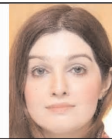




ERC orders high alert ahead of fresh monsoon onslaught



Asifa Bhutto briefed on proposal to establish JPMC comprehensive stroke center



Mushaal Mullick urges dialogue to end AJK crisis

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CDF Munir, Kuwait FM discuss regional security and steps to boost bilateral cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir and the visiting foreign minister of Kuwait discussed regional security and steps to boost bilateral cooperation on Wednesday, the military's media wing said.

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who landed in Pakistan last night on an official visit, called on the field marshal at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). "During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and steps to further strengthen bilateral cooperation were discussed," the statement issued by the ISPR on social media said. It added that

CDF Munir reiterated Pakistan's commitment to Kuwait, emphasising that both countries shared a "common vision for regional peace and prosperity".

Meanwhile, Al-Sabah appreciated Pakistan's "steadfast support", its constructive contribution toward regional peace and stability, and the deep fraternal ties between the two nations, the statement said.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with the visiting FM and expressed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening cooperation with Kuwait in diverse sectors, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. According to a statement issued by the PMO, the visiting minister was warmly welcomed by the premier.



Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir shakes hands with Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Security forces kill 32 terrorists during operations in KP, Balochistan: ISPR

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed 32 terrorists during operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan over the last 24 hours, the military's media affairs

wing said in a statement released on Wednesday.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said "comprehensive joint operations" were carried out in various parts of the two provinces, in continuation of action against the "terrorists nexus of India-sponsored Fitna-al-Khawarij and Fitna-al-Hindustan".

The state uses the term Fitna-al-Khawarij for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and has designated Balochistan-based groups as Fitna-al-Hindustan to highlight India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan.

ISPR said that the operations in KP and Balochistan were aimed at weeding out terrorists and their facilitators. Multiple "intelligence-based area sanitisation and targeted operations" were conducted in KP's Khyber on July 28 and 29, during which 24 terrorists belonging to Fitna-al-Khawarij were killed, it said.

Govt aims to provide citizens access to all public facilities under single digital ID: PM Shehbaz

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday that the government's vision for national digitalisation aims to provide citizens access to all public facilities under a single digital identity.

Chairing a review meeting in Islamabad on the implementation of a national-level integrated digital policy framework, PM Shehbaz said that implementing this vision in line with modern-day demands held "key importance" in forming an integrated society, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

"After the full implementation of the national digital vision, citizens will be able to access all public facilities, including government verification of documents, banking services, health, transfers, and all other facilities, under a single digital ID at one place," the statement cited the premier as saying.

It added that a meeting of the National Digital Commission (NDC) should be convened soon in order to take all stakeholders into confidence on the policy, including the provinces.

The prime minister directed that the digital vision first be implemented in priority sectors including health, agriculture, utilities, housing, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to provide better facilities to the public "as soon as possible".

Pakistan welcomes Kuwait's ratification of Defence Cooperation Agreement

WEEKLY BRIEFING

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday welcomed Kuwait's ratification of the Pakistan-Kuwait Defence Cooperation

Agreement, signed in June 2023, terming it another important milestone in the longstanding defence partnership between the two brotherly countries.

In a statement issued here, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Tahir Andrabi said the development reflected the shared resolve of both sides to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation and elevate their security partnership, which dates back to the early 1980s. He said the Agreement provided a comprehensive institutional framework for expanding defence cooperation, encompassing military training and education, joint exercises, exchange of expertise, and other mutually agreed areas of collaboration. The spokesperson said the pact would further enhance institutional linkages between the Armed Forces of both countries and consolidate the longstanding defence ties between Pakistan and Kuwait.

US-Saudi strikes in Iraq kill 20: Iraq militant alliance

PEAK POINT

SAUDI ARABIA: US-Saudi strikes on Iraq on Wednesday killed at least 20 members of the Hashed al-Shaabi, an armed Iraqi alliance that includes pro-Iran groups, the alliance said. The United States and Saudi Arabia said they had struck Iran-backed militants in Iraq in response to attacks on US forces and Saudi oil facilities. Washington and Tehran are Iraq's main allies, but their enmity has long turned the country into a proxy battleground and left successive governments struggling to maintain a delicate balance between the foes. The Hashed al-Shaabi, also known,

Re-polling demand, Form-47 jibe and doomsday talk—PPP, PML-N continue to trade barbs over Mirpur election results

PEAK POINT

MUZAFFARABAD: PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari continued his tirade against the PML-N — an ally of his party in the Centre — on Wednesday, reiterating his allegations in the first phase of Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections and demanding re-polling.

