hurt for a long time." Elsewhere on Wednesday, Spanish athlete Jhoan Bitarance to level the Guzman claimed gold match at 1-1 with a in the men's 100m resounding 149-0 sprint in roller sports, scoreline. However, setting a new world record of 9.53 seconds. It was Guzman's second gold at the multi-nation showpiece. He also won the men's one lap event in China's Chunsong 34.372 seconds.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports Syed Farkhar Jehan addresses to participants of Azadi Festival here in sports complex on Thursday.

## Tayiba Ashraf bags three golds at taekwondo championship

PEAK POINT

KUALA LUMPUR: Pakistan's Tayiba Ashraf clinched gold medals across three different disciplines during the International Taekwondo Championship in Malaysia on Tuesday. The national athlete emerged triumphant in the virtual fight,



pair poomsae and 49 kg fight. 6,500 athletes from 35 countries took part in the championship. "I'm overwhelmed with joy and pride! I've won three gold medals in the International Taekwondo Championship held in Malaysia, and this achievement is a gift to Pakistan on our Independence Day," Tayiba shared on her social media platform.

After the historic achievement she thanked her parents, coaches and supporters for their unwavering belief in her. "I couldn't have done it without the support of my parents, coaches, friends, and supporters. Your prayers and trust in me have been my driving force. I request you all to continue believing in me as I strive to reach new heights. My next goal is to take our flag to the Olympics and make our nation proud."



PESHAWAR: A group photo of Independence Day Bikers Rally organised by KPCTA and Pehawar Bikers Club near Bilahar Fort here on Thursday.

# Opinion & Editorial

## Six Years On: Why the International Community Must Break Its Silence on Kashmir



**Sidra sadozai**  
Resident Editor  
Daily Peak Point

The people of Jammu and Kashmir still endure fear, alienation, and repression as August 5, 2025, marks six years since the Indian government repealed Article 370. What was initially portrayed as a step toward integration and development has instead turned into a persistent campaign of dispossession, militarization, and control. It is not only disheartening, but also dangerous for the international community to remain silent in the face of such obvious injustice.

The region of Kashmir is still under dispute. There is still a significant military presence there. And it's still kept quiet, diplomatically, digitally, and politically. How long can the suffering of a whole population be disregarded on the grounds of strategic interests? This is a question that the international community, in particular democratic countries and multilateral organizations, must consider.

An Unfulfilled Promise to the People of Kashmir (UAPA) and the Public Safety Act (PSA).

The constitutional link between Kashmir and the Indian Union was severed in 2019 when India unilaterally revoked Article 370. As stipulated in the 1947 accession terms, this article had given the area a certain amount of autonomy. Its removal represented a significant shift in the political standing of a region that was acknowledged as disputed internationally, not merely an internal constitutional issue.

There was no consultation with Kashmiris. Their voices were drowned in a sea of nationalist propaganda, their streets were overrun with troops, their leaders were imprisoned, and their internet was shut down. Instead of progress, what transpired was the destruction of democratic norms, trust, and fundamental human rights.

Six Years of Suppression, Surveillance, and Silence Kashmir has witnessed since 2019:

Unprecedented militarization, placing it among the world's most heavily fortified areas.

persistent detentions of journalists, activists, students, and political figures—often in accordance with harsh legislation such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

Worldwide Precedent

What stops other states from using military force and legal wrangling to alter the status of a disputed territory if one state can get away with it? A risky precedent for international order is established by the Kashmir case.

Crisis of Human Rights International attention is required to address ongoing abuses, such as enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, and the suppression of civil liberties. The world cannot claim to uphold human rights while disregarding one of the oldest professions.

Strategic Quietness Is Not Neutral

Global powers' hesitancy to voice their opinions on Kashmir is mostly due to strategic and financial considerations. Many nations are wary of India because of its sizable market, diplomatic clout, and function as a check

on China. However, this calculated silence is complicity, not neutrality.

The international community is sending a dangerous message by not criticizing India's actions in Kashmir: that human rights are negotiable and that Kashmiris' lives and freedoms are worthless in the name of realpolitik.

They're Silencing Voices from the Ground

The increasing sense of desertion among Kashmiris is arguably the most tragic effect of this worldwide inaction. Around the world, their voices are disregarded and censored locally.

International human rights organizations are denied access, and peaceful protest is criminalized. The press is suppressed, civil society is under siege, and young people feel deceived.

An entire population is left to fight alone against the full power of a state apparatus that is determined to eradicate their identity and stifle their dreams in the absence of international solidarity.

