



Pakistan, Iran reaffirm resolve to expand bilateral trade to \$10bn



Pakistan faces challenge of surplus solar power storage



Shah Allah Ditta Caves to be developed into world-class Buddhist heritage site

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
Website: www.peakpoint.pk

Executive Group Editor
Arif Mehmood Khan



Wednesday 05 August 2026

Safar 21, 1448

A.H

VOI No: 06

Issue No. 162

Pages 4 Rs. 20

Armed forces ready to assist NDMA, civil administration in relief operations: CDF Munir

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir on Tuesday reassured that the Armed Forces of Pakistan remain fully prepared to extend assistance to the civil administration and NDMA in relief, rescue and rehabilitation operations.

He made the remarks during his visit to the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) at the Headquarters of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), said the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The CDF received a briefing on Pakistan's disaster preparedness and coordinated response arrangements for the ongoing monsoon season at the NEOC. CDF Munir

commended NDMA's efforts to strengthen Pakistan's national disaster management capacity, it added. The army chief emphasised readiness, effective inter-agency coordination and swift response to safeguard lives and critical infrastructure. The military's media wing said that the NDMA chairman briefed the CDF on the operational capabilities of NEOC and its technology-enabled response mechanisms, including "Disaster Lens 2026," which showed the prevailing monsoon situation and multi-hazard monitoring mechanisms. In a recent meeting of the Emergency Response Committee (ERC), officials briefed the body that recent rains had triggered flooding in several areas and that coordinated response operations were continuing through federal, provincial and district authorities.



Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir speaks during his visit to the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) at the Headquarters of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Several terrorists eliminated in Lakki Marwat IBOs

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Several terrorists were sent to hell by the security forces during effective intelligence-based operations under the Azm-e-Istehkam vision in the Lakki Marwat area of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

According to security sources, multiple hideouts of Fitna al-Khwarji terrorists were destroyed during intelligence-based operations in Lakki Marwat.

A large quantity of weapons, ammunition and other equipment was recovered from the killed terrorists. The sources further said that reports also indicate that several terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khwarji were injured during the operation. They said every effort is being made during the operations to ensure the safety of the lives and property of the local population and to avoid any harm to civilians. Security sources reaffirmed that the security forces will continue operations across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa until lasting peace is established and terrorism is eliminated. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid glowing tributes to security forces for conducting successful intelligence-based operations.

Pakistan to host Iranian officials as Trump's patience wears thin

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday invited Iran's parliament speaker and foreign minister for urgent consultations on regional developments, as Tehran described Islamabad as its primary mediator with the US.

National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq invited Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's chief negotiator with Washington and speaker of parliament. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, meanwhile, invited his Iranian counterpart, Seyyed Abbas Araghchi. The invitations were delivered in Tehran late Monday night after Dar spoke with Araghchi. "They exchanged views on regional and international developments, including the deteriorating situation in Occupied East Jerusalem," the Foreign Office said in a statement. It remained unclear when Ghalibaf and Araghchi would travel to Pakistan. A diplomatic source said both men had been asked to come as soon as possible for discussions on regional and international developments. Araghchi was in Iraq on Monday for Arbameen, which is being observed on Tuesday.

The invitations came roughly 36 hours after US President Donald Trump announced he had canceled imminent strikes against Iran. Trump said allies had urged him to hold off because a deal appeared imminent. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman spoke with Trump and persuaded him to call off the planned military action. Trump had also named UAE and Qatar as among the countries that had asked him to cancel the planned strikes. Iran has been holding talks with Oman.

AJK elections: Voting concludes in two constituencies as PPP again alleges rigging

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Voting in two AJK constituencies concluded on Tuesday after it could not be held on the scheduled date of Aug 2 during the second

phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections, as the PPP again alleged rigging. Authorities had postponed polling in LA-27 Muzaffarabad-I (Kutla) and at 71 of the 174 polling stations in LA-28 Muzaffarabad-II (Lachhrat) due to landslides and bad weather, which had resulted in blocked roads. Elections in AJK are being held in three phases due to security concerns, with polling having been held on seven seats of Muzaffarabad division and 12 refugee seats — reserved seats for refugees from India-occupied Kashmir — on Sunday. In the third phase, elections will be held in 11 constituencies of Poonch division on August 10. The first phase of polling was held in AJK's Mirpur division on July 27, in which the PML-N had secured nine of the 13 seats while the PPP won the remaining four. The two parties, which are allies in Centre, have been engaged in a war of words since, with the PPP accusing the PML-N of rigging.