Addressing a PPP workers' convention in Muzaffarabad, he called on the Election Commission to hold re-polling in Mirpur if "you are not involved in this rigging". Directly taking a jibe at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, he said: "If someone is sitting on the PM's seat, or someone is sitting on the CM's position today, even a child knows that it is not because of the

people's votes or your performance but because of



Form-47."

Form-47 is the provisional consolidated statement of results of the vote count of all polling stations in a constituency, prepared by the returning officer (RO) concerned. The term has also been used mainly by the opposition PTI since the 2024 general elections in the country to allege rigging in the polls. Elections in AJK are being held in

three phases over security concerns, and the PML-N

won nine out of a total 13 seats up for grabs in the first phase in Mirpur. Bilawal's allegations on Wednesday were in continuation of his party's accusations from the day before, when the PPP and the PML-N traded barbs over election results, with Maryam saying in a televised address that it was "not the state that decides election results, but the people". She also urged

the PPP to accept defeat.

Shortly before Bilawal's speech on Wednesday, she, too, took a jibe at the PPP on X, saying: "The PPP, which is the master of the fine art of rigging, is crying foul. When's the doomsday?"

Responding to her on X, PPP's Sharjeel Memon said, "This is not you speaking but Form-47. Doomsday came in 2024, when mandates were being distributed in charity."

Meanwhile, the AJK Election Commission officially notified the return of the 13 successful candidates elected from Mirpur division in the first phase of the Legislative Assembly elections held on July 27. According to a press release on the notifications, the PML-N secured nine of the 13 seats, while the PPP won the remaining four.

Trump says US will be hitting Iran 'hard', but will 'let them keep talking'



MAHPARA ZAMAN

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that the US would strike Iran "hard" in retaliation for Tehran's attacks on American forces in Jordan.

In a phone call with Fox News, Trump said the US strikes overnight against Iran-backed militias in Iraq were "coordinated with" the Iraqi government.

Following Iran's attack on Jordan, the US president said "we'll be hitting them (Iranians) hard," stressing that "They're going to get a beating." About negotiations with Iran for a peace deal, Trump said: "We're going to let them keep talking." Earlier this week, Trump said the US was having "good talks" with Iran and that there is a "good chance" of reaching,



SPORTS



ICC penalises Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Abbas over 'aggressive, animated' celebration during WI Test



PEAK POINT

TAROUA: The International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Wednesday that it had penalised Pakistan's Khurram Shahzad and Mohammad Abbas for breaching Level 1 of the ICC code of conduct during the first match of their ICC World Test Championship series against the West Indies in Tarouba.

"Khurram was fined 15 per cent of his match fee and Abbas handed an official reprimand for breaching Article 2.5 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and

Player Support Personnel, which relates to 'using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match,'" the ICC said in a press release.

It added that one demerit point had also been added to the disciplinary records of each of the players, both of whom did not have any previous offences in a 24-month period.

ICC said Khurram was fined close to dismissed batter Shai

Hope during the 17th over of the West Indies' second innings, an action deemed capable of provoking an aggressive reaction".

Abbas was penalised for celebrating in an "animated manner" near dismissed batter Jonel Warrican, the final wicket of the innings, it added.

"Both players admitted their offences and accepted the sanctions proposed by Jeff Crowe of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for formal hearings.

"On-field umpires Alex Wharf and Richard

Kettleborough and third umpire Jayaraman Madanagopal levelled the charges," the press release said.

It also explained that Level 1 breaches carried a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50pc of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

The ICC's announcement of penalties came a day after Pakistan lost the Tarouba Test against West Indies — the first of a two-match series — by 90 runs on the fourth day of the Test.

Pakistan crowned Champions of Men's Volleyball C'ship



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan emerged as the undisputed champions of the Zong 5G Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) Men's Volleyball Championship 2026, defeating Bangladesh in a commanding straight-set victory in the championship final here at the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex.