It's Time for a Worldwide Moral Reconciliation

The international community's frequent, ambiguous declarations of "concern" or "monitoring the situation" are no longer sufficient. Now is the moment to take action: To evaluate the state of six years later. Never again.

## Unique Independence Day

By: Abdul Basit Alvi

The importance of Independence Day in Pakistan is truly multi-dimensional. It is a day of immense pride, remembering the extraordinary bravery and visionary leadership of those who valiantly fought for the country's freedom. It is also a day of solemn mourning, recalling the countless lives tragically lost in the harrowing process of partition. It is a day for profound reflection, diligently assessing the progress already made and the significant work that undeniably remains to be done. It is a powerful day of unity, when people come together across all divides to joyously celebrate their shared identity. It is a day of inspiration, particularly for the youth, to actively become engaged and responsible citizens. And above all, it is a day of heartfelt gratitude—for the invaluable freedom that was earned with such immense sacrifice, and for the priceless opportunity to shape the nation's destiny with independence, dignity, and unwavering hope. Pakistan's Independence Day is not merely confined to a specific date on the calendar; it is a living, breathing symbol of what the nation unequivocally stands for and what it continually strives to become. The Independence Day of Pakistan in 2025 carries a significance unlike any other in the nation's history. Traditionally observed with deep patriotic fervor, August 14th has always symbolized the hard-won freedom from colonial rule and the birth of a homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. It is a day that profoundly honors the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the immense sacrifices of millions who paved the way for an independent Pakistan. However, this year, the celebration carries an unprecedented depth and emotional intensity. This is not merely an anniversary of freedom, but a pivotal moment when the country stands tall to celebrate its recent triumphs on both the battlefield and the political front, powerfully marked by the successes of Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyan Marsoos. These victories have profoundly renewed national pride, unified a deeply diverse population, and strikingly showcased Pakistan's evolving military prowess and strategic maturity on the global stage. The year 2025 brought with it a series of aggressive maneuvers and severe provocations that gravely threatened the sovereignty of Pakistan. In early May, Pakistan faced a significant military escalation from across its eastern border. India, under the deceptive pretext of eliminating what it claimed were militant threats, launched unprovoked air and missile strikes under the codename "Operation Sindoore." These strikes reportedly hit civilian areas, causing tragic losses, including the devastating destruction of homes, schools, and places of worship. The Pakistani nation watched with heavy hearts as horrifying scenes of devastation emerged, and the collective mood swiftly shifted from sorrow to res-



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olute determination. The government, powerfully backed by the unified will of the people and guided by the unwavering command of its armed forces, chose a path of calculated patience followed by decisive, impactful action. This robust response materialized as Operation Bunyan Marsoos, a name deeply rooted in Islamic tradition meaning "The Solid Structure" or "The Unbreakable Wall," powerfully symbolizing an unyielding stance against tyranny and aggression. Operation Bunyan Marsoos was far more than simply a military campaign; it was a profound statement of strategic brilliance and undeniable moral clarity. Pakistan's response was meticulously planned and surgically executed with extraordinary precision. Over two dozen Indian military installations, including major airbases, critical logistics hubs, and vital command centers, were specifically targeted and effectively disabled with remarkable accuracy. The operation was designed not just to retaliate but to unequivocally restore deterrence, uphold national dignity, and send an unmistakable message that Pakistan's sovereignty was absolutely inviolable. The strategic use of indigenous weapons systems such as the Fatah-I and Fatah-II ballistic missiles, state-of-the-art modern drones, and sophisticated electronic warfare tools powerfully demonstrated the significant advancements in Pakistan's defense capabilities. More than just cutting-edge technology, it was the exceptional coordination across the Pakistan Army, Air Force, Navy, and Cyber Command that vividly reflected an extraordinarily high degree of operational integration and professional excellence. This was emphatically not the Pakistan of the past, reactive and vulnerable. This was a nation thoroughly prepared, profoundly united, and supremely confident in its inherent ability to protect its people. What made these events even more extraordinary was the pivotal role of Marka-e-Haq, the overarching strategic doctrine that had been quietly and meticulously evolving within the defense and diplomatic circles of Pakistan. Translating to "The Battle of Truth," Marka-e-Haq was not limited to mere kinetic warfare; it was a truly multidimensional campaign encompassing precise military action, compelling media engagement, extensive diplomatic outreach, and vital internal cohesion. The doctrine powerfully emphasized the inherent righteousness of Pakistan's cause, firmly rooted in self-defense, impeccable ethical conduct, and the unwavering protection of innocent civilians. This was not a war of conquest, but a resolute fight for justice and sur-

