



Ayaz meets Kazakhstan, Azerbaijani envoys, reaffirms commitment to stronger bilateral ties



Dar says Pakistan 'confident' bilateral trade with US can double to \$20bn in next 5 years



Govt.'s digital reforms to boost connectivity, investment: Shaza Fatima

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PM Shehbaz orders expansion of country's strategic petroleum reserves

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday instructed authorities to expand Pakistan's strategic petroleum reserves, calling refinery upgradation a "key pillar of Pakistan's comprehensive energy security system".

The premier made the remarks while chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Energy at the Prime Minister's Office, where the proposed amendments to the Pakistan Oil Refining Policy, 2023, were approved, according to a statement issued by the PM Office.

PM Shehbaz's directives for the strategic petroleum reserves come months after Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb

urged considering strategic petroleum reserves following the oil shock from the ongoing war in the Middle East.

"When you go through a supply shock like this... it sends a very clear view that we need to accelerate these journeys," he said in an interview with Reuters on April 14.

A month later, Pakistan and Kuwait agreed to explore new opportunities around building strategic storage in Pakistan's petroleum and energy sectors.

The development emerged during a meeting between Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik and Kuwait's Ambassador to Pakistan Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Almutairi, the Petroleum Division said in a statement on May 12.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of cabinet committee on Energy.

PPP refuses to accept Mirpur election results, says Bilawal Bhutto

PEAK POINT



MUZAFFARABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Tuesday that the people of Mirpur had reposed their trust in the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) by electing its

candidates. Addressing the party workers at Muzaffarabad, he said that unfortunately depriving a political party of its mandate was called democracy in Pakistan. He made it clear that the PPP would not remain silent on this rigging, and would not accept the election results. "Every person knows that the people of Mirpur have voted in favour of the PPP," Bilawal said, adding the party would get all those seats back on which its candidates had won. He lamented that national interests were sacrificed in the country.

The PPP chairman said that the party would not allow Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to become Indian occupied Kashmir.

Bilawal said that the PPP had remain tightlipped for the last two years only in the national interest, not in the PML-N's interest. He said that a conspiracy had been hatched prior to the holding of elections.

Bushehr Airport crippled by US strikes, Iranian government says

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iran's government said on Tuesday that Bushehr Airport in the country's southwest has been rendered inoperable following US strikes, the official news agency IRNA reported.

Speaking at a press conference, government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said that she and officials visited Bushehr province and inspected the city's airport, which she described as "effectively out of service."

"We saw the remains of a refurbished aircraft that had been purchased to serve the people, but it was destroyed by a missile that struck it directly, leaving only a small part of its tail intact," she said. Mohajerani said the damage has left the airport unable to operate, but did not provide further details on when the strike occurred or the extent of damage to other airport facilities. She said the attacks also damaged airports in Iran's southern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, Semnan in northern Iran, and Bandar Abbas in the country's south. The spokesperson said the Bushehr Meteorological Centre was also targeted during the strikes. "Damage to civilian infrastructure and private property was extensive, affecting everything from fishing boats to tourism businesses," she added. According to Mohajerani, 12 bridges and two tunnels were damaged during the attacks. She also said the main railway station in Bandar Abbas, along with two bridges in southern Iran and two in the country's northeast, sustained damage.

AJK elections: PML-N grabs 9 out of 13 seats across Mirpur division, unofficial results show

PEAK POINT



MUZAFFARABAD: The PML-N grabbed nine out of the 13 constituencies of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) Mirpur division in yesterday's elections,

preliminary results issued by the Election Commission showed on Tuesday. Polls in AJK are being held in three phases over security concerns, with the first set of polls held in Mirpur division on Monday. Scuffles, violence and allegations of rigging had marred the polling process, with the PML-N and PPP accusing each other of electoral malpractice. According to preliminary results issued by the AJK Election Commission (Forms-26 and Forms-27), the PML-N emerged as the winner in nine constituencies, while the PPP could secure only four seats. Form-27 lists cumulative results based on votes cast on the polling day and by the election staff in advance polling. Form-26 comprises only the ballots cast on the main polling day, July 27, in this case. Following an intense election campaign by both parties in the lead-up to the polls, the PML-N emerged victorious in Mirpur district's Dadyal and Khari Sharif; Bhimber district's Barnala, Samahni and Bhimber.

