



Peace, stability only possible by eliminating terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, Dar says at SCO meeting



Industrial automation essential for Pakistan's economic future: Shaza Fatima



Gilani urges national unity, youth empowerment to ensure lasting peace, prosperity in Balochistan

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Saturday 25 July 2026

Safar 10, 1448 A.H

VOI No: 06

Issue No. 153

Pages 4 Rs. 20

PM Shehbaz inaugurates country's 'largest' data centre, AI cloud Sky47 in Islamabad

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday inaugurated the country's "largest" data centre and Sky47 AI cloud in Islamabad, terming the facility "awe-inspiring". The project has a capacity of 8.5 megawatts, the PM noted in his speech. Sky47 is also developing a 5MW data centre at Karachi's Port Qasim, slated for completion in September. Speaking on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said it was a privilege and an honour to be part of the ceremony.

"The facility we have just visited is awe-inspiring," he added.

He further said the data centre was built in record time, showcasing the best minds from across Pakistan in both the military and civil-

ian sectors.

He commended the leadership of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir, under whose supervision the data centre was built. PM Shehbaz said he was hopeful that "if we follow this model, there is no reason — and I am absolutely convinced, more than ever before — that not only will we be able to make up for the losses of the past, but we will also create a new, dynamic and forward-looking Pakistan, which is the need of the hour." He added that the task might be difficult, but it was not impossible.

The premier also invoked the example of Marka-i-Haq, which he called the "finest moment in Pakistan's history". He said such events showed that "if there is a will,



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting to review austerity measures in the wake of regional situation.

'Kashmir is not Kashmir': Nawaz Sharif takes swipe at Bilawal

PEAK POINT



MIRPUR: PML-N President Nawaz Sharif took a swipe at Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during a public rally in Mirpur on Friday, telling him

not to confuse Kashmir with Kashmir or Mirpur with Mirpur Khas. Addressing supporters in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), the former prime minister said Kashmir held a special place in his heart and criticised successive governments for neglecting the region after his removal from office. "Bilawal Barkhedar, don't consider Kashmir as Kashmir, or Mirpur as Mirpur Khas," Nawaz said, drawing applause from the crowd. He added that Bilawal should not take the remarks personally, saying political competition should remain respectful. "There should be competition among political parties, but there should be no bitterness, violence or hatred," he said. PML-N Quaid questioned what governments that came after his administration had done for Azad Kashmir. "After my government, no government did anything for Azad Kashmir. If they have, tell me what they have accomplished," he said.

US strikes Iran again to 'diminish threat to mariners, vessels' after attacks on Saudi oil tankers in Red Sea

MAHPARA ZAMAN



NEW YORK: US forces launched a fresh wave of strikes on Iran for the thirteenth consecutive day early on Friday after President Donald Trump vowed "major military punishment" for Tehran and its Houthi allies over attacks on two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea by the Yemeni rebels. The Houthi rebels, who

control northern and western Yemen, said this week they were imposing a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, which has diverted millions of barrels of oil per day by pipeline to the Red Sea to get around Iran's blockade of Gulf oil through the Strait of Hormuz. Now, attacks in the Red Sea have extended the Middle East war to a second major shipping chokepoint. Fears that the disruption could widen to block another sea route sent global oil prices surging in one of the steepest rises of the war, which began with US-Israeli attacks on Iran in late February. Brent crude rose more than six per cent on Thursday, piercing the level of \$100 a barrel for the first time since May. Early on Friday, Brent futures eased 72 cents, or 0.72pc, to \$99.97 a barrel as of 0126 GMT, but remained on course for a 13.5pc advance this week.

Houthi attacks could close the strait known as the Bab el-Mandeb or "Gate of Tears" which controls access from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, the second most important route for energy shipments after the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf. In the days since they unveiled their blockade in the Red Sea, several tankers have changed course to avoid the Bab el-Mandeb.