vival. Throughout the intense campaign, Pakistani leaders maintained exemplary transparency with the public, diligently ensured that military targets were exclusively selected to avoid any collateral damage, and simultaneously launched a comprehensive global diplomatic effort to clarify Pakistan's legitimate position and expose Indian aggression. International media outlets, once skeptical or even indifferent, began to acknowledge the undeniable legitimacy of Pakistan's stance, especially as overwhelming evidence mounted of Indian disinformation campaigns and egregious human rights violations. The culmination of these extraordinary efforts came with an unprecedented act in Pakistan's military history—the well-deserved elevation of General Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff, to the distinguished rank of Field Marshal. This rare honor, only the second of its kind in decades, was bestowed not merely as a recognition of one man's exceptional leadership, but as a profound tribute to the entire armed forces, the steadfast civilian leadership, and the resilient people of Pakistan who stood united in one of the most testing moments of the country's post-independence history. The government officially declared May 16 as Youm-e-Tashakur—the Day of Gratitude—celebrated nationwide to express profound thanks to Allah for the resounding success of the operation, to honor the fallen martyrs, and to deeply appreciate the remarkable solidarity shown by the entire populace. Streets across Pakistan, from the bustling avenues of Karachi to the serene valleys of Gilgit-Balistan, were filled with joyous celebrations, patriotic songs, and vibrant processions. Mosques resonated with fervent prayers of thanks, and social media buzzed with heartfelt messages of unity and immense pride. This year, as Pakistan proudly marks its 78th Independence Day, the national mood is distinctly one of profound renewal and unwavering resilience. The majestic green and white flag flies higher than ever before, not just as a poignant reminder of the past but as a bright beacon of a hopeful future. Children are reciting patriotic poems with a deeper, more visceral understanding of what independence truly means. Veterans are being saluted not only for their past valiant service but for their continued invaluable inspiration. The immense sacrifices of the armed forces are being honored with a renewed, unwavering commitment to national defense, while the compelling stories of strategic brilliance and exceptional bravery during Operation Bunyan Marsoos will undoubtedly become an integral part of the curriculum and the collective national consciousness. This celebration is not merely for a free Pakistan—it is for a strong, undeniably sovereign, and truly self-reliant Pakistan. Furthermore, this Independence Day stands as a rare and significant moment of political unity. Across all party lines, leaders have unequivocally acknowledged the imperative need to preserve national cohesion, to

steadfastly prioritize national interests above any personal or partisan agendas, and to assiduously foster an environment where democracy and security can genuinely coexist. The transformative events of 2025 have powerfully reinforced a crucial truth—that while internal disagreements may certainly exist, when the sacred integrity of the nation is at stake, Pakistan stands as one. Civil society organizations, dynamic youth groups, respected religious scholars, and influential media professionals have all played a critically important role in shaping this collective national response, definitively proving that the inherent strength of Pakistan lies not just in its formidable weapons but, more importantly, in its indomitable people. Even the extensive Pakistani diaspora, often geographically distant from the daily realities of life in the homeland, has engaged in this year's Independence Day celebrations with unusually fervent energy. In major global cities like London, New York, Toronto, Dubai, and Sydney, Pakistani communities are enthusiastically organizing rallies, vibrant cultural programs, and inclusive interfaith prayers to celebrate the country's renewed strength and to honor the cherished memories of those who ensured its survival. The global Pakistani identity has become noticeably more cohesive, more visibly proud, and more vocally expressive. Pakistani flags wave not only on the bustling streets of Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar, but also prominently in front of consulates and cultural centers across continents, representing a people no longer passive observers, but actively engaged participants in their nation's remarkable journey. In every conceivable way, then, the Independence Day of 2025 stands out as a truly defining chapter in Pakistan's rich and complex history. It is a rare and powerful fusion of heartfelt remembrance and invigorating renewal, of profound gratitude and resolute assertion, of solemn grief for the fallen and joyous triumph for the resilient. The indomitable spirit of 1947 has found a profound new manifestation in the exceptional courage and strategic clarity of 2025. It serves as a powerful reminder that independence is not a singular, one-time event but a continuous, unwavering struggle to protect and uphold the fundamental values for which the nation was so bravely created. The unequivocal lesson of Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyan Marsoos is abundantly clear: that truth, when powerfully backed by unity, meticulous preparation, and unwavering faith, becomes absolutely invincible. As the iconic green crescent proudly flutters in the sky this August 14th, it carries with it the weighty legacy of history and the invigorating winds of a confident, promising future.