The final day's action began with the 3rd Place Match between Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan, producing another exciting five-set encounter. Sri Lanka made a strong start by taking the opening set before Uzbekistan responded to level the match.

The two teams continued exchanging sets in a thrilling contest that kept spectators on the edge of their seats. In the decisive fifth set, Sri Lanka displayed remarkable composure and determination to seal the victory and secure the Bronze Medal. Sri Lanka defeated Uzbekistan 3-2 (25-19, 22-25, 25-23, 19-25, 15-11). The victory earned Sri Lanka a well-deserved third-place finish, while Uzbekistan concluded the championship in fourth position. The championship final featured the tournament's two best-performing teams as unbeaten Pakistan faced Bangladesh before a packed Liaquat Gymnasium, where thousands of passionate volleyball fans created a spectacular atmosphere.

Abu Bakar replaces Ammad Butt as Pakistan hockey captain



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has appointed Abu Bakar as the new captain of the Pakistan national hockey team on the recommendation of its Professional Development Committee. According to a PHF statement, the recommendation was made by the committee

comprising Ishtiaque Siddiqui and Hassan Sardar, and approved by PHF President Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani.

The federation said Abu Bakar will lead the national side as Pakistan prepares for upcoming international competitions.

He succeeded Ammad Butt, who served as Pakistan's captain.

of the squad, the team will continue to develop into a competitive unit.

The appointment comes after Pakistan endured a disappointing campaign in the FIH Pro League 2026, where the team finished without a single victory. Pakistan lost all 16 of their matches in the nine-team tournament, playing each of the other eight participating nations twice, and ended at the bottom of the standings with a goal difference of -57.

Earlier in March this year, Pakistan secured qualification for the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup, ending an eight-year absence from the tournament. They booked their place with a 4-3 victory over Japan in the semi-finals of the World Cup Qualifiers in Ismailia, Egypt, on March 6, 2026.

Boxer Fatima Zahra earns Pakistan's first Commonwealth Games medal



Pakistan ready to 'mix it with big boys' at FIFA ASEAN Cup: Gilani

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan's men's national football team is set to create history by making its debut in a FIFA competition after receiving an invitation to compete in the inaugural FIFA ASEAN Cup, scheduled to be held during the September-October international window. The landmark participation marks another significant achievement for Pakistan football under the leadership of Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani. It comes just months after the women's national team became the country's first side to feature in a FIFA Series tournament, highlighting the federation's renewed push to secure greater international exposure for both national teams.

Pakistan will be among 14 participating nations and one of eight teams compet-

ing in the top-tier FIFA ASEAN Cup, which will be hosted by Indonesia. The Shaheens are also one of only three invited teams, joining 11 nations from Southeast Asia in what FIFA has described as a new com-

petition aimed at providing meaningful international fixtures within the official men's international match calendar. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani thanked FIFA President Gianni Infantino for extending the opportunity. "This is another historic moment for Pakistan football. Following our

women's participation in the FIFA Series earlier this year, our men's national team will now play in its first-ever FIFA tournament. "It reflects our commitment to creating unprecedented opportunities for our players



and ensuring they compete regularly against quality international opposition," Gilani said and added: "The participation in the FIFA ASEAN Cup aligns with the federation's vision of exposing Pakistani footballers to high-level competition and accelerating the game's development."

Fatima Zahra guarantees Pakistan's first Commonwealth Games boxing medal





Bara Kahu and Sky Garden schemes under senate scrutiny after years of delays, committee demands Accountability