Pakistan slams drone strikes against Saudi Arabia

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has condemned drone attacks against Saudi Arabia and reaffirmed Islamabad's unwavering support for the Kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity, saying such provocative attacks pose a grave threat to regional peace and stability. Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed a number of drones on Monday that attempted to target petroleum facilities in the Eastern Region and Riyadh, according to the Kingdom's defence ministry.

Gulf states back plan to let Iran collect voluntary fees to use Hormuz

PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Oman has won backing from Gulf states for a plan that would let Tehran collect voluntary fees to use the Strait of Hormuz, a Gulf source told Reuters on Tuesday, a path towards ending the disruption to oil trade caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran.

President Donald Trump, who abruptly called off a two-week US bombing campaign over the weekend in his latest strategic U-turn, said there were "good talks" underway with Iran but threatened to restart strikes unless negotiations deliver. Iran denies seeking to resume talks with the United States.

Washington launched its renewed bombing campaign ear-



lier this month to break Iran's grip on the strait, through which about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flowed before the war.

Iran effectively shut the strait to ships other than its own after the United States and Israel attacked on February 28. A deal last month between the United States and Iran partially reopened it, but the agreement collapsed in early July after Iran fired on ships using a channel

it does not approve.

Iran has said it wants to manage the strait alongside Oman, which controls the opposite shore, and charge service fees to ships that use it. Washington wants to return to the status quo prior to the war, when ships were able to pass freely with no payments, and says charging mandatory fees would be illegal.

Under the Omani proposal, Iran would not exercise sole control,

and fees would be voluntary, a source told Reuters. The system would be analogous to one in place on Asia's Strait of Malacca, where Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore ask ships to pay voluntary contributions to fund navigation, environmental protection and search-and-rescue operations.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi discussed the Strait of Hormuz with his Omani and Saudi counterparts on Monday and stressed the need for regional cooperation, an Iranian Foreign Ministry statement said. Trump called off his latest campaign of air strikes after receiving advice from military commanders that the strategy had run its course.

Major earthquake hits Japan's Kyushu region; PM says injuries reported, buildings collapsed

PEAK POINT

JAPAN: An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.1 struck Japan's southern Kumamoto prefecture on Tuesday, knocking out power to thousands of homes, stopping rail services and triggering warnings for tsunamis and aftershocks. Companies including Sony and TSMC, the world's largest contract chipmaker, have plants in the area of the quake. A Sony spokesperson said the company was checking the situation. TSMC did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Japanese government issued emergency earthquake warnings for Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Fukuoka, Saga, Oita, and Miyazaki prefectures, all on Japan's southern Kyushu island. A tsunami warning for a wave measuring one metre was issued after the earthquake, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. However, the alert was removed on the agency's website just under two hours after the quake when no tsunami activity was observed. "This earthquake occurred inland, and no tsunami activity has been observed so far. For this reason, we hope to lift the tsunami advisory at a relatively early stage, depending on future sea level conditions," a Japan Meteorological Agency spokesperson said.





SPORTS



First Test: Pakistan gain upper hand over West Indies on Day 3



PEAK POINT

TAROUBA: Pakistan seized control of the first Test against West Indies on Monday as Mohammad Abbas and Khuram Shahzad shared five wickets to leave the hosts reeling at 126/7 by stumps on the third day, with only a 155-run lead at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy (BLCA).

At stumps on Day 3, the hosts were 126/7 in their second innings, leading by 155 runs, with lower-order batters Shamar Joseph and Kemar Roach unbeaten on 22 and five, respectively.