Iranian president denies reports of resignation

PEAK POINT

IRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian denied on Tuesday reports that he had submitted his resignation amid ongoing military escalation with the US. "If I were going to resign, I would announce it publicly. I will not resign, and I will not continue the struggle," Pezeshkian said in a televised speech, excerpts of which were published by the official IRNA news agency. He also denied claims of disagreements with Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei and the armed forces, stressing that "we are working in full harmony." "Everyone knows that if any disagreement,

Dar to attend ministerial meeting in Jordan on deteriorating situation in occupied Jerusalem: FO

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will visit Jordan on Tuesday to attend a ministerial meeting aimed at formulating a unified position on the situation in occupied Jerusalem, according to the Foreign Office (FO). The Ministerial Meeting on Jerusalem, scheduled to be held on Aug 5 (Wednesday), will bring together foreign ministers from Arab League member states and a group of Islamic countries to discuss the deteriorating situation in the region, the FO said in a statement shared on social media.

Dar was invited to attend by Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Al Safadi, the statement said. "The attending foreign

ministers will also call on His Majesty King



Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, during the visit," the FO added.

The foreign minister is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting to exchange views on regional developments, including the humanitarian situation in Palestine.

The FO termed Dar's

participation in the meeting "a manifestation of



Pakistan's principled support for the Palestinian people" and its commitment to the establishment of an "independent, sovereign and contiguous" State of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Pakistan and other Muslim countries have repeatedly condemned "continued incursions by extremist Israeli settlers"

into Al Aqsa Mosque — Islam's third-holiest site, located in east Jerusalem, which Israel captured in 1967 and later annexed.

The Al-Aqsa compound is a central symbol of Palestinian identity and also a frequent flashpoint. Under long-standing arrangements, Jewish people may visit the compound, but are not permitted to pray there. While Israel says it is committed to maintaining this status quo, Palestinians fear it is being eroded.

The foreign ministers of Pakistan and eight other Muslim countries in June expressed their "categorical rejection" of any attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites.

Trump's Board of Peace reassures Israel after Tel Aviv's objections on Gaza pullout



MAHPARA ZAMAN

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace on Monday assured Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel's withdrawal from Gaza would only begin after Hamas's complete disarmament, following his objections.

Two members of Netanyahu's security cabinet had urged a vote to tear up the deal championed by Trump after the board released a text that called for Israel to begin a phased withdrawal.

Netanyahu's office said it had raised concerns to the United States, after Trump on Friday hailed as a "major milestone" an agreement by Hamas to hand over weapons to a nascent Palestinian.



SPORTS



Pakistan women outclass Sri Lanka in third T20I by four wickets



PEAK POINT

DAMBULLA: Batter Ayesha Zafar hit a 31-ball innings of 39 runs studded with six fours as she led her Pakistan side to a comfortable win in the third and final T20 International against Sri Lankan women played at Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium on Tuesday.

Having won the series already, Sri Lankan women could manage to post a meagre total of 113 runs for the loss of six wickets when

put to bat by the Pakistani skipper after winning the toss.

Pakistani team chased down the target in 18.2 overs losing the same number of wickets and winning the match by four wickets.

For the tourists, Ayesha Zafar hit 39 runs, Shawwal Zulfiqar 21 runs and Muneeba Ali 19 runs.

On Sunday last, the Sri Lanka women had downed Pakistan women by six wickets in the second T20 International to take an unassailable lead in the three-match series at the same venue.

After electing to bat first, captain Muneeba Ali and Shawaal Zulfiqar gave Pakistan a rollicking start of 90 runs in 9.5 overs following a solid foundation of 68-0 in powerplay.

Muneeba struck six fours and a six in her 30-ball 45 while Shawaal top-scored with 48 runs off 35 deliveries smashing eight fours. Pakistan scored 175 runs for the loss of five wickets in 20 overs.

Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu then counter-attacked

with a 15-ball 40 laced with five fours and three sixes. Umm-e-Hani ended her innings before also dismissing Vishmi Gunaratne (31) to finish as Pakistan's leading bowler with two wickets for 28 runs from four overs.