'Unacceptable': Pakistan, 7 other countries condemn Israeli minister Ben Gvir's Al Aqsa incursion

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: A day after Israeli far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir led hundreds of Israeli Jews into Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque compound, Pakistan and seven other countries on Friday issued a joint statement condemning the "provocative actions". The joint statement, shared by the Foreign Office, was issued by the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye, Indonesia, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The ministers condemned "in the strongest terms the Israeli escalation at Al Aqsa Mosque, particularly the continued mass settlers' incursions led by extremist Israeli ministers, under the protection of the Israeli forces, the raising of the Israeli flag within its courtyards, the erection by Israeli police of two tents, and all other inflammatory acts". Access to the site is governed by a decades-old "status quo" arrangement between Israel and Jordan, whose religious foundation administers the place. Under that arrangement, Jews may visit but are not permitted to pray there, while Muslim worship is meant to continue uninterrupted. "These provocative and unacceptable actions constitute a flagrant violation.

Bangladesh President Shahabuddin, 76, resigns citing health concerns

PEAK POINT

BAGLADESH: Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin, a former ally of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, has resigned citing serious health issues, his office said on Friday. Shahabuddin, 76, has held the largely ceremonial post of president since April 2023, a period that included volatile months after Hasina's flight to India following a student-led uprising against her rule in 2024. "Recent medical examinations have diagnosed me with a condition known as autonomic neuropathy. Due to this condition, I occasionally experience momentary loss.

Terrorist attack on joint police checkpoint in KP's Tank martyrs 15, including 14 security personnel: ISPR

PEAK POINT

TANK: A terrorist attack on a joint police checkpoint in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tank district martyred 15 people, including 14 security personnel, the military's media wing said on Friday.

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement that the attack took place early on Friday and was carried out by Fitna-al-Khawarij — a term used to designate members of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan.

Elaborating on the incident, the military's media wing said the attackers attempted to breach the checkpoint's perimeter, but their attempts were "swiftly and decisively foiled by the vigilant and resolute response of security forces."

The security personnel

deployed at the checkpoint displayed "unwavering



courage and professional excellence" and engaged and eliminated 15 terrorists, the ISPR added.

The statement added that the attackers then rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into the perimeter wall.

"Due to [the] blast impact, infrastructure at [the] checkpoint was seriously damaged; resultant-ly, 15 brave sons of [the] soil, including 12 military,

two policemen and a gov-

ernment official ex forest forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country".

"These sacrifices of our brave soldiers further reinforce our unwavering commitment to safeguarding our nation at all costs," ISPR said.

Last week, security forces killed 24 terrorists in KP's Bannu district and its adjoining areas in the last 24 hours, the military's media affairs wing said in a statement.

The statement by ISPR said that there had been a recent "surge" in terrorist activities against police and suicide bombings in Bannu. In these incidents, the statement said, "Indian proxy Fitna-al-Khawarij targeted law enforcement agencies and innocent civilians".

UN urges 6,000 sailors' evacuation from Hormuz as Iran warns US allies



PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: UN rights chief Volker Turk on Friday urged countries involved in the Middle East war to help evacuate and repatriate some 6,000 sailors stranded in the Strait of Hormuz. "Parties to the conflict should urgently work to facilitate safe passage for stranded seafarers to safely evacuate and disembark, as well as ensure the delivery of critical supplies," his spokeswoman Shabia Mantoo told reporters in Geneva. Meanwhile, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Friday that they targeted a data centre in Bahrain belonging to US tech giant Amazon, state media reported.

The forces "targeted and destroyed the intelligence data centre building of the American company Amazon, which plays a major role in completing information.



SPORTS



Brian Lara Stadium hosts maiden Test as West Indies face Pakistan



PEAK POINT

SRI LANKA: West Indies and Pakistan meet at Test cricket's newest venue in Trinidad on Saturday at the start of a two-match series in which the home side will be enjoying rare favoured status against the visitors.

Brian Lara Stadium, located in the south of the island, has previously hosted one-day and T20 internationals along with regional first-class fixtures.

It becomes the nation's second Test match venue and 13th in the West Indies, drawing it alongside Queen's Park Oval in the capital, Port of Spain, the venue of the sec-

ond Test a week later.

Roston Chase enjoyed his first match and series wins as West Indies Test captain just three weeks ago when the Caribbean team demolished Sri Lanka by an innings and 217 runs and then played out a draw in the second and final Test, both matches played in Antigua. Chase missed the recent ODI series loss to New Zealand with an injury to his right index finger. "Roston is a fighter. I know he's not going to want to miss any Test cricket," West Indies head coach Daren Sammy said. "I'm pretty sure Dr. Byam (team physio Denis Byam) has a

way of keeping guys on the park, so I'm pretty sure Roston will be ready for the first Test."