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of people waiting for their homes have faced years of uncertainty as the Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works raised serious concerns over delays in major federal housing projects and decided to call the Chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for a briefing. The committee expressed concern over long delays, legal disputes and administrative problems that have stopped important housing projects despite payments made by allottees. During the meeting chaired by Senator Nasir Mehmood, lawmakers reviewed several housing schemes managed by the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) and PHA Foundation and ques-

tioned why citizens were still waiting for possession after years. The committee decided to summon the NAB Chairman in the next meeting to provide details about ongoing investigations, inquiries and legal issues linked with FGEHA joint venture housing projects. The decision came during a review of the Green Enclave 1 project in Bara Kahu, Islamabad, where land acquisition started in 2009 over an area of 3,375 kanals. Officials informed the committee that although a construction agreement was signed in 2019, development work remains suspended because of disputes related to contracts, work progress and security requirements. Members expressed serious concern that affected allottees had been making payments since 2008 but had still not received possession of

their plots. The committee questioned why people who paid money for housing projects had to wait for such a long period to receive what was promised to them. Housing officials informed the committee that development work could restart after approval from the relevant board once contractual issues are resolved. However, lawmakers were not satisfied with the continued delay and decided that further explanation was needed from accountability authorities. The committee also reviewed the Sky Garden Housing Scheme, also known as Green Enclave II, which covers around 7,300 kanals in Mauza Kathar and Mauza Mangal. Officials informed the committee that more than 2,455 consent notices had been issued and over Rs4.21 billion had been collected

from members of different categories. The committee was informed that land issues in Mauza Kathar had been resolved, while legal matters related to Mauza Mangal were settled in favour of FGEHA by the court in April 2026. Officials presented a proposed timeline for development and said block wise plot handovers are expected between December 2026 and March 2027. To address remaining administrative issues, the committee decided to call the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi for a detailed briefing in the next meeting. The committee also reviewed the EHFPRO Lifestyle Residency Apartments project in Sector G 13, Islamabad. Officials informed lawmakers that around 70 percent of physical work had already been completed, but progress was badly affected due to

increased construction costs after COVID 19, financial difficulties and the death of the private contractor. Following repeated violations, the joint venture agreement was cancelled and FGEHA took control of the project. Officials said the project is now being revived through a Public Private Partnership plan to avoid putting extra financial pressure on allottees. The committee was informed that planning approval has been completed and the process for selecting a new partner is underway. Members directed the ministry to provide regular progress reports during every stage of the project. The committee also reviewed the PHA F Residencia Project on Kuchlak Road, Quetta, where officials reported around 50 percent progress. Officials informed the committee that construction work had pro-

gressed on houses and apartment blocks, while additional units were being processed through new contracts. The committee also reviewed maintenance work at Federal Lodges and discussed improvements in sanitation, civil repairs and electrical works. Members were informed that discussions were ongoing to resolve problems related to water supply, drainage and basic facilities in some housing schemes. The committee reminded residents that any unauthorised structural changes must be approved through the Capital Development Authority. Senator Nasir Mehmood said public housing projects must be completed on time because delays create financial and personal difficulties for citizens.

Analysis of the Senate of Pakistan's 2025-2026 performance

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: In its analysis of the Senate of Pakistan's 2025-2026 performance, PILDAT notes a rise in legislative output accompanied by continued institutional weaknesses, including declining attendance, delayed representation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and concerns over the pace and depth of constitutional amendments. PILDAT believes the

quality of legislative deliberation continue to affect the Senate's institutional effectiveness. During 2025-2026, the Senate passed a total of 97 bills, comprising 47 government bills and 50 private members' bills, reflecting a significant increase in legislative activity compared to the previous year when 51 bills were passed. Private Members' legislation recovered strongly,

while government bills also recorded an upward trend. During the Year, only 6 ordinances laid, compared to 16 in 2024-2025. The Senate met for 64 sittings, slightly lower than the previous year when it met for 65 sittings, but working hours increased to approximately 159 hours from 117 last year, indicating longer sittings and intensified legislative activity. Attendance trends

showed a decline, with average attendance falling to 57.6%, compared to 62% in the previous year. The overall number of disruptions due to lack of quorum declined during the year. The Leader of the House recorded 31% attendance, while the office of the Leader of the Opposition remained vacant for 5 months and 15 days following the removal of Senator Shibli

Faraz on August 5, 2025, before Senator Raja Nasir Abbas assumed office on January 20, 2026. Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights (Punjab, PML-N) emerged as the most vocal Senator with a recorded talk time 10 hours and 40 minutes. He was followed by Senator Aimal Wali Khan, (Balochistan, ANP) who spoke

for 9 hours and 51 minutes, while Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Leader of the House, (ICT, PML-N) spoke for 6 hours 41 minutes. A defining feature of the year was the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment (which introduced major changes in judicial structure, and military command arrangements) was passed through an accelerated process within 24 hours.