Sanjana Kavindi, playing her first T20I, scored 46 off 24, while Harshitha Samarawickrama remained unbeaten on 37 from 22. Kavisha Dilhari contributed an unbeaten 14 as the hosts achieved the target in 17.4 overs while losing four wickets.

PCB ropes in Michael Smith as batting coach



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Former South African cricketer Michael Smith has been hired by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) as batting coach of the men's team, the Board confirmed on Tuesday. The 46-year-old will work with the team across both red-ball and white-ball formats, the Board said.

Smith featured in 89 first-class matches, 72 List-A matches and 16 T20 matches from 2003 to 2013. The former right-handed batsman scored 7,029 runs across the three formats, including nine centuries and 40 fifties.

Smith, who holds a Level 4 coaching qualification, has served on the coaching staffs of three HBL PSL franchises: Islamabad United, Karachi Kings and Multan Sultans. He has also worked as batting coach with Australia's Hobart Hurricanes and Cricket Tasmania.

As a coaching consultant, Smith has worked with South Africa's KZN Inland and Eastern Province.

Smith, who has been appointed for a two-year term, will join the Pakistan team ahead of the three-match Test series against England, commencing on August 19. The addition of Smith addresses a key vacancy in Pakistan's coaching set-up at a time when the team's batting performances, particularly in Test cricket, have come under increasing scrutiny.

Pakistan boxer Qudratullah goes missing in Glasgow



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan boxer Qudratullah Khan has gone missing in Glasgow after competing at the Commonwealth Games.

The Quetta-born boxer, who represents a highly respectable department, did not join the national squad that was scheduled to return home on Sunday following the

officials, Khan was not found in his hotel room when the squad Lyari-born boxer Zohaib Rasheed, then prepared to depart, Pakistan's Asian although his luggage and other personal belongings remained there.

The incident has left the team's management facing an financial difficulties unexpected challenge. It is not the first time a Pakistani athlete has disappeared during an overseas sporting event.

At the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, boxers Suleman Baloch and Nazirullah Khan also went missing after the competition. A month earlier, Pakistan leading swimmer Faizan Akbar disappeared in Hungary ahead of the FINA World Championships.

In March 2024, Lyari-born boxer Zohaib Rasheed, then prepared to depart, Pakistan's Asian although his luggage and other personal belongings remained there. The latest incident is likely to renew concerns among sports administrators over athletes disappearing during international tours. Pakistan is scheduled to send a contingent to Japan next month for the Asian Games and Qudratullah's disappearance is expected to increase scrutiny of the country's sports management.

Pakistani athlete Fauzia Hemani-Madhani completes fourth full Ironman challenge in Canada



Pakistan launches ITF Masters World Team Championships campaign as second seeds



Egypt's Salman Khalil conquers Nasir Iqbal to clinch squash crown

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Egypt's promising youngster and World 55 Salman Khalil on Tuesday sizzled as he romped to a superb 3-0 victory over Pakistan's experienced campaigner Nasir Iqbal to win the Pakistan Navy Fleet Cup International Squash Championship which concluded here at the Roshan Khan-Jehangir Khan Squash Complex.

The set score was 14-12, 11-3, 13-11.

Unlike expectations the decider turned out to be a one-sided affair in favour of the third seed Khalil. Khalil displayed fine skills to annex the crown. Nasir, who had done extremely well in the entire tournament, did not show the kind of resilience which was expected from the Peshawar-born player who has been serving the nation since long. The first set was the best of the three as both contenders

extended terrific resistance to each other before the Egyptian pocketing it 14-12.

In the second set Khalil was even more ruthless and did not allow at all Nasir to show enough resistance.

Khalil secured 11-3 win in

ranking and will pace way for getting call-ups for major events," Nasir told reporters.

Meanwhile Salman Khalil said that it was a good win for him.

"It was a nice here and I am happy. It was a rough final



this set. In the third set Nasir tried his level best to stage a fight-back. He also played some fine shots but failed to prevent Khalil from victory as he won the set 13-11 to seal a solid title victory.

Nasir Iqbal was happy despite losing the final.

"It was a good tournament for me as it will help boost my

as I had to move around the whole court," Khalil said.

Commander Karachi Vice Admiral Faisal Amin presented trophies and prizes to the players. Former world champion Jehangir Khan and former Sindh Governor Moinuddin Haider also attended the closing ceremony.