It was their first home Test series triumph since a 2-0 sweep of Bangladesh in 2022, a result which also gave them their last consecutive series wins anywhere as the whitewash of the Bangladeshis was preceded by a notable 1-0 home triumph over England in a three-Test contest.

West Indies are not expected to make significant alterations to the winning combination from the Sri Lankan series, although left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican is likely to come into consideration at the

expense of fast-medium bowler Anderson Phillip given the expectation of a pitch favouring spin later in the match. In stark contrast, Pakistan have once again revamped their squad in the aftermath of a 2-0 series loss in Bangladesh two months ago with batsman Babar Azam returning as captain in place of Shan Masood in hope of reviving their Test fortunes. Babar and opening batsman Azan Awaiz both compiled hundreds in the lone warm-up match against a West Indies Select XI at the weekend while most of the other main batsmen also got confidence-boosting runs.

India, Pakistan among teams handed direct Asian Games men's cricket knockout berths



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka secured direct entry into the men's cricket knockout stage at the 2026 Asian Games after the draw was announced on Thursday.

The 10-team men's competition, starting from September 24 in Nagoya, will begin with a preliminary round featuring Afghanistan, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal and Oman competing for the remaining quarter-final berths.

Afghanistan, Japan and Nepal were drawn in Group A, while Hong Kong, Malaysia and Oman were placed in Group B. The top two teams from each group will advance to the knockout stage to join the four seeded sides.

The women's tournament, scheduled from September 17-22, features eight teams and will begin at the quarter-final stage. Defending champions India will face hosts Japan, Bangladesh will take on China, Sri Lanka will meet Malaysia, and Pakistan will play Thailand.

All matches in both competitions will be played in the Twenty20 format.

India swept the cricket gold medals at the 2022 Asian Games, held in Hangzhou, claiming both the men's and women's titles.

PHF steps up grassroots development with U-15 registration portal



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has officially launched the National Under-15 Hockey Registration Portal as part of its grassroots development initiative aimed at identifying and nurturing young hockey talent across the country. The federation has urged school princi-

pals nationwide to register their institutions on the portal and encourage students under the age of 15 to enroll. Registered schools will become part of the National U-15 Hockey Development Programme.

The registration drive will help create Pakistan's first comprehensive national database of Under-15

skills. Selected schools may also receive sports equipment and hockey kits.

The programme will culminate in the National Under-15 Hockey Championship, scheduled to be held later this year or early next year. Outstanding performers from the championship will be selected for the Pakistan National Under-15 Hockey Team to represent the country in international competitions.

The PHF has called upon schools, students, parents and hockey enthusiasts to actively participate in the initiative and contribute to the revival and long-term development of the country's national game.

PCB hosts dinner in honor of Pakistan, South Africa Women's Under-19 teams



Pakistan sweep Bangladesh in CAVA Volleyball Championship

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Hosts Pakistan maintained their unbeaten run in the ZONG 5G CAVA Men's Volleyball Championship 2026 with a commanding straight-sets victory over Bangladesh on the second day of competition at the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad. The Green Shirts controlled proceedings from the outset, overpowering Bangladesh 25-16, 25-17, 25-22 through aggressive serving, solid blocking, quick attacking combinations and disciplined defence. Bangladesh offered greater resistance in the third set, but Pakistan remained composed to secure their second consecutive victory without dropping a set, following their opening-day win over Sri Lanka.

Earlier, Sri Lanka rallied from 2-1 down to defeat Nepal 3-2 (25-18, 21-25, 19-

25, 25-21, 15-10) and register their first win of the tournament. The day's most exciting contest saw Uzbekistan edge Kazakhstan 3-2 in a gripping five-set battle. After trailing twice, Uzbekistan held their nerve

ulated Pakistan on its impressive start, praising the players' teamwork, discipline and determination while lauding the tournament's rising standard. PVF President Sohail Khawar Mir also commended the national team's consis-



to clinch the decider 16-14, with the match widely hailed as one of the championship's finest so far.

PVF Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob congrat-

tened and expressed confidence that Pakistan would carry its momentum into the remaining league fixtures. Pakistan will next face Nepal on Friday.