Opinion & Editorial

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Hidden epidemic

HIV in Sindh is more widespread than initially believed: this is the inescapable conclusion one has to draw from the latest infections uncovered at the Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution's hospital in Landhi neighbourhood of Karachi. What began as an outbreak centred on the Kulsam Bai Valika Hospital has steadily expanded with every new round of screening. More than 120 people have now tested positive near Valika Hospital, while another 10 cases have surfaced in Landhi. Each expansion of testing is revealing more infections than previously known, suggesting that the city's HIV burden extends well beyond what official figures have captured. HIV cases do not suddenly emerge in clusters overnight. It spreads silently, often remaining undetected for years before diagnosis. If screening a few thousand people near two hospitals has uncovered well over a hundred infections, it is reasonable to ask how many more cases remain hidden across Karachi, particularly among people who have never been tested. In the light of this, the government's decision to constitute another inquiry committee is a necessary but reactive initiative. Pakistan has become adept at investigating HIV outbreaks without preventing them. Ratodero should have been the watershed moment. Instead, it became the first in a series of warnings.

Can Pakistan Become South Asia's Next Technology Hub?

By Sardar Ahmed Ali



For decades, Pakistan's economy has been associated primarily with agriculture, textiles, and overseas remittances. Today, however, a new economic narrative is gradually taking shape. Instead of relying solely on traditional industries, Pakistan is emerging as a promising digital economy driven by technology, innovation, and the skills of its young population. The country's growing information technology sector has become one of its strongest economic performers, raising an important question: Can Pakistan transform this momentum into becoming South Asia's next technology hub? The answer depends not only on impressive export figures but also on whether Pakistan can build a sustainable ecosystem that promotes innovation, research, entrepreneurship, and globally competitive technology companies. Pakistan's information and communication technology sector has demonstrated remarkable resilience despite economic challenges. According to official statistics, ICT exports reached a record US\$4.6 billion during FY2025-26, representing annual growth of more than 20 percent. The industry has become Pakistan's largest services export, generating valuable foreign exchange and creating thousands of high paying jobs for software engineers, developers, cybersecurity specialists, digital marketers, and technology entrepreneurs. The rapid growth reflects increasing international confidence in Pakistani technology professionals. Companies across North America, Europe, the

Middle East, and Asia are outsourcing software development, cloud computing, artificial intelligence solutions, business process outsourcing, and digital services to Pakistani firms. At the same time, Pakistan has established itself among the world's leading freelancing nations, proving that its young professionals possess the technical expertise required to compete successfully in global digital markets. However, becoming a true technology hub requires much more than exporting software services. Countries such as India and Singapore achieved technological leadership by creating complete innovation ecosystems where universities, research institutions, venture capital firms, startups, multinational corporations, and government agencies work together. These countries invested consistently in education, research and development, digital infrastructure, and policies that encouraged entrepreneurship. Their success was built on producing globally recognised technology companies rather than relying solely on outsourcing. Pakistan possesses several natural advantages that could support a similar transformation. With a population exceeding 250 million and nearly two thirds under the age of thirty, the country has one of the youngest workforces in the region. Every year, universities produce thousands of graduates in computer science, software engineering, information technology, and related disciplines. Combined with expanding internet access and growing digital literacy, this demographic dividend provides Pakistan with significant long term potential. Nevertheless, serious challenges continue to limit progress. Investment in research and development remains relatively low com-

pared with regional competitors. Access to venture capital is still limited, making it difficult for innovative startups to scale their businesses. Regulatory uncertainty, inconsistent digital infrastructure, and concerns regarding ease of doing business also discourage both domestic entrepreneurs and foreign investors. Furthermore, many technology companies remain focused on outsourcing rather than developing proprietary products, intellectual property, and globally recognised digital platforms. Artificial intelligence has added new urgency to this challenge. AI is transforming industries including healthcare, finance, education, manufacturing, agriculture, and public administration. Countries investing heavily in AI research, advanced computing, semiconductor technologies, and digital infrastructure are likely to dominate the global economy in the coming decades. Pakistan cannot afford to remain only a consumer of emerging technologies while other nations become their creators. Educational institutions must modernise curricula to reflect evolving industry requirements, while government policies should encourage AI research, innovation, startup financing, and stronger protection of intellectual property. Equally important is investor confidence. International technology companies seek predictable policies, transparent governance, reliable electricity, high speed internet, cybersecurity standards, and regulatory stability before making long term investments. Pakistan has made encouraging progress in several of these areas, but continued reforms remain essential. Consistency in economic and digital policies will play a decisive role in attracting greater foreign direct investment and expanding the coun-