Art exhibition on Kashmir inaugurated at PNCA Islamabad



PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD: An art exhibition titled "5th August - Youm-e-Istehsaal: Witnessing Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir - Land, Body and Voice" was inaugurated on 3 August 2026 at the Exhibition Hall of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad. The exhibition, organized in collaboration with the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), PNCA and Kashmir Media Service (KMS), aims to portray through art the experiences, struggles, identity and voices associated with Jammu and Kashmir. The inauguration ceremony was held on 3 August and featured remarks by Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir; Ambassador (R) Ishtiyque Andrabi; Advocate Pervaiz Ahmed, General Secretary of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC); and Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR). The artworks by artist Warda Zainab explore themes of land, identity, human experience, resilience and voice, offering an artistic perspective on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The exhibition was attended by artists, art enthusiasts, members of civil society, media representatives, students, researchers and members of the general public, who viewed the artworks and engaged with the artistic narratives presented. The exhibition will remain open to visitors on 4 and 5 August 2026 at the PNCA Exhibition Hall, Islamabad.

NDMA warns of rise in river flows, low-level flooding, flash floods due to monsoon rains

PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday warned that river flows across the country's major river systems are expected to rise sharply over the next 24 hours due to ongoing monsoon rains, forecasting low-level flooding at several locations and flash floods in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and northern Balochistan. According to the NDMA's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) Hydrological Situation Report, low-level flooding is currently continuing in the Indus River at Kalabagh, Chashma and Mulla, as well as in Nullah Palkhu at Wazirabad and Nullah Basanter at Narawal. The authority said the Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum, Kabul and Sutlej rivers are presently flowing within normal limits at all monitored control points. Hill torrents in Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur, along with Rawalpindi's Nullah Lai, also remain within normal levels. The report, covering Aug. 4 and 5, forecasts a significant increase in river flows across all major river systems. Low-level flooding is expected in the Indus River at Tarbela, Taunsa, Sukkur and Guddu, the Chenab River at Marala, the Ravi River at Balloki, and the Jhelum River and its tributaries upstream of Mangla Dam. The NDMA also warned of possible flash flooding in streams, seasonal nullahs and hill torrents across Haripur and Mansehra in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bagh and Haveli districts in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Hunza, Shigar, Gupis-Yasin and Ghanche in Gilgit-Baltistan, and Zhob, Musakhel and Sherani districts of northern Balochistan. The authority urged provincial and district administrations to closely monitor the evolving hydrological situation and take precautionary measures in vulnerable areas.

Opinion & Editorial



Arif Mehmood Khan

Group Editor: 0333-5366814

Samra Athar Kakakhel

Resident Editor

Nadim Tanoli

Joint Editor: Mob-0301-7777874

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com

www.peakpoint.pk

MQM's dilemma

The MQM-P is in disarray as recent infighting exposes its deep fault lines. Once the heartthrob of Karachiites for defending the city's rights, the party is now dysfunctional. It has split into multiple groups, all fighting for leadership. Compounding this is the party's failure to focus on development, demography and devolution, leaving the urban population marginalised. The recent clash between the Bahadurabad and PIB factions of the party remains unexplained, but their lack of command over workers highlights a complete breakdown of political control. The largest party of the Urdu-speaking community is visibly locked in an inward-looking power struggle, routinely bickering over tickets and spheres of influence in Karachi. Leaders like Farooq Sattar, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Mustafa Kamal, Amir Khan and Anees Qaimkhan must step up and prioritise internal cohesion. The party completely lacks a coherent political strategy, rendering its performance in the Sindh Assembly a total non-starter. Having abandoned its fight for local government empowerment, the party leadership now seems entirely focused on fighting the provincial government over municipal resources.