After taking a useful 29-run first-innings lead by bowling

Pakistan out for 282, West Indies failed to build on their advantage as Abbas dismissed Brandon King (5) and Kavem Hodge (0) in the eventful fourth over to hand Pakistan an ideal start with the ball. Following the early setbacks, Amir Jangoo (4) joined opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul and the pair cautiously added 21 runs for the third wicket before Mohammad Ali had Jangoo caught behind in the 14th over, reducing West Indies to 28/3.

Mohammad Ali struck again three overs later when he dismissed experienced wicketkeeper-batter Shai Hope (10), leaving the

hosts struggling at 43/4.

After the collapse, all-rounder Justin Greaves joined left-handed opener Chanderpaul, and the pair added 37 runs for the fifth wicket before Aamir Jamal removed Chanderpaul, who top-scored for West Indies with 35 from 101 deliveries. West Indies then lost two more wickets in quick succession as Abbas dismissed Greaves (20), while Khuram Shahzad had captain Roston Chase (8) caught behind, leaving the hosts in trouble at 93/7. Lower-order pair Joseph and Roach then frustrated the Pakistan attack with an unbeaten 33-run stand for the eighth

wicket, ensuring West Indies suffered no further setbacks before the close. The pair will resume the innings on the penultimate day as the hosts look to set Pakistan a challenging victory target.

For Pakistan, Abbas has so far taken 3/14 in 13 overs, while Shahzad has claimed two wickets. Mohammad Ali and Jamal have taken one wicket each.

Earlier in the day, Justin Greaves' five-wicket haul helped West Indies bowl Pakistan out for 282 despite a resolute century from Shan Masood, after the hosts had posted 311 in their first

Fatima Sana urges positives despite ODI series defeat



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan women's cricket team captain Fatima Sana has expressed disappointment over the ODI series defeat but believes the team can take valuable lessons from the setbacks.

Speaking after the series, Fatima said Pakistan had made a promising start but failed to maintain the same standard of performance.

She admitted the result was disappointing but stressed that the team's focus is on taking as many positives as possible from the series to improve in the future. The captain acknowledged that the batting-friendly pitches offered an ideal opportunity for the batters, but the team failed to capitalize. She emphasized that whenever senior players are dismissed early, younger batters must seize the opportunity and make meaningful contributions, adding that a stronger middle order will greatly benefit the team. Fatima highlighted several encouraging performances, praising Gull Feroza and Sadaf Shamas for consistently providing solid starts during the powerplay. She commended Sidra Amin for handling pressure well and building her innings from the beginning of the series, while Muneeba Ali earned praise for her effective batting after moving to the No. 5 position.

South Korean hockey team in Pakistan to play four-match series



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A 24-member South Korean National Hockey Team arrived in Islamabad for a four-match FIH-approved international test series against Pakistan, marking the first bilateral hockey tour of the country in nearly 20 years.

The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) said the four matches will be played in Naseer Bunda

Stadium in Islamabad on July 30, August 2, August 4 and August 7. PHF President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani and other high-ranking officials of the inter-provincial coordination welcomed the Korean team, calling the tour a landmark moment for the revival of international hockey in Pakistan.

"This is a proud and memorable occasion for Pakistan hockey. After almost two

to both sides and contribute to Pakistan's preparations for upcoming major competitions. It described the tour as reflecting growing confidence within the international hockey community in Pakistan's ability to host world-class events in a safe and professional environment.

The federation expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, security agencies and other stakeholders for their support in making the tour possible. The PHF invited hockey fans across the country to attend the matches in large numbers and support the national team as Pakistan takes another step toward restoring its standing on the international hockey map.

Nasir Iqbal clinches BARD-Markhor Challenger Squash title



PESHAWAR: A member team of Climbers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pose for a group photo after climbing of 6, 050 meter long peak of Tholazon.