try's technology ecosystem. Another critical challenge is retaining talent. Every year, many highly skilled Pakistani software engineers and technology professionals pursue opportunities abroad because of better salaries, stronger research environments, and greater access to investment. Reducing this brain drain requires creating an environment where talented individuals can build innovative companies, secure funding, and achieve international success without leaving the country. The future of Pakistan's economy will depend less on natural resources and increasingly on human capital. Knowledge, creativity, innovation, and technological capability have become the defining assets of modern economies. Pakistan has already demonstrated that it can produce world class technology professionals capable of competing internationally. The next step is ensuring that these professionals establish globally recognised technology companies from within Pakistan. The ambition of becoming South Asia's next technology hub will not be realised overnight. It requires political stability, sustained investment in education and research, stronger public private partnerships, and long term policy continuity. The encouraging growth of Pakistan's technology sector proves that the foundation already exists. If the country remains committed to innovation, invests in its young people, and creates an environment that rewards entrepreneurship, Pakistan has every opportunity to emerge as one of Asia's most dynamic digital economies. The opportunity is real. The talent is abundant. What remains is the national resolve to transform digital potential into lasting prosperity.

ERC orders high alert ahead of fresh monsoon onslaught



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Emergency Response Committee (ERC) on Wednesday reviewed Pakistan's monsoon preparedness and ongoing response efforts at its sixth meeting in Islamabad, warning that a fresh weather system from July 29 to August 5 could trigger heavy rains, urban flooding and rising river flows across the country, as the nationwide death toll from monsoon related incidents climbed to 109 and injuries reached 362. The meeting, held at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) at NDMA headquar-

ters, was chaired via video link by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal. It was attended by Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Wattoo, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik and senior officials from relevant ministries and departments. The committee was informed that a new

monsoon system is expected to affect Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh, bringing widespread rainfall with isolated heavy downpours. Officials warned that the weather system could cause rapid rises in river flows, medium to high flows in the Chenab River and its associated nullahs, flash floods in hill torrents and seasonal streams, and urban flooding in vulnerable cities. According to the latest situation report, 109 people lost their lives and 362 were injured nationwide between June 26 and July 28. House, roof and wall collapses remained the leading cause of fatalities, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported the highest number of deaths, followed by Punjab. The committee was also informed that 148 rescue operations had been carried out across the country, resulting in the evacuation of 4,111 people to safer locations through coordinated efforts of the NDMA.

Asifa Bhutto briefed on proposal to establish JPMC comprehensive stroke center



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: First Lady Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari, MNA, was briefed on the vision and implementation roadmap for the proposed Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) Comprehensive Stroke Center on Wednesday by Dr. Syed Fazal Zaidi, Professor of Neurology at the University of Toledo, internationally renowned vascular and interventional neurologist and Founding Director of the JPMC Comprehensive Stroke Program, along with Mushtaq Chapra, Chairman of the Patient Aid Foundation. During the briefing, Dr. Zaidi highlighted the growing burden of stroke in

Sindh, noting that the province, with a population of over 55 million, records an estimated 500 stroke cases every day, including around 50 patients with severe strokes requiring highly specialised care. He emphasised the urgent need to strengthen the public healthcare system by establishing a Comprehensive Stroke Center capable of providing timely, life-saving treatment. The First Lady was informed that while NICVD and SICVD provide valuable care for patients with ischemic stroke, Sindh currently lacks a Comprehensive Stroke Center capable of managing the full spectrum of stroke care, including both ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes, complex neurovascular emergencies, advanced neuro-interventional procedures, neurocritical care and specialised rehabilitation. Dr. Zaidi said the initiative is being led through the Pakistan Stroke Initiative, a US-based non-profit organisation established to advance stroke care in Pakistan, in partnership with the Patient Aid Foundation, JPMC and the Government of Sindh.