Politics is upon us

Arifa Noor IT wasn't an ordinary day by any stretch of the imagination, even though it began rather ordinarily. There was little news to interest anyone (and Kashmir was a no-no for television channels). Initially, there came fleeting news about a press conference by the head of ISPR but it wasn't meant to be. Those who had not been invited to the event thought the news was incorrect but later it transpired that the conference had been delayed to the next day, Friday. And then came the bombshell — in Islamabad at an event hosting businessmen for a conference on the economy, business and all things complicated. Here, instead of the speeches by the men managing Pakistan's finances (if there were any), it was Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's speech that got all the attention. It's still not clear why he spoke there but as the conference took place at a hall located close to his office, perhaps he offered to swing by and say a few words. His speech didn't just create headlines; it created an entire news cycle. In simple words, he confirmed in a way what the government's worst critics have been saying — that people are in pain and the government hasn't been able to provide them with any relief. He put it even more bluntly. He spoke of the 'system' (the entire country — not just the one in Sindh) having collapsed. Not collapsing but collapsed. He said it wasn't possible to deliver regardless of how hard the prime minister worked and how many long hours he put in. He referenced recent events in India, saying that if the 'cockroaches' (youth) got together, they would overthrow it all. But more intriguingly, he also made it clear that giving people a few thousand rupees or a laptop wasn't enough. This was clearly a reference to the various schemes launched by the PML-N as well as the Benazir Income Support Programme, which is seen as the PPP's baby. He proposed a solution by arguing the country needed more provinces or administrative units so that governance could be delivered at the doorstep. The next day, the DG ISPR reinforced this proposal. The interior minister's indictment of the present government will not be forgotten easily. While his solution or proposal took no one by surprise, his criticism of the set-up did. After all, most of us are aware that there is much discussion behind closed doors on the need to revisit the NFC as well as the notion of devolution (which would assist the people as well as weaken the dynasty-controlled fiefdoms at the provincial level). However, Naqvi's indictment of the present government will not be forgotten easily — for now, all those who had been waxing lyrical about the work done by Maryam Nawaz in Punjab or by Shehbaz Sharif at the centre will find it hard to argue that the party has delivered and won over the people. Interestingly, his remarks, which were a damning indictment of the current set-up, were initially met with silence. It took nearly a day before the reaction came from the PPP and PML-N whose public representatives are usually quick to hold media talks every day on any hint of criticism. But to contradict the interior minister, and one who is said to be very close to the highest in the establishment, is surely above the pay grade of those put in charge of information ministries. Still, the senior tiers were called to report for duty. In Sindh, the chief minister himself pooh-poohed the suggestion, while from the PML-N Rana Sanaullah was the first to fire back. Since then, others too have joined the fray, but most of the criticism focuses on Naqvi and not those who back him. There was also news of a family gathering at Jati Umrah in Lahore. Not much emerged from it other than some vloggers thundering about Nawaz Sharif having been woken up from his slumber — news that somehow didn't get traction unlike Naqvi's speech. Perhaps it is because the news is limited to a few who are relying on sources or because no one really believes the family is in a position to push back. Courtesy Dawn

Idea theft in green clothing

Mirza Mujtaba Baig Pakistan's climate advocacy scene is hiding a problem few people want to talk about. The very organisations funded to fight environmental degradation have built a quiet culture of intellectual theft, one that is choking the genuine innovation the country desperately needs. Funded NGOs are constantly hungry for "new ideas" to satisfy donor reports and justify their budgets. But this hunger is self-made. It comes not from a shortage of creativity in Pakistan, but from an industry built more on performance than on purpose. Too many of the people running these organisations are not climate professionals driven by ecological conviction. They are grant chasers who learned how to write a persuasive proposal, not people who understand the science, the urgency, or the stakes of the crisis. The creative failure runs deeper than simple incompetence. Many of these organisations hire "creative teams" pulled straight from corporate marketing backgrounds, people trained to sell soft drinks and shampoo, not to steward planetary survival. They arrive with polished portfolios full of brand campaigns and apply the same transactional thinking to a climate communication. What follows is a steady stream of tired, recycled campaigns that treat climate awareness like a product, not a civilisational emergency that demands honest engagement. They stage tree planting photo ops with imported saplings that die within weeks. They launch "green challenges" on social media that generate a burst of hashtags and change nothing. Their work fails to connect because it was never built to serve the climate. It was built to serve the next quarterly report. The rot does not stop at creative laziness, though. Local coordinators, the foot soldiers of these funded operations, are just as complicit. Many of them scroll through Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn not to learn or engage, but to hunt for ideas they can lift wholesale. Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan, Iran reaffirm resolve to expand bilateral trade to \$10bn



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Tuesday reiterated their resolve to expand bilateral trade to \$10 billion, with Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan calling for transforming "historic brotherly relations" with Iran into a robust economic partnership. Since March this year, both countries have rolled out a series of measures to facilitate border trade, including easing customs procedures, formalising Taftan as a customs station, and notifying new transit routes, against the backdrop of the ongoing US-

Iran conflict in the Middle East that has strained economies in the region and beyond. Their latest engagement took place at the 10th session of the Pak-Iran Joint Trade Committee (JTC), which is being held in Islamabad from August 3-5. The meeting was co-chaired by Iranian Industry, Mine and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak and Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan. On the occasion, Khan also underscored the urgency to finalise the Pak-Iran Free Trade Agreement, a statement issued by his ministry said.