From empty coffers to a Korean tour: Pakistan hockey's road back

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: With the South Korean team's boots on Pakistani turf for the first bilateral series by a visiting international side in nearly 20 years, Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani's revival mission has produced its most visible dividend yet, a moment built in just five months of relentless work and several difficult decisions. Wani took charge of the PHF as ad-hoc president in February 2026 following administrative changes ordered by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif amid reports of mismanagement within the federation. Since then, he has pursued a steady, methodical rebuild that stretches from the national team's finances to grassroots pathways for boys and girls alike.

The scale of the challenge was, by his own account, daunting. Reflecting on the



hand over responsibilities to former Olympians who are eager to contribute," Wani said, noting that never before in the country's hockey history had so many former Olympians been simultaneously engaged in key roles.

"These stalwarts have now been given full authority to rebuild the national team and make it competitive against the best sides in the world," he added. That trust has been reciprocated by a roster of former greats now embedded in the federation's setup: Ishtiaque Siddiqui and Hasan Sardar, who co-chair the PHF's Development and Professional Advisory Committee; Samiullah Khan, appointed chief selector; Manzoorul Hasan, head coach of the senior national team; Khawaja Junaid, also on the coaching side; Ayaz Mahmood, head coach of the junior team; and Qamar Ibrahim, in charge of the Under-18 side.



Pakistan declares Hepatitis C a National Emergency as over 10 Million people affected

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has declared Hepatitis C a national emergency as the country faces a major health challenge with more than 10 million people live with the virus and around 110,000 new infections are reported every year. Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Mustafa Kamal announced the emergency on World Hepatitis Day, warning that Pakistan can no longer ignore a disease that is preventable, detectable and curable. The minister said the situation requires immediate action because untreated Hepatitis C can cause serious liver damage, liver failure and eventually liver cancer. He said the government is moving from simply treating

patients to preventing the disease through large scale screening and early treatment programmes. Under the Prime Minister's National Hepatitis C Elimination Programme, the government plans to screen more than 164 million people across Pakistan. The minister said every person diagnosed with Hepatitis C under the programme will receive a complete three month treatment course free of cost. He added that the treatment, which normally costs around Rs34,000 per patient, will be provided by the government without any charge. If a patient requires additional treatment, the government will also provide support free of cost, he said. Mustafa Kamal said Hepatitis C is no longer an incurable disease because modern medicines can help

more than 95 percent of patients recover completely if they are diagnosed and treated on time. He urged citizens to visit designated screening centres and get tested because many infected people do not know they have the virus until serious health problems appear. The minister said the government is following a national elimination strategy inspired by Egypt's successful Hepatitis C control model, where nationwide screening helped reduce the disease burden. He said Pakistan will implement the programme in phases, starting from areas directly managed by the federal government and later expanding across the country with support from provincial authorities. The ultimate goal is to make Pakistan free from Hepatitis C by 2030. The

minister warned that delaying diagnosis can turn a treatable disease into a life-threatening condition. He said prevention and early detection must become a national priority because hospitals alone cannot solve Pakistan's growing health problems. During his address, Mustafa Kamal also highlighted wider health challenges facing the country. He said around 11,000 women die every year during pregnancy and childbirth due to causes that can often be prevented through better healthcare and timely medical support. He said Pakistan continues to face serious problems including malnutrition, poor maternal and child health, diabetes, heart diseases and mental health issues. The minister said hundreds of thousands of children die every year

from preventable causes, while many others suffer from poor physical and mental development due to malnutrition. He warned that these health problems are not only medical concerns but also barriers to economic growth and national progress. The minister also raised concerns over the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance. He said the unnecessary use and misuse of antibiotics in humans, animals and poultry is making medicines less effective and allowing infections to become harder to treat. He urged citizens and healthcare providers to use antibiotics responsibly to protect future generations. The government also announced plans to introduce legislation making screening for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and other

important infectious diseases compulsory for patients undergoing surgeries and invasive medical procedures. The minister said the screening system will gradually be expanded to public and private hospitals across Pakistan to improve patient safety and prevent further spread of diseases. He stressed that a healthy Pakistan cannot be built through hospitals alone. According to the minister, clean environments, safe drinking water, strong primary healthcare, vaccination, nutrition and disease prevention are necessary to build a healthier society. He called on citizens to cooperate with the government's screening campaign and take advantage of free testing facilities to protect themselves and their families.