Pakistani boxing team arrives in Scotland for Commonwealth Games





HEC Baseball ban sparks fresh debate: Punishment announced, but students seek answers over unresolved questions

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: A university women's baseball championship has turned into a controversy after the Higher Education Commission (HEC) imposed a one-year ban on two Lahore-based universities, their players and officials following allegations of violence and misconduct. While HEC says disciplinary action was necessary, affected students and stakeholders are demanding an independent investigation, arguing that all facts and evidence should be reviewed before final responsibility is decided. According to an official order issued by HEC on July 21, 2026, the University of the Punjab, Lahore and

Lahore College for Women University (LCWU), Lahore, have been prohibited from participating in HEC/Pakistan University Sports Board (PUSB) Women's Intervarsity Baseball Championship activities for one year. The action was taken after what HEC described as "serious incidents of violence, physical altercation, indiscipline and misconduct" during and after the final match and closing ceremony of the HEC Intervarsity Women's Baseball Championship 2025-26 at the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), Islamabad. Under the decision, team managers, coaches and accompanying officials of both universities have also

been barred from performing official duties in HEC/PUSB sports events for one year. Players from the two teams have also been suspended from participating in HEC and PUSB intervarsity sports competitions during the same period. However, the disciplinary action has opened a new debate, with some students and representatives questioning whether a complete and impartial investigation was conducted before announcing penalties. They have demanded that an independent inquiry committee should examine all aspects of the incident, including security arrangements, available evidence, CCTV footage, and the events that took place after the final match. Students

and stakeholders have raised concerns regarding alleged delays in transport arrangements after the closing ceremony, claiming that some participants faced difficulties while returning late at night. Questions have also been raised about reports of missing personal belongings and whether all complaints were properly investigated. They further demanded that CCTV footage and other relevant evidence should be reviewed to establish the exact sequence of events and ensure that no student faces unfair consequences. The controversy has also brought attention to event management and administrative responsibilities. Some stakeholders have questioned

whether proper arrangements were made for hosting teams, security, accommodation and transportation during the championship. HEC, however, has stated that the action was taken under Article 2.11.12 of the Pakistan University Sports Board Constitution and Rules, which allows disciplinary measures against teams, players or officials involved in violence or serious misconduct during or after intervarsity championships. The HEC order stated that the decision was approved by the competent authority and has been circulated to public and private sector higher education institutions for strict implementation. The controversy has now become a

wider discussion about university sports governance in Pakistan. While one side believes strict action is necessary to maintain discipline in educational sports, the other side insists that transparency, evidence and a fair hearing are equally important before deciding the fate of young athletes. The HEC media team was contacted for its official response regarding the allegations raised by students and stakeholders. However, at the time of publishing this report, no response, clarification, or additional statement had been received from HEC. This report will be updated if HEC provides further comments or its official position.

PNRA awards key approvals to boost Pakistan's indigenous nuclear safety capabilities

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) presented two major regulatory approvals at a ceremony held at its headquarters, strengthening Pakistan's indigenous capabilities in nuclear engineering and the local supply of radioactive medicines.

PNRA awarded a Design License to the Directorate General of Nuclear Power Engineering (DGNPE),

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), for the design of safety-related systems and equipment used in nuclear installations. The license allows DGNPE to carry out this design work locally, reducing Pakistan's reliance on foreign suppliers and supporting the long-term sustainability of the country's nuclear power programme. PNRA also granted a Design Approval Certificate to Heavy Mechanical Complex-3



(HMC-3), PAEC, for a locally developed Type B(U) transport package, a container built and certified to safely carry

radioactive medicines (radio-pharmaceuticals). The certificate paves the way for local manufacturing of these pack-

ages, helping ensure a steady and reliable supply of radio-pharmaceuticals to hospitals across Pakistan. Both approvals were granted after DGNPE and HMC-3 went through detailed technical reviews, site inspections, and licensing assessments carried out in line with national regulations and international safety standards. Speaking at the ceremony, PNRA Chairman Mr. Zia Hussain Shah said "The approvals reflect Pakistan's

growing technical capabilities and show that the licensee complies with the national regulatory framework which ensures safety and security in line with the international safety and security standards for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. He added that PNRA remains committed to enabling the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology for national development while ensuring protection of workers, public and environment".