He called for the removal of barriers in border logistics and cargo movement, highlighting that joint border markets and electronic data interchange could significantly boost trade flows, it added.

According to the statement, both sides reviewed the measures already taken to enhance bilateral commerce at the meeting.

Moreover, the commerce minister said the private sector in both countries was prepared to expand trade, stressing that it was the responsibility of both governments to provide a "predictable and favourable" environment for business to them. He expressed hope that the JTC meeting would help evolve a practical roadmap to transform trade connectivity and raise the bilateral volume to its maximum potential, the statement said. For his part, the Iranian minister called Pakistan Iran's "long-term strategic trade partner", the statement said, adding that he expressed Tehran's desire to expand regional trade and logistics cooperation through Karachi and Gwadar ports, and the optimism that the Pak-Iran FTA would be concluded soon.

Planning, Information ministers discuss PTV revamping, modernization under PSDP

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar held a detailed discussion on the revamping and modernization of Pakistan Television (PTV) under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

During the meeting, Ahsan Iqbal said the state broadcaster was a national asset that would be restored and equipped with modern facilities to strengthen its role in promoting national identity and unity, a news release by the Ministry of Planning said on Tuesday. Attallah Tarar said the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting required the support of the Ministry of Planning for implementing the PTV revamp-



ing project under the PSDP.

He said the development of local broadcasting infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan was indispensable for the live telecast of international sporting events, adding that, at present, Outside Broadcast (OB) vans had to be dispatched from Islamabad to cover such events.

The information minister also stressed that upgrading PTV's Master Control Rooms (MCRs) in line with modern broadcasting requirements was an urgent necessity to improve the quality and efficiency of transmissions.

Shah Allah Ditta Caves to be developed into world-class Buddhist heritage site

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Tuesday said the historic Shah Allah Ditta Caves in federal capital, an important centre of the Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist heritage, would be developed into a world-class Buddhist heritage site with modern facilities.

During a visit to the caves, the minister directed the authorities concerned to complete the ongoing conservation and development work at the earliest so the site could be formally inaugurated during the Gandhara Conference scheduled for September or October. Parliamentary Secretary Farah Naz Akbar accompanied him during the visit.

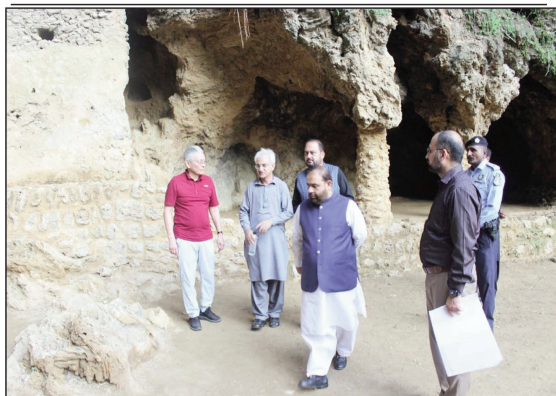
The officials of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM) briefed the minister on the conservation work and informed him that a historic Buddhist-era stupa was located on a hillside opposite the caves but is not clearly visible from the site

due to the distance.

Shah Allah Ditta Caves to be developed into world-class Buddhist heritage site

The minister directed the installation of a modern telescope to enable Buddhist monks and other visitors to have a closer view of the ancient stupa.

He also instructed the authorities to prominently display information on the history and heritage of Buddhism at the caves to highlight the site's historical and religious significance. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said Prime Minister of Pakistan was taking keen interest in the preservation, promotion and international recognition of the Gandhara Civilization, adding that the Shah Allah Ditta Caves are being upgraded in line with international standards. He said facilities including a cafeteria, gift shop and other visitor amenities would be established for local and foreign tourists, while decorative lighting would also be installed to enhance the site's appeal during the evening.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi visited the historic Shah Allah Ditta Caves in Islamabad to review the ongoing conservation and development work.