NLPD hosts launch of Shakeel Khurshed's poetry collection 'Yeh Mere Harf'

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Language Promotion Department (NLPD), under the National Heritage and Culture Division, has hosted the launch ceremony of acclaimed poet Shakeel Khurshed's debut poetry collection 'Yeh Mere Harf'.

The event was held at Dr Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi Hall, according to a press release issued on Tuesday.

Renowned poet and intellectual Iftikhar Arif

presided over the ceremony, while Director General NLPD Prof Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar and Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Prof Dr Nasir Mahmood attended as chief guests.

The event brought together leading literary figures, including fiction writer and critic Muhammad Hameed Shahid, former Dean of AIOU Dr Abdul Aziz Sahir, poet Mamoon Tahir Rana, Chairman of the Urdu Department at AIOU

Dr Arshad Mehmood Nashad, and young poet Farzand Ali Hashmi. The proceedings were conducted by Dr Mehnaz Anjum.

Welcoming the participants, NLPD Executive Director Dr Rashid Hameed said Shakeel Khurshed's poetry reflected simplicity, elegance and emotional depth. He noted that the poet had produced remarkable literary work during his 26-year career in the Pakistan Air Force, describing his achievement as

inspiring and commendable.

In his presidential address, Iftikhar Arif described a poet's first book as "a first love", saying Yeh Mere Harf reflected the author's intellectual maturity, literary insight and command of language. He said such works enriched Urdu literature and inspired younger generations to appreciate quality writing.

Professor Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar said the collection present-

ed a harmonious blend of thought, emotion and expression. He observed that individuals nurtured in a literary environment naturally expressed themselves through poetry, regardless of their professional background, adding that the NLPD would continue its efforts to promote the Urdu language and literature.

Professor Dr Nasir Mahmood termed the collection an impressive debut, saying Shakeel Khurshed had demonstrated poetic

maturity and expressed his emotions with honesty and confidence.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Hameed Shahid said the poet had effectively portrayed social emotions and human experiences, while Dr Abdul Aziz Sahir described the collection as evidence of literary dedication and creative excellence. He highlighted the poet's innovative use of devotional themes and contemporary language in his verses.

Opinion & Editorial

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Digital roll call

This year, the Sindh government has been making impressive strides in education by introducing reliable, transparent systems through widespread digitisation. First, under the Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Project, it launched an initiative to shift examinations from manual marking to e-marking, alongside wider digitisation of the exam process. Then it launched an e-transfer system for government school teachers which has also completed at least one full transfer cycle. Now, it plans to digitise the student enrolment system by assigning a unique admission ID against students' B-Forms. Under this new initiative, enrolment records, academic performances and examination history would all be available for every student under a single, accessible digital system throughout their academic journey. This makes it much easier to track student progress and gauge any issues in their education before they grow into bigger problems that are harder to overturn. For example, students who are at risk of dropping out or have too many absences against their names can be provided school-led interventions to help bring them back on track. Moreover, a digital system will also deter fake enrolments for board examinations where a person sits for an exam under someone else's name in exchange of money.

Many moons ago

Arifa Noor

JULY is the month the Bastille fell. Centuries ago, in Paris. For most of us who studied history in English-medium private schools, history tended to focus on the West, as the West has prepared the syllabi we follow. As a result, the French Revolution or the Boston Tea Party are familiar events — as familiar as the 1857 war of independence. And so hopefully, readers will also be familiar with the fall of the Bastille which is synonymous with the French Revolution — when ordinary people brought down one of the most powerful dynasties in Europe. The first blow was struck when they took over the Bastille prison, which was seen as a symbol of Louis XVI's oppression.