Opinion & Editorial

ISLAMABAD
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Dangerous new front

The Houthis are endangering navigational traffic in the Bab El-Mandeb Strait. Their naval blockade of Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea is ultra vires under international law. This appears to be an act of desperation by the Yemeni militia as it seeks to settle scores amidst regional warfare. Thus, the Houthis' attack on two Saudi oil tankers is condemnable and must be halted immediately. Reportedly, one of the vessels is on fire after being hit by cruise and ballistic missiles. The strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, is a critical artery for Middle Eastern trade with the Mediterranean and beyond; its closure could severely disrupt global supply lines. Pakistan has led from the front in lambasting this high-seas piracy by the Houthis, and has offered its unequivocal support to Saudi Arabia. While Islamabad has a mutual defence pact with Riyadh, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a telephonic conversation with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, reiterated that Saudi Arabia has the right to self-defence if its maritime interests are targeted in any hostile act. The Foreign Office too on Wednesday extended Pakistan's unconditional support to the Kingdom, saying that "such actions threaten regional security, undermine freedom of navigation, challenge the rules-based maritime order and jeopardise uninterrupted flow of global commerce."

Holy grail of economics

Aqdas Afzal
SOME people may have watched Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade starring Harrison Ford as the eponymous swashbuckling archaeologist on a mission to find the holy grail — the cup said to grant eternal life to whoever drinks from it. In common usage, 'holy grail' signifies a highly sought-after goal that is extremely difficult or seemingly impossible to achieve. In this sense, economic growth is undoubtedly the holy grail of economics as it remains the most-coveted prize for policymakers everywhere.

Globally, countries have reduced poverty and improved living standards through strong and sustained economic growth, not least because economic growth creates more high-quality jobs. China's breakneck economic growth in the 1990s lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty and built the very foundation for China's emergence as a global manufacturing powerhouse by the 2000s. At the same time, China's rapid economic growth generated the necessary fiscal space for Beijing to build infrastructure, expand social security coverage and modernise its military, all without resorting to unsustainable borrowing.

Since independence, Pakistan achieved decent rates of economic growth, while India muddled along at the 'Hindu rate of growth' below four per cent. But, in the 1990s, as Pakistan's economic engine started sputtering, Indian econ-

omy, unshackled from 'licence Raj', came into its own. By 2008-09, Pakistan's economic engine finally ran out of steam enabling India's per capita income to catch up and overtake that of Pakistan.

Even after two decades, despite the sound and fury of 'stabilisation', Pakistan remains largely unsuccessful in kick-starting its economic engine. In the last four years, economic growth has averaged a paltry 2.3 per cent. With some estimates putting population growth rate at 2.55pc, the per capita growth, responsible for raising living standards, has actually been negative. The most recent HIES, Pakistan's flagship survey, indicates an almost 20pc reduction in the real income of urban households over the last six years.

Despite costly plans, economic growth remains stuck, suggesting that the problem isn't simply a shortage of strategies, but something deeper.

Despite the recent warning from the World Bank regarding the need for 30m jobs over the next 10 years, it has been almost impossible to create high-quality jobs due to anaemic economic growth. It is not so surprising that this mothballed economic engine is forcing thousands of young Pakistanis to undertake perilous journeys to greener pastures abroad.

Pakistan's stagnant growth is not the result of a lack of trying as policymakers have repeatedly brought in expensive foreign consultants to prescribe fixes. Yet despite these

costly plans, growth remains stuck, suggesting that the problem isn't simply a shortage of strategies, but something deeper.

The most important lesson in economics is that productivity is key to economic growth. Productivity's contribution to growth in Pakistan has been almost zero over 2000-2022, compared to positive contributions of 25pc in China and 32pc in India, which means that all of Pakistan's growth in this period came from throwing in more capital and labour, and none from using these better.

Essentially, productivity is driven by four components: innovation or new technologies; education or workforce capacity; efficiency or effective allocation of resources; and infrastructure for private sector activity. Of these four, education appears to be Pakistan's binding constraint due to persistent backsliding as evidenced by a recent report that puts the number of out-of-school children at 26.2m. Policymakers need to begin with a focus on reducing the number of out-of-school children in the country. There is no lack of precedent. Bangladesh, despite starting from a similar base, cut its out-of-school numbers through a two-pronged approach, focusing on conditional cash transfers that paid mothers to keep children enrolled, and BRAC's community-run 'second chance' schools, which have graduated over 14m children — dropped out or never enrolled.