State Minister appreciates students art work, highlighting issues of IIOJ&K

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of state for federal education and professional training, Wajaha Qamar on Tuesday appreciated the artwork of students highlighted issues in Indian

Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), underscoring that voices may be suppressed but the language of art continues to leave a lasting impact. She made these remarks, while addressing the event as chief guest, organized by the Youth Forum for Kashmir, in collaboration with the Institute of Home Economics and Design. The event organized a painting competition titled "Conflict Through Art" to commemorate Kashmir Exploitation Day. The event brought together nearly 200 young student artists from across Pakistan, who expressed their perspectives on the Kashmir issue through creative and thought-provoking artworks. Their paintings depicted the humanitarian challenges faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir, including alleged human rights violations and the impact of the revocation of the region's special constitutional status.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari has said that Pakistan no longer faces an electricity generation shortage but must invest in battery storage and grid flexibility to manage surplus solar power and meet rising evening demand. "Let me be very direct about where we stand. Pakistan does not have a generation problem anymore... What we have is a flexibility problem. The inability to move abundant midday solar energy into the evening peak," said Leghari while addressing the Solar Storage Flexibility 2026 (SSF26) Conference in Islamabad.

He said that the ongoing conflict between Iran and the United



States has reminded us how external events shake energy markets.

"Oil price volatility, shipping risk through the Strait of Hormuz and uncertainty in the global fuel markets are not abstract concerns for policymakers in Washington or Riyadh.

"For a country like Pakistan, which still imports the bulk of the fuel that runs a large share of our thermal fleet, they are a direct threat to our fiscal stability and our people's cost of living."

Billions of rupees lost by Pakistan, Afghanistan due to the closure of bilateral, transit trade in ten months

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Senior Vice President of Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) and Chairman of Dry Port/Railway Standing Committee of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi (Sitara Imtiaz) has said that billions of rupees have been lost by Pakistan and Afghanistan due to the closure of Pak-Afghan bilateral trade and transit trade during the last ten months. In a press statement issued here on Tuesday, Zia Sarhadi said Afghanistan is the closest and most important market for Pakistani products where full payment is made before

delivery of goods. Pakistan's annual exports to Afghanistan are about 1.5 billion US dollars. The trade blockade has cost Pakistani exporters around \$1 billion in the past 10 months. Similarly, annual exports of Pakistani products to Central Asian countries via Afghanistan are around \$800 million and the blockade of transit trade has cost Pakistani exporters around \$225 million in the past 10 months. Pakistan imports cotton, pulses and other commodities from Central Asian countries. These imports were possible at a relatively low cost via Afghanistan, but the blockade of transit trade has significantly increased the cost of imports.

NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reaffirms Pakistan's unwavering commitment to support Kashmiris' Right to Self-Determination on Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, in his message on Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir (Kashmir Exploitation Day), said that August 5 reminds the world of India's illegal annulment of Articles 370 and 35-A of its Constitution, through which the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) was revoked and the fundamental rights and distinct identity of the Kashmiri people were undermined. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reaffirmed

Pakistan's unwavering commitment to supporting the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for the realization of their right to self-determination. He expressed solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for their just cause. He said that Pakistan would continue to raise its voice for the legitimate rights of the people of IIOJK and support their just cause at all regional and international forums. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the Kashmiri

people have rendered unparalleled sacrifices for their fundamental right to self-determination, freedom and preservation of their identity. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq recalled that the state and people of Pakistan, despite all political differences within, had stood firmly as one with the Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the last 78 years. This unity remained the key strength of the Kashmir struggle and it was all the more important at the current critical global times to keep the unity among our ranks. Speaker Sardar Ayaz

Sadiq categorically stated that India's illegal actions on August 5, 2019 were a blatant violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, adding that Pakistan has consistently rejected these unlawful measures aimed at altering the disputed status of Jammu & Kashmir, changing the demographic composition in IIOJK and undermining the identity of the Kashmiri people. NA Speaker said that a just resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir Dispute is indispensable for lasting peace, security and stability in

South Asia. He further stressed the need for resolving the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq urged the international community to take effective notice of the grave human rights violations in IIOJK, attempts to alter its demographic composition and restrictions imposed on Kashmiri leadership. Speaker National Assembly said that the Parliament of Pakistan has always supported the right to

self-determination of the Kashmiri people and has adopted numerous unanimous resolutions condemning human rights violations in IIOJK and drawing the attention of the international community towards the long-standing Kashmir dispute. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq further said that the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir is playing an active role in effectively highlighting the Kashmir issue at the international level and conveying the voice of the Kashmiri people to the international community.