But while the stories about the French Revolution of 1789, the Bastille and even poor Marie Antoinette who is still associated with a phrase she never uttered are perhaps well known, few realise how long this revolution had been in the making.

The financial crisis, at the heart of the matter, dated back multiple decades. The French had spent enormous amounts on fighting wars. The last war it waded into was the American War of Independence in which Paris assisted the rebels against the British. Most people know how that ended but it was a victory that brought no advantage as such to the French (except that they got to help inflict a defeat on the

Brits, a long-time enemy). But in the process, the state simply added to an already precarious financial position. According to some accounts, by the 1780s, half of the royal revenues were going into paying the interest on debt.

This was compounded by the indecision of the monarch, who understood the need for reform but lacked the political will to do it. And the reform he had to undertake concerned a bankrupt state which seemed incapable of fixing its regressive tax system in which the nobility and the clergy paid very little tax and the ordinary people bore the brunt of it. For instance, the ordinary people had to pay a tax on salt, from which even children were not exempt. The numbers were so absurd that the need for reform seemed obvious but proved impossible for a young king who retreated each time the nobility pushed back against any burden.

Few realise how long the French Revolution had been in the making.

During his reign of around 15 years before the revolution, he hired and fired around 10 economic managers, some of whom lasted mere months. But the most famous of these and their departures were linked to the issue of reform. The first one — Turgot — was fired around 1776 under pressure from the nobility. The next one, Jacques Necker, left in 1781. After that came two who departed because they proposed taxing the nobility

and failed. It was at this moment that Necker was brought back, a step that was welcomed by the people and scared the monarch into firing him, leading to the siege of the Bastille.

Necker was well known to the people then and to history. When he first held this position, he had helped finance the war in America by taking loans. In fact, he was also known for having fudged the figures so well that he had been able to convince the French people and the monarch that the country was sound financially. But this is not what made him popular with the people at large; he had won them over with his decision to publish the details of royal finances, which was a major change from the earlier stance that they were a state secret. The king had a divine right to rule (and spend), but by making the details public, ordinary people had a right to read and judge the government. And the details also created public anger against the privileged classes with the outing of court expenses and the amounts spent on pensions for the nobility.

So when Necker returned to the position, there was public expectation that he would fix the system in favour of the 'third estate' (the people). His firing was the last straw for the angry crowds, who set out towards the Bastille.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Courtesy Dawn

Here come the answers

Fahd Husain

THE government has communicated. That's a good start. It started with my column "Say it, show it, if you know it" last week, in which I asked the government to find its voice. I raised ten questions. Throughout the week, I kept getting feedback that reinforced how critical good governance is and why its absence — or shortage — is the central reason for Pakistan's sad state of affairs. My colleague Kamran Khan did a detailed segment on the column, and we agreed that Centre and provinces are equally responsible for the lack of visible improvement. The government has now sent me answers to those ten questions. The lengthy response is indicative of at least two things: first, it is positive that the government is sensitive to the need for greater engagement and communication; second, and less positive, the policies mentioned in the document oftentimes raise more questions than answers.

It will not be possible for me to reproduce the entire response. Instead, here are abridged answers along with my original questions. Do note that my question 6 on retail and agriculture tax and why it was not being collected with the same zeal as the tax on the salaried class was missed out in the response (perhaps inadvertently). I am reserving my analysis of the response for later columns where I will delve deeper into these ten issues. For now, read what the government has answered and make up your own mind. The full text of the response will also be available on social media.

1. What is our strategy on Balochistan?

Our strategy rests on four clear pillars: security, effective border management, better governance and people-centred development. Intelligence-based operations against terrorists and their facilitators will continue until their complete elimination. At the same time, through better governance and participation of the people, Balochistan's natural endowment of resources will translate into economic opportunities, education, healthcare and tangible benefits for local communities.

Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan, Qatar pledge deeper security partnership as Mohsin Naqvi holds key talks in Doha



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Qatar have reaffirmed their commitment to expanding bilateral security cooperation, strengthening institutional ties between their interior ministries, and working together to promote regional peace and stability during a high-level meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Qatar's Interior Minister and Commander of the Internal Security

Force (Lekhwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. The meeting focused on enhancing collaboration across a wide range of security-related sectors, with both ministers holding detailed discussions on ways to deepen their strategic security partnership. They also reiterated their resolve to further strengthen cooperation between the interior ministries of the two countries, emphasizing the importance of

sustained engagement in addressing shared security challenges.

Regional developments and the broader security environment also featured prominently in the discussions. Both sides exchanged views on the prevailing situation in the region and underscored the need for continued cooperation in promoting peace, stability, and collective security. The two ministers agreed to reinforce mutual collaboration and partnership in matters relating to internal security, reflecting the growing strategic convergence between Pakistan and Qatar.

Speaking on the occasion, Naqvi said Pakistan remains firmly committed to expanding cooperation with Qatar in the fields of security and other areas of mutual interest, adding that closer institutional coordination would further strengthen the longstanding relationship between the two friendly nations.

Govt.'s digital reforms to boost connectivity, investment: Shaza Fatima

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said the government had accelerated digital transformation through policy reforms, the expansion of fibre infrastructure, spectrum reforms and nationwide collaboration, expressing confidence that these measures would strengthen connectivity, attract investment and contribute billions of dollars to the economy in the coming years. Speaking at the GSMA Digital Nation Pakistan event, the minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had demonstrated a strong commitment to technology even during his tenure as Chief Minister of Punjab by introducing e-facilitation centres, e-libraries, e-employment centres and free public Wi-Fi hotspots. She said he also used



teleconferencing to conduct meetings with officials in South Punjab, reflecting his early focus on technology-driven governance. Shaza Fatima said that after assuming office, one of the government's first priorities was to accelerate digital transformation and improve nationwide connectivity. She said the Prime Minister extended full support to the government's fibre-optic programme and spectrum reforms, while Pakistan also landed new submarine fibre-optic cables and introduced Sea-WE fibre-related licences to strengthen international connectivity.

Dar says Pakistan 'confident' bilateral trade with US can double to \$20bn in next 5 years

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said the government was "confident" that trade between Pakistan and the United States could double to \$20 billion over the next five years.

Dar made the remarks while addressing a delegation of US congressmen and businessmen in Islamabad. The gathering included US congressmen Ryan Zinke and Michael James Baumgartner, who are on a visit to Pakistan.

Addressing the event, Dar called strong and mutually beneficial economic ties "the true measure of a mature strategic partnership and friendship".

Noting that the US is Pakistan's largest single-country export destination, he said that goods trade between the two countries in the last fiscal year reached \$9.4bn.

"While encouraging this figure ... we are confident that we can double bilateral trade to \$20bn over the next five years by fully harnessing the complementarity of our economies," the deputy premier said.

He said the Pak-US partnership was "mutually rewarding", as Pakistan remained

among the largest importers of US cotton and was also emerging as an important market for US hydrocarbons. Similarly, he said, Pakistan's growing demand for advanced machinery, technology and capital goods presented "significant opportunity for American manufacturers".

The minister also noted that the presence of over 80 US companies in Pakistan reflected "their confidence in our market, our people and our long-term economic potential".

"With an improving macroeconomic outlook, ongoing structural reforms, and competitive US tariffs, Pakistan's market is well positioned for a new wave of investment," he said. Dar highlighted that the government had set up the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to provide a "one-window facility" to potential investors, and encouraged the delegation to continue working closely with SIFC as it was ready to help them turn opportunities into successful economic partnerships. He called on the delegation to meet potential partners, explore new opportunities, engage with the government and lead discussions into long-term investments that benefit both our countries.