Courtesy Dawn

The wars within

Shahzad Chaudhry

Why do I keep writing about wars? I recently started a YouTube channel, and all I have discussed on it since it began is wars. Perhaps because writing about the zillion other matters that weigh on the mind about Pakistan and its domestic complications is either not safe to talk about in the prevailing environment or will not fetch any recognition; nor will they ever be resolved because those in power don't seem to care. Neither does anything ever get done about them. Every news cycle only brings bad news. The relentless decay of Karachi — is it deliberate, or just that no one cares? It keeps reminding one of the ugliness that the country has become.

Ditto, the young children who become victims of easy child abuse in violations that just keep increasing in number every day. What has gone wrong with us as a society? Is it because of a lazy and fully compromised legal system in which there is no retribution for such crimes or any crime if you are monied, have influence, and can manipulate the right levers in higher places? The women are repeat victims of sexual crimes. There is neither lament nor abatement. The society is off its hooks. Why? Discipline, norms, mutual respect, lowered gazes, giving way; are these values of the past? Now antiquated? Any time I see a little girl out alone at an odd time of the day in the rather secluded environment that I live in, I worry about her and her safety. I follow her till she is in the safety of her walls. My bigger question: Does anyone care? At all? Or have we fallen to the lows that perk the animals in us? Is it because we are attending to bigger matters? Of money and resources, and impending catastrophes that we feared would soon knock at our door? The entire leadership of this country has been fighting to bring peace to the world, while in the country, we are descending to new lows with every passing day.

Courtesy Tribune

Peace, stability only possible by eliminating terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, Dar says at SCO meeting



PEAK POINT

MANILA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that durable peace and stability in the region can only be achieved by eliminating the threat of terrorism emanating from neighbouring Afghanistan. "Durable peace, stability and economic development can only be achieved with the eradication of the menace of terrorism emanating

from Afghan soil," he said while speaking at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting.

He said that Pakistan desired to see a "peaceful, stable, regionally integrated and prosperous Afghanistan which is at peace with itself and its neighbours", adding that this would be in the best interest of all SCO member states and beyond.

He said that currently, the threat

of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan was one of the most serious security challenges for Pakistan. He said that terrorist organisations continued to recruit, train and operate from Afghan soil "under the watch and facilitation of the Afghan Taliban regime".

He said that this support was "well-documented", adding that Pakistan was at the forefront of this threat. He added that this year alone, more than 560 Pakistanis have been killed in over 2,000 terrorist attacks.

"It is also deeply concerning that Afghan nationals have been found to be involved in these terrorist incidents," the minister said.

He urged the SCO to demand the Afghan Taliban regime to "honour its counter-terrorism commitments to the international community and fulfil its responsibilities towards global peace and security". During his remarks, Dar said that since its establishment

Gilani urges national unity, youth empowerment to ensure lasting peace, prosperity in Balochistan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Friday underscored the need for national unity, inclusive development, and sustained security efforts to ensure lasting peace and prosperity in Balochistan. Addressing participants of the National Workshop Balochistan at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the chairman senate welcomed the participants on behalf of the President Asif Ali Zardari and said the workshop had, since 2016, served as an important platform bringing together parliamentarians, bureaucrats, civil society members, academics, youth, and media representatives from across the country. He described the initiative as a bridge connecting provinces, perspectives, and ideas to collectively address national challenges. Emphasizing Balochistan's strategic importance, the senate chairman said the province was central to Pakistan's economic future and national security owing to its vast coastline along the Arabian Sea, rich mineral resources, and geographic location linking South Asia with Central Asia and the Middle East. Syed

Yousuf Raza Gilani condemned recent terrorist attacks by the Indian-backed proxies and militant groups for attempting to destabilize Pakistan.

He said terrorists had shifted their focus from military targets to civilians in an act of desperation.

Paying tribute to the armed forces, Frontier Corps, police, and other law enforcement agencies, Mr. Gilani praised their professionalism and sacrifices in combating terrorism. He reiterated that the entire nation stood firmly behind the country's security institutions and honoured those who had laid down their lives in the line of duty.

However, he stressed that military action alone could not guarantee sustainable peace. "The people of Balochistan, particularly its youth, must remain at the centre of the province's future. Their participation, ownership, and trust are essential for lasting peace and meaningful development," he said. Gilani urged national unity, youth empowerment to ensure lasting peace, prosperity in Balochistan. Recalling his tenure as prime minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani highlighted measures taken to address Balochistan's long-standing concerns.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a group photo with the participants of 20th National Workshop Balochistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Ali Pervaiz holds meetings with international energy companies to expand investment, cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Friday held separate meetings with representatives of leading international energy companies to discuss investment opportunities in Pakistan's energy and critical minerals sectors.