Journalist Pervaiz Mughal presents a bouquet to Principal Information Officer Raisa Adil on her assumption of office.

Governor KP, US Chargé d'Affaires discuss investment, education, sports diplomacy

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday held a meeting with United States Chargé d'Affaires to Pakistan Ms. Natalie A. Baker at Governor House to discuss ways to enhance cooperation in investment, education, sports diplomacy, tourism, regional peace and economic development.

The meeting was attended by U.S. Consul General for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Thomas Eckert, PPP Parliamentary Leader in the KP Assembly Ahmed Karim

Kundi and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahab Ali Shah. During the meeting, the Governor highlighted the province's vast investment potential, particularly in minerals, gemstones, hydropower, natural gas, water resources and tourism, with special emphasis on religious tourism. He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possessed abundant reserves of precious stones and gemstones, offering significant opportunities for international investment and private-sector participation in value-addition projects in the mines and minerals sector.



Governor Kundi also proposed promoting business-to-business collaboration and partnerships with local communities to facilitate investment.

Referring to recent regional developments, he

said peace and stability would enable Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to fully capitalize on its natural resources and attract greater foreign investment.

Natalie A. Baker acknowledged

the province's strong economic potential despite prevailing security perceptions and encouraged the Governor to engage with members of the U.S. Congress, officials of the U.S. Department of State and leading policy think tanks during his proposed visit to the United States.

She also suggested that the Governor be accompanied by a business delegation to showcase Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's investment opportunities and proposed exploring sister-city partnerships, including with Houston.

The meeting also discussed sports diplomacy, with Ms. Baker appreciating the Governor's efforts to promote cricket and other sports in the province.

The two sides also exchanged views on the security situation.

US congressional delegation led by rep. ryan zinke and rep. Michael Baumgartner calls on NA Speaker

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A United States congressional delegation, led by Representatives Ryan Zinke and Michael Baumgartner, called on National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Islamabad today. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq extended a warm welcome to the visiting US Congressional Delegation. Chargé d'Affaires Ms. Natalie A. Baker was also present on the occasion. The meeting focused on Pak-US bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that Pakistan attaches great importance to its longstanding relationship with the United States, which is founded on mutual respect, trust and shared interests. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated that parliamentary diplomacy can play a pivotal role in



strengthening bilateral relations. He stressed the need to further expand parliamentary exchanges and cooperation between the legislatures of Pakistan and the United States of America. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, stability and diplomatic solutions in the region. He stated that Pakistan had consistently supported restraint, dialogue and de-escalation during the recent regional tensions, adding that diplomacy and dialogue remain the most effective means of resolving.

Pakistan pushes stronger commonwealth youth agenda

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening youth cooperation across the Commonwealth while co-chairing a special meeting of the Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Task Force (CYMTF), where member states reviewed the draft Commonwealth Youth Programme Strategic Framework 2026-2030 and discussed measures to expand opportunities for young people through education, entrepreneurship, digital inclusion and skills development. The virtual meeting was co-chaired by Samoa's Minister of Family and Social Affairs, Hon. Moetauaonui Julius Ah Koi Tafanua, and attend-



ed by representatives of Commonwealth member states and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The participants reviewed feedback on the draft Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Strategic Framework 2026-2030 and discussed the future direction of the programme. The meeting also received updates on preparations for the Commonwealth Youth Forum, the Commonwealth Youth Council and the 11th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting.

PPP should present evidence of AJK election rigging before relevant forums if it has any: Dr. Tariq Fazal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Wednesday said that if the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had any evidence of rigging in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections, it should present it before the relevant legal and electoral forums.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, the minister said the PPP was once again resorting to its old practice of making allegations of electoral rigging without presenting any evidence, terming it a failed attempt to conceal its defeat.

He said the people of Azad



Jammu and Kashmir had delivered their verdict through the ballot box after evaluating the performance of the PPP's previous government. The people of AJK expressed confidence in the politics of development, stability, and public service by voting for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), he added. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry reiterated that if the PPP genuinely