## Ahsan says nation marks Independence Day with pride Maarka-e-Haq victory, vision for 2035

SIDRA SADOZAI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said that the nation was celebrating its Independence Day with a renewed sense of pride, demonstrated by the success of Maarka-e-Haq under Operation Bunyan al-Marsoos (Iron Wall) – a testament that no enemy could dare cast an evil eye on Pakistan.

"Independence Day is a day of joy and pride. Today, we thank Allah Almighty and celebrate the victory in Maarka-e-Haq, during which the nation proved that no enemy can cast a malicious eye on Pakistan," he said in his Independence Day message. The minister affirmed that the armed forces were fully capable of delivering a decisive response to any aggression, adding that the political leadership, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has



demonstrated its unwavering commitment to defending the honor and dignity of Pakistan. Ahsan Iqbal praised the armed forces for their readiness and strength, highlighting the country's unyielding resolve to protect its sovereignty. He also commended the government's leadership, saying "The political leadership has shown it will not waver in making bold decisions for

Pakistan's honor." He expressed pride in Pakistan's growing international recognition, saying "The world is looking at Pakistan with admiration." He highlighted major achievements in the defense sector under Operation Bunyan al-Marsoos, calling it an unparalleled success. However, Ahsan Iqbal stressed that the real battle lies ahead in the economic domain, under the 'Uraan Pakistan' initiative, which aims to transform the country into an economic powerhouse by 2035. "Teachers, doctors, engineers, traders, farmers, and laborers – all must contribute to the goal of making Pakistan a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2035," he stressed. He placed special focus on youth, calling them "Pakistan's most valuable asset," and emphasized the importance of equipping them with modern skills to showcase their talent on the global stage.

## President confers military awards on officers, personnel of armed forces

AYESHA REHAN

RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday conferred military awards on officers, soldiers of armed forces for their conspicuous courage and supreme sacrifice rendered during Operation "Bunyan-Um-Marsoos. The military awards included eight Sitara-i-Jurat, five Tamgha-i-Jurat, 24 Sitara-i-Basalat, 45 Tamgha-i-Basalat, 146 Intiaz Ahmad, 259 COAS Commendation Cards and one Tamgha-i-Intiaz (Military), said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) here. Officers who have been conferred with Sitara-i-Jurat included Wing Commander Bilal Raza, GD(P), Air Force, Wing Commander Hamid Iqbal Masood, GD(P), Air Force, Squadron Leader M Yousaf Khan, GD(P), Air Force, Squadron Leader Muhammad Osama Ishaq, GD(P), Air Force, Squadron Leader Muhammad Hassan Anees, GD(P), Air Force, Squadron Leader Talal Hassan, GD(P), Air Force, Squadron Leader Fida Muhammad Khan,

GD(P), Air Force, and Flight Lieutenant Muhammad Ashhad Amir, GD(P), Air Force. Officers and men who have been conferred with Tamgha-i-Jurat are Lt Hav Amir Sheraz (Shaheed), Baloch, Nk Abdul Rehman (Shaheed), SSG, L/NK Ikram Ullah (Shaheed), AK, Sep Adeel Akbar (Shaheed), Punjab, and Capt Ali Hassan, FF.

Similarly, officers and men who have been conferred with Sitara-i-Basalat included Sep Nisar Ali (Shaheed), PR (Pb), Lt Gen Muhammad Asim Malik, HI(M), Baloch, Lt Gen Nauman Zakria, HI(M), SI, AC, Lt Gen Syed Aamer Raza, HI(M), AC, Lt Gen Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, HI(M), AD, Lt Gen Shahid Intiaz, HI(M), AK, Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, HI(M) EME, Maj Gen Wajid Aziz, HI (M), Punjab, Maj Gen Kashif Abdullah, Punjab, Maj Gen Syed Muhammad Jawad Tariq, FF, Maj Gen Tajdeed Mumtaz, Baloch, Capt Muhammad Haider Ali, Arty, Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz, HI(M), Navy, Rear Admiral Abdul Munib.



ISLAMABAD: A combination photo shows Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Gen Shair Shamshad Mirza, Air Chief Marshal Zaeher Ahmed Babar Sidhu and Navy Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf receiving national awards during a ceremony at the Presidency.