In the first meeting, the Minister met with Gregory Bloom, President of Morgan Hughes Energy, a U.S.-based energy company, and Ahmad Waleed, CEO of Tejara Capital. The discussions focused on expanding U.S. investment in Pakistan's

energy and critical minerals sectors, said a news release.

Bloom highlighted the potential of Balochistan for critical minerals development and said that Morgan Hughes Energy and Tejara Capital are partnering to pursue minerals projects while also exploring opportunities in Pakistan's oil and gas sector, particularly in field optimisation to enhance production from existing assets. Ali Pervaiz Malik welcomed their interest, reaffirming the government's commitment to increasing indigenous energy production and facilitat-



tating responsible international investment through close collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Ali Pervaiz holds meet-

ings with international energy companies to expand investment, cooperation

In a separate meeting, the Minister met with Kieran

Ayaz Sadiq congratulates Ayesha Javed Deputy Secretary Finance for her Int'l Recognition

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Ayesha Javed, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance, on her inclusion as a contributing author in Routledge's internationally acclaimed publication, Women in Public Finance: Stories of Gender in Budgeting. The Speaker lauded Ms. Javed's remarkable achievement, describing it as a matter of pride for Pakistan. He noted that her chapter, "Limitless Skies and Endless Dreams," reflects not only her professional excellence but also the growing role of Pakistani women in public finance, policymaking, and gender-responsive budgeting. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the accomplishments of Pakistani women on international



platforms project a positive image of the country and demonstrate the immense talent, dedication, and intellectual capacity of Pakistan's public servants. He emphasized that such achievements inspire the younger generation, particularly women, to pursue excellence and contribute meaningfully to national development. The Speaker reaffirmed his support for initiatives that promote women's participation and leadership in public institutions, stating that an inclusive and merit-based environment is essential for sustainable progress.

Industrial automation essential for Pakistan's economic future: Shaza Fatima

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday said Pakistan's future economic competitiveness depends on the adoption of robotics, automation and other emerging technologies, stressing that industrial automation is no longer a choice but a necessity. Speaking at the closing ceremony of the two-day Indus RAS (Robotics and Autonomous Systems) Expo 2026 at the Pak-China Friendship Centre in Islamabad, the minister said, "If Pakistan wants to remain economically competitive, every traditional industry must move towards automation." She added that reducing taxes or energy costs alone



would not be enough unless industries integrated robotics and automation into manufacturing, agriculture and supply chains. Shaza said the Indus RAS (Robotics and Autonomous Systems) Expo 2026 attracted more than 20,000 visitors, including children, students, researchers, policymakers, industry leaders and technology professionals. She said the large and diverse turnout reflected growing national interest in robotics and autonomous technologies.

Governor Kundi urges youth engagement, quality education for national development

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday stressed the need for meaningful youth engagement, quality education, women empowerment and greater opportunities in sports, saying the province's large youth population was its greatest strength for future development.

Talking to members of the Empower Youth Parliament, led by its Chairman Malik Abid Khalil, at the Governor House, the Governor welcomed the delegation and termed the Youth Parliament an excellent platform for learning, leadership development and civic participation.



He appreciated the organisation for serving people despite having no financial support from the government and encouraged its members to continue their activities for the benefit of society. During an interactive question-and-answer session, the Governor said powers had been devolved to the provinces under the Constitution and urged elected representatives.

Gallagher, CEO of Vitol Asia, and his team to discuss ongoing cooperation in Pakistan's petroleum sector.

He congratulated Vitol on the successful commencement of bunkering operations at Gwadar and welcomed the company's proposal to convert High Sulphur Fuel Oil (HSFO) into Very Light Sulphur Fuel Oil (VLSFO), assuring full Government support for the project.

The meeting also reviewed opportunities under Pakistan's newly introduced bonded storage policy.

The Minister noted that discussions on bonded storage infrastructure are underway with leading global energy companies, including Vitol, as part of the Government's efforts to strengthen energy logistics, expand strategic storage capacity, and attract greater international investment.

Both meetings reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening global energy partnerships, attracting foreign investment, and advancing long-term energy security and economic growth.