President sees M-9 as ideal for EV infra

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari chaired a meeting to review progress of various memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and other cooperation initiatives between the Government of Sindh and Chinese companies, directing that the agreed projects be advanced expeditiously and any remaining procedural and technical requirements completed at the earliest.

The president said this during a meeting with Chinese delegations of Anhui Nengtong New Energy Technology Co. Ltd and Luoyang Modern Biology Group at CM House on Monday.

Facilitated by the China-Pakistan-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Promotion Association, the meeting reviewed the implementation status of previously agreed areas of cooperation and discussed steps to advance their execution. The president said Karachi and Hyderabad offer significant potential for the development of EV infrastructure, while the Karachi-Hyderabad M-9 corridor could serve as an important starting point for intercity charging facilities.

CM Maryam launches 'Lab on Wheels' for Punjab farmers

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched revolutionary "Lab on Wheels" programme for Punjab farmers. A meeting chaired by CM Maryam Nawaz in Lahore on Tuesday was informed that a mobile lab team will collect soil and water samples from the farmer's field on the spot.

Soil and water samples will be immediately scientifically analyzed in the farmer's field. Soil pH and electrical conductivity (EC) will be measured on the spot. Soil's basic nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK) will be scientifically examined. Soil and water testing results will be immediately entered into the mobile app. As soon as the testing is completed, a scientific



report of soil and water will be issued immediately on the spot. Speaking the meeting, Maryam Nawaz said accurate soil testing and use of balanced fertilizers will make Punjab agriculturally self-sufficient.

Maryam Nawaz said agriculture in Punjab has been taken out of traditional methods and entered the scientific and digital era. Our goal is to reduce the cost of production of the farmer and increase the income received per acre, Maryam Nawaz said.

Rana Mashhood pitches Pakistan's youth on US tour

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan concluded a series of engagements in the United States this week, where he promoted Pakistan's youth potential by strengthening international partnerships, expanding opportunities for education and innovation, highlighting emerging football talent, and advocating greater global exposure for young Pakistanis through academic and cultural exchanges.

During meetings with academic institutions, youth leaders, diaspora members and development partners, Mr Mashhood underscored the gov-



ernment's commitment to placing young people at the centre of national development and international engagement.

He highlighted the role of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme in connecting Pakistani youth with education, skills development, entrepreneurship and sports opportunities, while exploring new avenues for collaboration with leading institutions in the United States.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar addressing a delegation of US congressmen and businessmen.

Lawyers have played proactive role in strengthening democracy and upholding rule of Law: Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the lawyer community has always played a proactive and constructive role in ensuring the supremacy of law and strengthening of the democratic norms and principles. He said that a Legislative Drafting Council has been established in the National Assembly, in which

experienced individuals have been recruited on merit basis to further strengthen and improve the quality of legislative drafting. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of lawyers from Hyderabad High Court Bar Association, District Bar Association, Dadu and District Bar Association Tando Allahyar at the Parliament House, Islamabad, today. Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of

Balochistan, Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai was also present on the occasion. During the meeting, the delegation apprised the Speaker National Assembly of the issues and challenges faced by members of the legal fraternity in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. Matters pertaining to the professional development, welfare, and overall interests of the legal community were also

discussed. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that lawyers have made significant contributions to the strengthening of democratic institutions and in upholding the rule of law. He further stressed the need for closer cooperation between Parliament and the legal community. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that the Legislative Drafting Council of the National Assembly has played an

effective role in strengthening the legislative process. The delegation appreciated the efforts of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for strengthening the country's parliamentary institutions and promoting greater engagement with the legal fraternity. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq assured the delegation that the issues raised during the meeting would be duly considered and addressed appropriate-

ly. The delegation comprised Syed Shahzad Shah, General Secretary, High Court Bar Association, Hyderabad; Asif Ali Abro, Joint Secretary, High Court Bar Association, Hyderabad; Ayaz Hussain Rind, General Secretary, District Bar Association, Dadu; and Zamir Hussain Khaskheli, Library Secretary, District Bar Association, Tando Allahyar.