## Rs701 Million Fraud Rocks Park Road Scheme as FIA Targets Collusion Network

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Park Road Scheme, a high-profile housing project under the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), has been exposed as the centre of a multi-million-rupee fraud involving contractors, bank employees, consultants, and even an insurance company. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) revealed a sophisticated embezzlement scheme worth 701 million rupees, carried out through collusion, fake guarantees, and forged docu-

ments. The project, which stalled amid the scandal, is now set to be taken over by the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) under the new name "Margalla Orchard." According to the FIA's findings, the fraud began when the contractor was allowed to withdraw massive advance mobilisation funds in two tranches of 380 million rupees each. Despite pocketing the funds, the contractor failed to perform any substantial work on the site. The withdrawals were made possible by fake bank guarantees issued in

the name of United Bank Limited (UBL) and endorsed by the project's consultant from NESPAK, who remains the key absconder in the case. The bank's role has come under intense scrutiny. The FIA reported "active connivance" on UBL's part, noting that a bid security of 100 million rupees—meant to be held until the tender was approved—was illegally returned to the contractor's account the day after it was deposited. When FGEHA sought confirmation that the bid security remained intact, UBL falsely

assured them that it was, even though the funds had already been removed. Two bank employees whose signatures appeared on the forged guarantees were arrested but later released on bail. The insurance company involved, United Insurance, also faced accusations of obstructing recovery. Despite holding a performance guarantee for the project, the insurer initially resisted payout attempts, forcing the FIA to intervene. Officials from the company were also named in the FIR. The FIA has so far

secured or seized assets worth approximately 637 million rupees, including 25 vehicles valued at 160 million and performance security worth 477 million. This leaves a shortfall of around 64 million rupees. FGEHA is now banking on a potential 480 million rupee payout from United Insurance, which could bring them to financial recovery and offset most of the losses suffered. With the project stalled, FGEHA has signed an MoU with DHA to take over and complete the development under the rebranded

name "Margalla Orchard." The committee overseeing the matter has directed FGEHA to submit the final agreement with DHA for review, ensuring transparency and protecting the interests of allottees who have been left in limbo. The FIA has been commended for its progress but urged to accelerate its investigation and present the final challan in court without delay. All of these revelations, directives, and recovery updates emerged during a meeting of the Standing Committee on Housing & Works.

## Cultural minister attends 'Independence Day' & Marka-e-Haq ceremony at Lok Virsa

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Thursday attended a ceremony at Lok Virsa marking Pakistan's Independence Day and the Marka-e-Haq. Cultural minister attends 'Independence Day' & Marka-e-Haq ceremony at Lok Virsa Parliamentary Secretary Farah Naz Akbar, Secretary National Heritage and Culture Asad Rehman Gillani, and Executive Director Lok Virsa Dr. Waqas were also present on the occasion. The event began with a cake-cutting ceremony in connection with Independence Day and the Marka-e-Haq. Speaking on the occasion, the Federal Minister said that Independence Day not only reminds us of the value of freedom and the sacrifices made to achieve it but also renews our pledge to



safeguard our culture, heritage, and national identity at all costs. He said that the recent Pakistan-India tensions have once again reminded the nation of the price of freedom and the need for national unity to preserve it. "Protecting independence is impossible without sacrifice and unity, and the entire nation stands like a wall for the defense of the motherland," he added. The Federal Minister also visited the photo exhibition and cultural programs dedicated to the Marka-e-Haq and Independence Day at Lok Virsa and lauded the efforts made in organizing them.

## Tanveer calls for immediate reduction in DAP prices to protect farmers

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday called for immediate reduction in DAP prices in order to protect the farmers across the country.

He was chairing a high-level meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee, which was also attended by heads of major fertilizer companies, senior officials from the ministry and stakeholders from all provinces, including representatives of provincial agriculture departments and farmer organizations. The minister expressed deep concern over the recent surge in DAP fertilizer prices, emphasizing that the rising cost has become a serious



obstacle for farmers, particularly small-scale growers who form the backbone of the national agriculture sector.

He stated that farmers cannot afford such high prices and that the weakening of their purchasing power would not only reduce agricultural productivity but also adversely impact the business of fertilizer companies themselves. Rana Tanveer stressed that the availability of affordable and quality fertilizers is essential for ensuring food security.

## Shaza unveils Pakistan's Digital Future on Independence Day

SIDRA SADOZAI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja unveiled Pakistan's "Digital Future" vision on the country's Independence Day on Thursday.

Addressing a gathering organised by the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication and its allied organisations to mark the occasion, she recalled Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision of a strong, progressive, and self-reliant Pakistan. The event brought together leaders from government, industry, startups and academia to celebrate the



nation's progress. This year's Independence Day also commemorated Marka-e-Haq—Pakistan's remarkable triumph over India in May, when courage, professionalism, and technical capability combined to secure victory. Not only was this a historic moment etched in the country's history, it also set a blueprint for achieving success in every sphere of life. Shaza invoked Quaid-e-Azam's belief